Immigrant-background young adults giving accounts of themselves: agentic and dialogic reframing of parental cultural heritage

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Increasing research attention has been dedicated to the transfer of cultural resources and practices in immigrant families and the different impacts parental cultural heritage can have on children and young adults who navigate their identities and expectations originating from different cultural influences. This research, however, tends to focus on either specific communities or specific aspects of culture, failing to paint a broader picture of how cultural heritage and identities are constituted, experienced, and narrated by young immigrant-background individuals as they enter adulthood. This thesis draws on a qualitative design that involved reflective journaling, interviewing, and collaborative data analysis conducted with 15 participants from a range of ethnic and economic backgrounds—all 18-29 years old and born in the UK to immigrant parents. On the theoretical level, this research problematises and destabilises the link between cultural heritage, collective identity, and self-identification. Drawing on Judith Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself*, the thesis conceptualises parental cultural heritage as a responsibility and considers the role of agency in negotiating the relationship between the self and culture. It then further explores—aided by Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism—immigrant-background individuals' agentic approaches to reframing cultural heritage and cultural identity through dialogic relations and intersubjectivity. Finally, in critical engagement with Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity and agency, immigrant-background individuals' experiences are contextualised within the workings of society to argue that the agentic and dialogic reframing of cultural heritage has its limits and that experiencing, and giving an account of, cultural hybridity will continue to be difficult unless the prevailing discourse shifts. Beyond its theoretical contribution, this thesis emphasises how discussing the sense of responsibility, agency, and cultural heritage with those experiencing hybrid and migrant-background realities requires innovative methodological approaches to elicit the often unarticulated and tacit narratives and understandings. To address this challenge, the thesis introduces the 'narrative grounded theory' approach which marries grounded theory and narrative inquiry to produce methodological tools that encourage participants' reflectiveness, analytical engagement, and revisiting of their stories on multiple occasions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

While the UK continues to become more and more culturally diverse, the levels of acceptability of explicit racial, ethnic and religious intolerance also continue to grow (Achiume, 2018; Kierans, 2020). For many whose cultural heritages—be it the languages they speak, religious beliefs they hold, or the way they were born looking—do not seem to align with what has been historically considered 'British', such a context constitutes a site of contestation where one's understandings of culture, identity, and community are, inevitably, shaped within interactions, alongside the expectations coming from others and their sometimes racist or essentialising gazes. Recent research has focused on the transfer of cultural and transnational resources and practices within immigrant families, as well as on cultural identity formulation in individuals from broadly understood 'immigrant backgrounds'. However, the processes of negotiating cultural heritage and self-identification of young adults who were born in the UK to immigrant parents are still understudied. This thesis concentrates on the narrative understandings of culture and identity in the period of young adulthood. It explores the connections and ruptures between parental cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity, and identifies the interrelational and agentic ways in which young adults navigate these. The thesis addresses the following overarching Research Questions: (1) How is parental cultural heritage constituted, experienced, and negotiated in immigrant-background young adults' lives? (2) How do these processes inform the ways in which immigrant-background young adults formulate their self-identifications? (3) How can immigrant-background young adults exercise agency when navigating cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity?

1.1. Sociopolitical context

Over the past few decades, the high levels of migrant mobility across nation-state borders related to European Union expansion, refugee movements, and the internationalisation of education and job markets have led to an increased diversity of the UK's ethnic, cultural, and

linguistic landscapes (ONS, 2022c, 2022d).[1] These changes have been met with a resurgence of populist ethnonationalism promoting national sovereignty and purity, as well as a tightening of Britain's borders—both through immigration legislation restricting movement to the UK from abroad and through controls applied on those seen as 'immigrants' within the spheres of everyday life, such as work, healthcare, and education (Alexander & Byrne, 2020; Solomos, 2022). In line with what has been the focus of the UK's migration policy through the twentieth century, the past few decades have seen an emphasis on preserving 'British values', prioritising economic usefulness (Bennett, 2018), and, in the words of Margaret Thatcher, avoiding "being swamped by people of a different culture" (cited in Schuster & Solomos, 1999, p. 59). Such ideologies have been echoed in media and public discourse through negative narratives about the 'immigrant Other' infiltrating and posing threat to the nation-state's security and economy (Sveinsson, 2008). They were also amplified in the run-up to Brexit and in post-Brexit debates when politicians called for a move away from multiculturalism towards assimilation and promoted the notion of assuming 'Britishness' as the right moral trajectory upon immigration (Kinnock, 2016). Brexit—and the anti-migration and racist sentiments it led to[2]—manifested as means to prolonging the fantasy of a "white nation", where imagined "white entitlements" exclude not only the newcomers but also those born in the UK to immigrant parents (R. Finlay et al., 2019, p. 18). It is within such a national context, where 'non-white' and 'immigrant-background' is portrayed as antonymous to 'British' that British-born children of immigrants struggle to form identities, feel valued, and find belonging and understanding (Burrell & Hopkins, 2019; Modood et al., 1997; Tyrrell et al., 2018). It is within this context that their cultural heritages are essentialised, devalued, and discriminated against.

In the UK, identification with Britain's national story has been used as an indicator of national consensus, community cohesion, and the success of the multicultural project (Parekh, 2000;

[1] According to last year's Census data, 74.4 per cent of the total population in England and Wales identified their ethnic group as "English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British" within the "White" background category, compared to 80.5 per cent in 2011 and 87.5 in 2001 (ONS, 2022c).

[2] Racism, as a system of symbolic, material, and structural domination, is deeply embedded in UK's history and politics, accounting for centuries of exclusion, marginalisation, and interiorisation of people and groups based on purported physical, ideological, and cultural differences (Shankley & Rhodes, 2020). Acts of prejudice, racial violence, and bias are pervasive in the everyday life of ethnic and religious minority groups, as shown by the raise in racial and religious hate crime reporting in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland in recent years (Home Office, 2022; PSNI, 2022).

Platt, 2014). Conversely, the maintenance of 'strong ethnic identities' and fostering of cultural values that seem in conflict with the cultural ethos of the majority and the 'British values' has been viewed as problematic and a barrier to an integrated society (Nandi & Platt, 2015; Warriner, 2017). For example, the presence of anti-Islamic sentiments in the public discourse, media, and the rhetoric of populist political parties has resulted in the portrayal of British Muslims as "the alien 'other'", their precarious positionality in the UK, and the development of negative connotations related to the religion they might profess, the languages some of them speak, and the way they might decide to dress (Sales, 2012, p. 40). Claire Alexander (2016, p. 1429) notices the double-faced nature of the notion of cultural integration and cultural difference in the UK:

> Questions of 'culture' sit uncomfortably alongside questions of colour and citizenship, equality and belonging, both as a source of solidarity and resistance–even, on occasion, as a very partial and contingent celebration of an inclusive and global Britishness–and as a form of ineradicable distinction and exclusion at the very heart of nationhood.

Alexander (2016, p. 1429) argues that, while certain contemporary areas of cultural production, such as British sports, media and music, are inconceivable without the presence of Black Brits, the success of a few and the illusion of united multicultural Britain, is not representative of the lived experiences of the vast majority of Black Britons in a country that remains "hideously white".[3] It is within such a hostile national context, that nearly 30 per cent of births in England and Wales in 2021 were given by non-UK-born women (ONS, 2022b).[4] A marked increase from an already substantial figure of 11-15 per cent in the nineties when those currently in their young adulthood—a life period that I focus on in this thesis—were born (ONS, 2019a). We have yet to see how these numbers might be affected by the resurgence of nationalist movements and the post-Brexit sentiments, however, what at this point seems a given is that ethnic, racial, and religious diversity as well as migratory heritages will continue to play a role in narrating the yet to be written parts of Britain's multicultural story.

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[3] Alexander (2016) credits Greg Dyke for this phrase.

[4] This figure varies largely depending on the region, with certain parts of London registering over 70 per cent of births to non-UK-born women in 2021 and Manchester, Leicester, and Reading, among other metropolitan areas, witnessing over 50 per cent of such births (ONS, 2022b).

1.2. Research context

In the British context, increasing research attention has been dedicated to the transfer of cultural and transnational resources and practices in immigrant families (Curdt-Christiansen & Morgia, 2018; Gruszczyńska-Thompson, 2019; Sime & Pietka-Nykaza, 2015), migrant and immigrant-background children's experiences of socialisation and learning in new cultural and linguistic settings (Moskal, 2014; Moskal & Sime, 2015; Welply, 2010), and the marginalisation of migrant youth in the education system and other institutions (Evans et al., 2020; Sime et al., 2022). There has also been a growing interest in the formation of cultural identities and the processes of navigating cultural heritage following resettlement or having been born in a country (or cultural setting) different to one's parents' country of origin. This resulted in scholars exploring the intersection of national, cultural, and linguistic identities and how these are shaped within different social contexts in the UK (e.g., family, classroom) and transnationally (Bolognani, 2014; Miller, 2004; Whittaker, 2019), as well as some others—especially those interested in the study of race and diaspora—considering potential for cultural hybridity and hybrid identities (Ademolu, 2021; Alexander & Kim, 2013; Saini, 2022; Werbner, 2004). Nevertheless, despite evidence suggesting the period from late teenagerhood through to one's twenties as a crucial life stage in identity formation (Landberg et al., 2018), qualitative research exploring British-born immigrant-background young adults' accounts of navigating cultural heritage and self-identifications is scarce.

My interest in this topic is grounded in my master's research which explored immigrant parents' decision-making regarding the maintenance of their heritage language with their British-born children (Gruszczyńska-Thompson, 2019). The findings of this research suggested a vast range of consequences of parental language education decisions on the children's sense of identity, social positioning, and their perceptions of the role of language in shaping their social interactions and relationships with the parents. The project also pointed to certain levels of children's initiative—especially in their teens[5]—in accessing cultural and linguistic resources independently of what was offered or expected by their parents, drawing my interest to the potential for independence and agency in cultural heritage negotiations post-

[5] The oldest children in the sample were 10-14 years old.

childhood, i.e., in the period of young adulthood which is often associated with the transition from school to university, potential mobility away from home, broader access to a variety of social contexts, and, indeed, identity development (Arnett, 2000).

In this thesis, using multiple theoretical lenses, I interrogate the relationship between cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity, suggesting that, while perceiving it as complex, ambiguous, and sometimes confusing, young adults can also exercise agency in the process of defining themselves and finding belonging with others. The relationship with parental cultural heritage, especially in the context of exploring British-born immigrant-background young adults' ways of developing and reformulating identities, has been afforded some research attention amongst scholars interested in linguistic heritages (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010b), religiosity (Kapinga et al., 2022), embodied practices (Bhimji, 2008), traditional celebrations and cultural events (M. Bhambra, 2022), and other forms of heritage (Barber, 2015a). These outputs, however, tend to focus on individuals who are seen as belonging to the same ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic communities (e.g., 'British Sikhs', 'British-born Vietnamese', 'British-born women of Bangladeshi Muslim origins'), perhaps missing out on the opportunity to explore the points of convergence in the experiences of British-born children of immigrants from various migratory backgrounds and in how they account for their dynamic identities and question belonging to pre-determined collectivities.

1.3. Responding to these contexts

In 2021, at least every fourth child born in the UK was a child of a non-UK-born mother (ONS, 2022b). Many of these children will likely remain in the UK and continue to contribute to the country's growing diversity while, at the same time, having to navigate their unique cultural upbringing amid the societal pressures to fit into predetermined categories and identifications. In 18 years, they will be forming a large part of the cohort of young people stepping into adulthood, joining the workforce or the higher education system, and becoming more politically active. A better understanding of the diversity of immigrant-background young adults' experiences and their individual stories, as explored in this thesis, is crucial to the development of more inclusive policies and systems of support that can be responsive to the unique needs of young adults and the dynamic ways in which they self-identify and

interact with their cultural heritages (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). However, as Finlay et al. (2019) suggest, one must be also wary not to construct the UK's youth as homogeneously mobile, hybrid, or cosmopolitan. Instead, research needs to account for the role of social inequalities and privilege in legitimising mobility, transnationality, and agentic self-identification, and the disadvantaged positionings some young adults might occupy within such a context (Bhopal, 2018).

In this thesis, I set out to investigate the role that parental cultural heritage (e.g., language, dress, skin colour) plays in the lives of young British-born adults whose parents were born and grew up outside of the UK. I am particularly interested in the multiple social, cultural, and ecological factors that constitute contexts within which these young adults navigate cultural heritage and manage to find agentic ways to reshape it or resist its uncritical reproduction. In order to examine this, I will draw on qualitative data from reflective journals, interviews, and collaborative analysis undertaken with 15 participants from a variety of ethnic, religious, economic, and linguistic backgrounds. This inquiry find its beginning in an open-ended conceptualisation of identity, heritage, and community, inviting the participants to engage with narrating and re-narrate culture and identity over time and giving them tools to consider the ambiguous, difficult-to-articulate, and incomplete reflections and conclusions they might hold about themselves and their realities. On the theoretical level, the accounts of immigrant-background young adults shared in this thesis are contextualised within the "changing ethnoscapes that migration and travel generate" and the destabilisation of "the former certainties of nation, neighbourhood, community, family, [and] friendship" (Alexander, 2010, p. 2). Drawing on the works of theorists who have influenced postmodern and postcolonial thinking (Judith Butler, Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall), in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, I will position parental cultural heritage alongside concepts of self-identification and collective identity, then, proceed to consider the process of its negotiation within social norms, practices of interpellation, and interactions with multiple dialogic actors, before concluding with an exploration of the role that cultural heritage plays in group membership and community building. Culture and identity, in this thesis, will be conceptualised as dynamic; rooted in histories, and experienced within the norms of specific contexts, while also subject to change and re-articulation (Hall, 1990), allowing the analysis to unpack the different forms of agency that immigrant-background young adults engage with

as they navigate cultural heritage and the, often conflicting, sets of expectations and responsibilities that come with it.

This research contributes to the academic field by applying a new theoretical framework to the study of broadly conceived parental cultural heritage and highlighting the various forms of immigrant-background young adults' agency in face of the challenges that they confront developing their self-identifications and forming communities within a sociopolitical context that racialises them and delegitimises their cultural practices and resources. On the more practical level, this research project aims to paint a broader picture of how cultural heritages, processes of identification and misidentification, and sense of group belonging intersect in the mobility and migration context, to inform further research on practices and policies that would support immigrant-background youth, their parents, immigrant communities, and institutions that support them. An increasingly timely agenda considering the growing levels of ethnic and racial diversity in the UK and the figures indicating a large proportion of British-born children growing up with non-UK-born parents.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, the rest of this thesis is organised into three parts. Part I (Chapters 2-4) accounts for the substantive, theoretical, and methodological choices made and situates the studied topic within a wider field of knowledge. In Chapter 2, I review the academic literature concerned with British-born children of immigrants—with a focus on those in the early stages of adulthood—and how they navigate their identities within the UK context. Through this review of the literature, I identify the gaps in theoretical and methodological approaches to the topic, which then, I address, in turn, in Chapters 3 and 4, as I introduce the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of the study as well as the research considerations and design that guided the process of data collection and analysis. The chapters that form Part II (Chapters 5-7) present the findings of the study and analyse them through three different theoretical lenses. In Chapter 5, I draw on Judith Butler's theory of responsibility and agency to conceptualise parental cultural heritage as responsibility and a source of guilt and shame. Chapter 6, through its use of Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, focuses on the process of negotiating cultural heritage within the social context

consisting of multiple, and often competing, dialogic actors. Chapter 7, then, engages more explicitly with the concepts of culture, identity, and self-identification, as it deploys Homi Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity to consider the role of cultural heritage in defining the self and one's belonging in communities and collective identities. Throughout Chapters 5-7, drawing on different theoretical approaches, I also unpack the multiple forms of agency that immigrant-background young adults may find themselves engaging with as they navigate their cultural heritage and self-identifications. Finally, Part III consists of a concluding chapter (Chapter 8) that highlights the contributions to knowledge made in this thesis and the implications of this research.

PART I

CHAPTER 2: CULTURAL HERITAGES AND IDENTITIES: BRITISH-BORN (ADULT) CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE UK

Following on from the previous chapter that situated immigrant-background young adults and the task of navigating parental cultural heritage within the UK's sociopolitical context, this current chapter discussed how these have been approached, theorised, and understood in extant literature. As outlined in the Introduction, the increased diversity of the UK's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic landscapes over the last few decades has coincided with a resurgence of populist, far-right, and anti-immigration rhetoric that has painted those with a migratory background as 'the Other' and a 'threat' (Welply, 2022a) and their heritages (languages, religious beliefs, skin colours) as markers of difference and non-belonging (Solomos, 2022). Within such a context, I argue, there is something unique to how the process of negotiating cultural heritage and self-identification amid conflicting expectations from society, ethnic 'community', and family plays out for those entering adulthood, as opposed to adolescents and those beyond their twenties. Throughout this chapter, I will be drawing on academic literature in sociology, education, geography, psychology and other disciplines to review the existing scholarship concerning children of immigrants in their young adulthood, their relationships with parental cultural heritage (as a cumulative term and in its various component forms, e.g., linguistic heritage, dress, relationship practices, religious beliefs), and their ways of naming and narrating their identities. This is done in the context of Neblett et al.'s (2019) call for interdisciplinarity in the study of ethnic and racial identity development to build common awareness of approaches, frameworks, and questions guiding research on the topic. My aim, here, is not only to identify the gaps in current knowledge on the topic that this thesis addresses but also to offer an explanation for why it is important and urgent that these gaps are bridged.

While the focus of this chapter will be on the literature concerning British-born immigrant-background young adults' heritages and identifications, this thesis contributes to the broader scholarship developed over the last three decades that challenges static forms of identity and

culture and considers the internal, contextualised, and politicised constructions and definitions of identity and community (Alexander, 1996; Modood et al., 1994; Solomos, 2022). Terms such as 'ethnicity', 'race', 'culture', 'heritage', 'collective identity', 'immigrant background', to name just a few that will prominently feature in the thesis, are not stable or self-evident categories, some even have been put 'under erasure' (Anthias, 2002; Bonnett, 1996; Gilroy, 1998; Hall, 1996a; W. S. E. Lam, 2006; Young, 2000). Nonetheless, as Hall (1996a, p. 1) suggests, "since they have not been superseded dialectically, and there are no other, entirely different concepts with which to replace them, there is nothing to do but to continue to think with them—albeit now in their detotalized or deconstructed forms, and no longer operating within the paradigm in which they were originally generated". The new paradigm in which to consider these terms has been shaped through the destabilisation of these contested notions and their roots in academic writing and lived experiences. Scholars have disrupted the assumption of the spatial nature of cultural difference and shifted "the focal point away from the ascriptions and presumptions of the Imperial centre to the experience of the colonised periphery [and] the salience of marginalised knowledges" (Alexander, 2010, p. 3), starting to inquire more into the new kinds and expressions of identity within a social world shaped by globalisation and the new dynamic and unfinished forms of migration and settlement (Calgar, 1997; Modood et al., 1994). Some of these early conceptualisations of multifaceted identities (e.g., hyphenated or 'bi-cultural' identities) were criticised for failing to express the heterogeneity embedded within identity descriptors such as 'black', 'British', or 'Muslim' (Brah, 1996), reproducing essentialised identification (Solomos & Back, 1996), and reinforcing a demand on individuals and communities to identify in ways that afford them recognition in a political world where assimilation seems to be portrayed as the only alternative to marginalisation (Kalra et al., 2005). This criticism—paired with a growing body of literature suggesting that people increasingly define themselves in terms of multiple and fluid cultural identities that transcend what can be expressed using predetermined identity categories—has contributed to a shift in scholarly discourse towards conceptualising identity as a process, a lived experience, and as constituted and negotiated through interaction (Alexander, 1996; Harries, 2017; Morley & Robins, 2001; Nayak, 2003b; Solomos, 2003). This attention to "how the formation of identity, racism and multiculture is manifest within everyday life", as Back (1996, p. 6) argues, can be a means to escaping "the trap of meta-theoretical reification" of abstracted concepts of identity and cultural difference.

One of the ways to bring more focus to the 'lived' nature of identity has been through the study of how it is experienced in family life, across communities, through other social relations, in response to exclusion, and, indeed, as related to one's relationship to the different forms of cultural heritage, as will be discussed further in this chapter. However, this has been done less frequently in studies concerning young adults from immigrant backgrounds. I begin this chapter, therefore, by justifying the project's focus on children of immigrants in their young adulthood, and then proceed to suggest that by concentrating on specific ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, as well as narrow geographical contexts (e.g., cities with large diasporic communities), a lot of research on the topics of culture, heritage, and identity concerning young adults continues to find its origins in assumptions of shared characteristics, experiences, and values amongst those speaking the same languages, professing a certain religion, or embodying similar features. I will further argue, in this chapter, that the often applied focus on 'cultural' and 'ethnic' identifications and orientations has made it difficult for researchers to study the dynamic and changeable nature of identity, and suggest that approaching the topic through an exploration of the relationship with parental cultural heritage can facilitate a better accounting for the change in self-identification over time and can prove easier to articulate for research participants than an abstract notion of identity. Finally, I will discuss the theoretical lenses that have been most commonly used in research on immigrant-background young adults' experiences of parental cultural heritage and self-identification and will make a case for the development of a new theoretical framework and methodological approach, which I discuss in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

2.1. Choosing to focus on children of immigrants in young adulthood

While interest—both in terms of research and official statistics—in immigrant 'generations' has been more prominent in the US than in the British context (Waters, 2014), I want to suggest here that being born in the UK to immigrant parents is likely to bring out different experiences of identity, cultural heritage, and navigating the two as one transitions into adulthood than those lived by young adults who experienced migration themselves or were raised by UK-born descendants of immigrants. In this thesis, I avoid the term 'second-

generation immigrant', unless referring to research outputs that specifically use it. The concept of migrants' generationality is not as common in popular discourse and everyday interactions in the UK, as compared to the United States, and it has not featured in the accounts shared with me by the study participants. Considering the focus of this research on self-identification and narrativity, I deploy terms that align better with the participants' perspectives. I am also conscious that speaking about 'children of immigrants' implies that their parents, indeed, are 'immigrants' which, even if it is their legal status, might not necessarily be how they view themselves and self-identify. When referring to the data and findings of the research project reported in this thesis, I will be mostly speaking of 'immigrant-background young adults', which outside of the context of this manuscript could be understood as much broader than what it entails here, this is, UK-born children of 'immigrants'. Terminology aside, I argue that studies of young adults from migratory backgrounds and their cultural heritages and identities too often either study those born in the country of resettlement alongside those who migrated as children (i.e., first and second generation together, e.g., Aboulhassan & Brumley, 2019; Blake, 2019; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2019; Harries, 2017; Hopkins, 2004; Michikyan & Suárez-Orozco, 2017; Min & Kim, 2000; Timol, 2020; Vadher & Barrett, 2009) or use the term 'second generation' to also describe those who were born outside of the studied context (sometimes referred to as 1.5- and 1.75-generation, e.g., Barros & Albert, 2020; Bolognani, 2014; Haraldsson & McLean, 2021; Kebede, 2017; Sundar, 2008). I argue, however, that there is something distinct about the experiences of British-born children of immigrants and that migration research could benefit from more precision and deliberation when conceptualising studied populations.

Researchers have suggested differences between the 'first' and 'second generations' in the UK based on their ethnic and political identifications (Nandi & Platt, 2020), use of heritage languages (Sebba & Tate, 2002; van Tubergen & Mentjox, 2014), religiosity (McAndrew & Voas, 2014), and dietary practices (Osei-Kwasi et al., 2017), to name just a few forms of cultural heritage (Heath, 2014). What should be noted as well is that the citizenship policies at the time when current young adults were born—even though not racism-free (Webber, 2022)—made becoming officially associated with the UK through citizenship, and not just country of birth, mostly accessible to the British-born, and this, as suggested by Hussain and Bagguley (2005) and Platt (2014), might have resulted in differences in adopting British

identity between the 'first' and 'second generation'. Indeed, all immigrant-background young adults whose narratives are presented in this thesis are British citizens and only three (all of whom have parents who migrated to the UK from a European country) hold a second citizenship. Another factor that makes me believe that it is relevant to distinguish between British-born children of immigrants and those who migrated to the UK with their parents in studies of cultural heritage and identity transmission and maintenance is that living in the UK when the child is born can mean that parents opt to, or find themselves needing to, expose him or her to the British media, the English language, and potentially different social networks to those that would have been available in their country of origin during the early years (Gruszczyńska-Thompson, 2019). This early exposure as well as being associated with the UK through legal status and as a place of birth might have importance for how children of immigrants navigate their cultural heritage and identities throughout their lives. I agree with Platt (2014) that "[d]ifferent contexts support different opportunities and expectations for identification, whether through histories of migration and patterns of settlement, through classification systems (Waters 1990), through policies, or through contexts of reception". With this in mind, in my project, I chose to focus on immigrant-background individuals who were born and grew up in the UK.

Research on children of immigrants, or 'the second generation', and their relationship to the various aspect of cultural heritage has focused on their experiences in childhood (e.g., Chen et al., 2021; Dai et al., 2015; Froehlich et al., 2019; K. A. King, 2013; V. L. Lam et al., 2020; Welply, 2010) and adolescence (e.g., Balkaya et al., 2019; Ferguson, 2013; Franceschelli & O'Brien, 2015; Kabir, 2014; Pichler, 2007; Robinson, 2009; Safa et al., 2022; Sall, 2020), or adulthood perceived very broadly, where those in their late teens and twenties would be studied alongside those in the later stages of adult lives (e.g., Aboulhassan & Brumley, 2019; Güngör et al., 2011; Haraldsson & McLean, 2021; Imoagene, 2017; Kebede, 2017; Platt, 2014; Whittaker, 2019). Young adulthood, or more specifically 'emerging adulthood',[6] on the other hand, even though indicated as a key period in identity development and reassessment of

[6] While important for the contextualisation of this research project, the concept of emerging adulthood is not as commonly used in the UK as it is in the US. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I will be mostly referring to those aged 18-29 years old as 'young adults' to speak more directly to the literature situated in the same context to the one I study.

social norms and normative expectations (Kaniušonytė & Žukauskienė, 2018; Landberg et al., 2018), has remained less prominent, especially where 'ethnic identity' research is concerned (Syed & Mitchell, 2013). According to Arnett (2000, p. 469), who first defined the concept, emerging adulthood is a distinct life stage from the late teens through the twenties "when many different directions remain possible, when little about the future has been decided for certain, when the scope of independent exploration of life's possibilities is greater for most people than it will be at any other period of the life course". This possibility inscribed in the concept, while initially described as a predominantly positive aspect, has also been acknowledged as leading to instability, ambiguity, and feeling 'in-between' (Tanner & Arnett, 2016). It has been suggested that many emerging adults in Western societies have often moved away from their parental homes, but do not yet have a sense of stability in their relationships, work, and futures, and as they explore their independence and self-sufficiency, they continue to inquire into their changing identities (Arnett, 2014; Schwartz, 2016). Nonetheless, what has not been addressed, and I seek to explore, is the more symbolic task of negotiating distance and closeness between parents and their adult children through commitment, or lack thereof, to parental cultural heritage and self-identifications relating to one's cultural background.

It has been recognised that more research on emerging adults from diverse populations is required to clarify the role of this period in cultural theory and verify its applicability to the lives of individuals from underrepresented groups and minorities (Sugimura et al., 2015; Swanson, 2016; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). Tanner and Arnett (2016, p. 37) also suggest the need for future studies to interrogate "within-culture heterogeneity" in emerging adults' experiences, to explore the potential of race, class, and ethnic inequalities in bringing variation to the original concept as conceived in 2000. Existing literature on 'ethnic identities' of children of immigrants as they transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood highlights the instability of identification in this transition stage and suggests that 'ethnic identities' stabilise post-emerging adulthood, however, it also indicates that the importance attached to such identifications diminishes in those beyond their thirties (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2019; Syed & Azmitia, 2009). Such conclusions, nevertheless, are mostly based on survey data, where the complex matter of identification is minimised to a short, sometimes even numerical, answer to questions such as "How do you identify? That is, what do you call

yourself (e.g., Asian, Hispanic, American, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Latino, Filipino, Filipino-American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese-American, Lao, Lao-American, Cambodian, and Cambodian-American)?" (Feliciano, 2009; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2019; van der Does & Adem, 2019),[7] "With which race/ethnicity do you most identify?" with the options of White, Black, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, and a fill-in option (Blake, 2019), "On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), to what extent do you agree with the following statement: 'I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group'" (Syed & Azmitia, 2009), or "What one (sic) race best describes you?" (J. M. Doyle & Kao, 2007). Even when the use of narrative methods is claimed, which is rare, this seems to be usually done in a structured way that prescribes focus on 'ethnicity' as relevant to identity and self-defining (Nesteruk et al., 2015; Syed & Azmitia, 2008, 2010). Therefore, while acknowledging the aforementioned research approaches for drawing attention to the period of young adulthood as a key and distinct stage in 'ethnic identity' development, I also recognise their limited capacity to apprehend the fluid, intangible and dynamic nature of identification. In my project, I avoid questions that would imply singularity of racial identity or cultural attachment, and instead, inquire—by means of journal prompts, narrative interviewing, and collaborative analysis—into immigrant-background young adults' experiences of cultural heritage—through questions about belonging, language, family relations, and culture—aiming, in this way, to elicit their complex, unique, and often ambiguous and unfinished accounts of entering adulthood as a child of immigrants in the UK.

In sum, while there seems to be a consensus among emerging adulthood scholars regarding the distinctiveness of this period for identity development, this same group of researchers also suggests a level of openness, ambiguity, and 'in-betweenness' that characterises emerging adults' lives. I argued, here, that there is scope for developing innovative methodologies in research on immigrant-background emerging adults' ethnic and cultural identifications and their relationships with cultural heritage to more effectively—perhaps than quantitative methods do—capture the dialogic, situational, narrative, and agentic ways in which young adults can and do make sense of these complex matters as they navigate the

[7] While the authors claim that the respondents were free to "write-in any identity of their choice" (van der Does & Adem, 2019, p. 111), I argue, that the examples they provided are suggestive of the kind of response they expect.

possibilities and ambiguities of emerging adulthood. Moreover, as I advocate for the inclusion of young individuals from a variety of backgrounds—be it cultural, linguistic, religious, or class—in emerging adulthood research and oppose the term 'second-generation immigrant' as a description for a person born in a country other than their parents' country of origin, I also recognise how these individuals' experiences of identity, culture, and belonging might differ from those of other 'generations'. The project reported in this thesis focuses on the perspectives of British-born children of immigrants in young adulthood (18-29 years old)[8] and deploys qualitative and narrative methods to provide the participants with the non-prescriptive and open-ended tools for expressing their relationship with culture, ethnicity, and familial heritage and for accounting for the unstable and dynamic nature of these relations.

2.2. De-essentialising how immigrant-background populations are conceptualised in research

Qualitative research on cultural identities and heritages of British-born children of immigrants in their young adulthood is rare and difficult to come across. As argued earlier in the chapter, while young adults do get included in studies on the topic, they are often grouped in with adolescents and older adults, making it challenging to access knowledge that pertains to the transitional period between teenagerhood and thirties, especially in the UK context where the concept of emerging adulthood has not been afforded as much attention as in the United States and Canada. Additionally, even when working with samples consisting of young adults only, researchers sometimes fail to acknowledge their contribution to the literature on this specific age group[9] (e.g., Bhimji, 2009; Jaspal & Coyle, 2010b), making it difficult to identify and group studies that share this characteristic. In this section, I spend the next four paragraphs discussing examples of empirical qualitative studies of cultural heritage and identification in British-born children of immigrants in their late teens and twenties, to set a scene for pointing to further limitations in extant literature. I will, then, make a case for

[8] The choice of this age range is discussed and justified in Chapter 4.
[9] Such acknowledgement could take the form of including one of the following phrases: 'young', 'young people', 'young adult(hood)', 'emerging adult(hood)', 'early adult(hood)', 'twenties', 'transition to adulthood', 'student', or 'postgraduate'.

research designs that avoid specifying ethnic, national, religious, racial, or other backgrounds of study participants and transcend such categorisation by incorporating a broader understanding of agentic and fluid self-identification and cultural attachment in conceptualising those with lived and inherited migratory pasts.

The inquiry into religious identities has been perhaps of most interest to researchers studying British-born young adults with migratory backgrounds and their cultures and identities. Kapinga et al.'s (2022) paper, for example, reports on a study of British-born Muslims aged 17-24 whose families migrated to the UK from Pakistan and Bangladesh and who at the time of the study resided in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The authors used in-depth interviews and map-making techniques to explore young adults' religious identities with a specific focus on the role of places beyond the UK in shaping participants' dynamic and independent notions of religious beliefs and identities. A somewhat similar objective—even though not referenced by Kapinga et al.—guided Fazila Bhimji's (2008) inquiry into British-born Muslim women's self-identification along religious and cultural dimensions as they relate to Britain and their parents' countries of origin (all located in South Asia). Bhimji spent twelve months in Northern England conducting interviews and participant observation with young women aged 19-28 years old. Both studies, while emphasising a porous and transnational understanding of relations with place and nation-states, also acknowledge the contextual and not 'placeless' nature of religious identity. Bhimji also explores this aspect further in her subsequent publication where she discusses young women's agency in traversing religious spheres and spaces in the UK and their role in how these women navigate their identities within the broader British society (Bhimji, 2009).

Researchers have also studied religious identities alongside different social locations and forms of identification. Jaspal and Coyle (2010a), who studied British-born young adults (18-24 years old) of South Asian heritage, deploy qualitative methods to explore religious identities alongside linguistic identities. The participants in their study self-identify as Muslims, Sikhs, or Hindus and have Indian or Pakistani backgrounds. Jaspal and Coyle's (2010a) young interviewees spoke about the complexities of negotiating 'ethnic pride' and religious identity and reported on the ethnolinguistic barrier to feeling included in religious communities in the UK. Using the same data set in a separate publication, the authors have

also wrote about the role of heritage language in maintaining self-identifications as Asian, where they acknowledged the potential repercussions of bi-/multilingualism for one's sense of self (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010b).[10] Interested in religious beliefs and practices as accommodated alongside other identities, too, Manmit Bhambra (2022) interviewed 80 young British Sikhs and Hindus (18-25 years old) in London to inquire into their understandings of Britishness. Her conversations with immigrant-background young adults showed the malleability of cultural and religious traditions and questioned the view of minority and majority cultures as separate entities.

Interested in the experiences of adult children of immigrants whose parents migrated from specific countries, Barber (2015a) and Scandone (2020, 2022) investigate cultural identities and heritages of young British-born Vietnamese and Bangladeshi, respectively. Barber's (2015a) account identifies young British-born Vietnamese (17-34 years old) as an overlooked minority group in 'super-diverse' London and considers the role of collective and pan-ethnic identifications in Britain. Importantly, Barber engages with identity through the lens of broadly understood cultural heritage, discussing how race, gendered practices, embodied characteristics, and material and symbolic embeddedness within 'the Vietnamese community' among others, all contribute to these young adults' understandings of British Vietnamese identities. Scandone's (2022) study of 18-24-year-old Bangladeshi Muslim women also reveals a range of tensions and adaptations located at the intersection of social positionings and multiple lines of identification. She focuses on ethnicity, class, religion, and gender, and discusses young women's capability to re-negotiate gendered norms as they explore the complexities of their lived experiences, prospects, and selves. In an earlier publication, using the same data set, Scandone (2020) also explored the concept of reclaiming 'culture' and revisiting ethnic identity assertions at the transition between school and university.

Finally, Floya Anthias (2002) and Bethan Harries (2017) studied young people's experiences of ethnicity, exclusion, and racism and how these are narratively constructed through

[10] Jaspal's (2013) discussion of the identities of British-born Sikhs aged 18-27 may also be valuable to those interested in the continuity and distinctiveness of collective identities.

individuals' accounts. Anthias' study of British-born youth (16-25 years old) of Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot, Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds was conducted in 1994-8 when most of the young adults who participated in my project were being born and the political and discursive contexts of the UK were different, and thus, its specific findings, understandably so, do not always reflect the experiences or sentiments shared by mine or Harries' participants. Nonetheless, the ways in which Anthias questions the usefulness of a decontextualised notion of 'identity' is certainly very pertinent to the arguments in this chapter and the thesis more broadly. She observes that how her project participants narrate their belonging and non-belonging could not be expressed through the notion of 'identity' and, instead, she considers narratives of location and positionality as a useful means to understanding the processes and outcomes of collective identity. Anthias argues for the importance of the relational, situational, and locational aspects of the story one tells about oneself and the conditions under which such an account is given. Harries, in a similar manner, sets out to move away from an abstracted notion of identity to focus on 'lived identities'. In her project, she studied young adults from a range of ethnic and economic backgrounds between the ages of 20 and 30. It should be noted that some of the participants of her study, unlike those in mine, were born outside of the UK and migrated as teenagers. While primarily in the context of experiences and articulations of race and the navigating of identities within the city space, Harries' work, in parallel with my research, draws attention to immigrant-background young adults' agency through resisting imposed identifications, claiming multi-faceted identities, and naming oppressive behaviour and oppressors. Both Anthias and Harries, instead of using the concept of identity as a starting point, explore identity and identification through experiences and narratives of race and ethnicity, which reflects my conceptualisation of cultural identity and self-identification[11] as well as my epistemological approach. What, however, differentiates my study from Anthias' and Harries' contributions is that it offers an exploration of a wider range of forms of cultural heritage across a wider context of the UK, as opposed to specific city centres—London, for Anthias, and Manchester, for Harries.

[11] See Chapter 3.

So, while, as mentioned above, there are limitations and challenges to identifying research outputs pertaining to young adulthood and this chapter will certainly not include all of them, the few examples discussed above are representative of a trend present also in a broader body of literature studying immigrant-background populations of different ages in the UK. Such research tends to define its perimeters by focusing on specific social positionings or categories that are believed to describe those of immigrant background. When qualitative studies of British-born children of immigrants are considered, this has been done by concentrating on those associated—via self-identification or researcher's assumption—with certain national backgrounds (e.g., Barber, 2015a, 2015b; Eid & Sallabank, 2021; Mukherjee, 2021; Scandone, 2020, 2022), religious groups (e.g., M. Bhambra, 2022; Bhimji, 2008; Jaspal, 2013; Kapinga et al., 2022; V. L. Lam et al., 2020; Ramji, 2006; Redclift et al., 2022; Whittaker, 2019), geographical regions of 'origin' (e.g., Jaspal & Coyle, 2010b; Mas Giralt, 2013; Saini, 2022), or diasporic communities (Mukherjee, 2021; Redclift et al., 2022). Quantitative researchers, naturally, have also relied on this kind of categorising often operationalising these complex positionings and deploying them as variables in comparative analyses (e.g., Lee, 2019; Platt, 2014). I do not want to disregard here the implications of power and privilege, as well as disadvantage and injustice, associated with occupying particular social locations, or indeed an intersection of such locations, in specific discursive contexts and in specific moments in history (Mason, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 2006). I understand that, in many of the papers cited, such social positionings seem to match participants' self-identifications and these positionings, while socially constructed, are also lived, perceived, and experienced, and therefore, not dismissible as meaningless descriptors. Nonetheless, I argue that more attention could be dedicated to challenging and destabilising these descriptors early in research projects, e.g., through approaching recruitment critically, to avoid conflating social locations with belonging, identification, and attachment, and to invite possible accounts of non-belonging, disidentification, and detachment, as well as ambiguity, confusion, and denial, that are far less common in research on cultural heritage and identity (Anthias, 2002; Calgar, 1997). I have yet to find a qualitative research paper on the topic where the authors would describe the experiences and identities of those occupying certain social locations (e.g., nationality, race, linguistic or religious background) without resorting to including that characteristic as their selection criterion or making a decision to recruit from within ethnic,

religious, diasporic, or linguistic communities.[12] To illustrate, what I am proposing here is that, for example, those who do not self-identify as Muslim and do not attend a mosque, but perhaps come from families that practice Islam, might bring insight into studies of Muslimhood and religiosity amongst descendants of immigrants. Similarly, those who did not attend a complementary school, I argue, are as important to studies of linguistic heritage maintenance and non-maintenance as those who studied their heritage language formally. There is still a lot we do not know about those who choose to, or feel a need to, disassociate and form identities that transcend these social descriptors and encapsulate uniquely intersectional and hybrid positionings.

Having familiarised myself with a broad body of literature concerning cultural identifications and heritages of British-born descendants of immigrants of various ages, I believe that it could benefit from the inclusion of studies that research these populations across their different positionings and avoid prescriptive concentrations on immigrant-background individuals' specific identifications or group memberships—be it in relation to nationality, class, religion, or race (Smith, 2007). The limited range of qualitative research that focuses on the experiences and narratives of young adults (18-29 years old) with migratory backgrounds in the UK, as presented in this section, suggests that certain heritages (e.g., Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Muslim) are afforded research attention while others remain underrepresented in academic writing. This practice of defining study participants based on specific social positionings not only means that some are studied and better understood and some are not, but it also implies the commonality of experiences that, in some research, seems to be assumed as originating from a degree of membership, belonging, or identification with a group, community, or collective identity. In the project reported here, by not identifying any specific ethnic, religious, or nationality group as the subject of study, which has been the case in most research on the topic so far, I hope to be able to reveal parallels and divergences in young adults' experiences and show how they transcend assigned social and geographical positionings and exercise agency in their self-identifications and relationship with parental cultural heritage. Aware of the biases that recruiting participants through 'community'

[12] I acknowledge Scandone's (2020) careful consideration of her recruitment practices and her use of open-ended interview questions to facilitate identifications transcending social positionings and categories.

networks and channels (e.g., religious circles, complementary schools, charities focusing on immigrants from specific countries or regions) and that using language that implies expectations of specific identifications could mean to this objective, I aim to address this challenge in the field by implementing a research design welcoming of those from a variety of backgrounds and inviting them to refer to their social locations and cultural identities if and when it serves a purpose in their narratives.

2.3. Reviewing common research approaches to studying cultural identification and cultural heritage

The ways in which populations with immigrant backgrounds have been accessed and conceptualised, and, in some research, essentialised, might—to an extent—be rooted in how cultural and ethnic identities have been theorised historically. While more prevalent in quantitative research, approaches such as Phinney's (1989) ethnic identity model, Berry's (1992) acculturation, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory, and Benet-Martínez et al.'s (2002) construct of bicultural identity integration have been influential on how British-born children of immigrants continue to be studied and their identities understood (Dai et al., 2015; V. L. Lam et al., 2020; Robinson, 2006, 2009; Saeed et al., 1999), also through the lens of qualitative methodologies (Cavdar, 2020). These, N.B. widely contested in recent scholarship, theoretical frameworks equate identity with memberships and social (and geographical) locations, assume cultures to be separate entities linked to nation-states, religions, or ethnic communities, and fail to make room for contextualisation of identity within the power differentials and directionalities that are embedded in the process of constructing identities that go beyond assumptions of cultural binaries (see Naujoks, 2010; Vora et al., 2019 for a broader critique). Even when acknowledging the fluid and multidimensional nature of identity, researchers have discussed it as a characteristic that can be used "strategically and deliberately by youth to achieve particular goals in specific situations" (Ajrouch, 2000; Platt, 2014; Sundar, 2008, p. 255), potentially disregarding the contextual and discursive obstacle to freely alter identities if and when that could prove beneficial. In this section, I dare to disagree with Landberg et al.'s (2018) call for more

research on identity and acculturation in emerging adulthood globally,[13] and, as has been done in many fields of research (e.g., Bhatia, 2002; Dervin, 2011; Doucerain et al., 2013; Guarnaccia & Hausmann-Stabile, 2016; Lazarus, 1997), challenge acculturation and suggest engaging with alternative theoretical approaches to exploring and conceptualising identity. I pay particular attention, here, to empirical research concerned with British-born children of immigrants and their accounts of identity and cultural heritage.

Identities and "narratives are produced in relation to socially available and hegemonic discourses and practices", and therefore, rather than studied in isolation or as correlated to other social characteristics, I argue, they cannot be removed from the intersubjective and unique realities within which they are constructed, communicated, and re-articulated (Anthias, 2002, p. 511). As Bonnett and Nayak (2003) suggest in relation to race, cultural identities encompass an extraordinary set of diverse subject positions and social experiences, and cannot be grounded categories, since, as a sociopolitical construct, rather than describing something existing in nature, ready to be discovered and studied, they relate to internally-gradated, intersectionally influenced multiple and various versions of what it can mean to be black or white. Or, in the context of my project, what it can mean to adopt certain self-identifications related to nationality, religion, race etc. and to maintain or forego aspects of parental cultural heritage. The transnational lens has been commonly adopted by migration researchers and geographers to consider the dynamic and agentic ways in which individuals with migratory backgrounds negotiate their multiple identities within and across different social contexts (e.g., Bolognani, 2014; Eisikovits, 2014; Kapinga et al., 2022; Kebede, 2017; Levitt, 2009; Reynolds & Zontini, 2016; Ryan et al., 2012; Somerville, 2008; Whittaker, 2019). In a step forward from theories attempting to stabilise and quantify identity, the transnational perspective focuses on networks and social fields and how ideas, practices, and heritages are exchanged and transformed in ways that challenge and defy the structures of nation-states (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). The construction of "transnational social fields" opens space for understandings of community and collective identity that extend beyond a single locality (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1007), however, through the lens of transnationalism,

[13] I should acknowledge here that the authors, to their credit, also encourage future researchers to consider intersectional approaches to identity and to situate their projects within the studied contexts.

identities are often still interpreted as grounded in group membership, communities, or social organisation.

Intersectionality approaches have been another way to destabilise concepts of singular identity and incorporate multilocationality (here, in a form of social locations) of identification into research on children of immigrants and cultural heritage (Ahn et al., 2022; Anthias, 2012; Mirza, 2013; Moffitt et al., 2020; Scandone, 2022; Werbner, 2013). Coined by Crenshaw (2000, p. 7),

> [I]ntersectionality is a conceptualization of the problem that attempts to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like.

The intersectional lens has proven useful in problematising assumptions of homogeneity of experiences of occupying a social location and allowed for a more nuanced and complex view of the multiple and, indeed, intersecting tensions, inequalities, as well as privileges that access and ascription to specific material and symbolic spaces (or what Anthias, 1998, p. 508 describes as 'relational ontological spaces') mean for individual lived experiences and outcomes (Anthias, 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2011). In a similar way to intersectionality, the concept of hybridity of identity, another influential framework for exploring immigrant-background individuals' identities, "destabilise[s] or subvert[s] the hierarchies imposed on differences" (Calgar, 1997, p. 172). While the idea of 'hybrid' or 'hybridised' identities has been raised in research on British-born individuals with migratory backgrounds it has often been mentioned in passing rather than used as a source of theoretical grounding (e.g., M. Bhambra, 2022; Hussain & Bagguley, 2005; Mau, 2014). Likely due to its origins in postcolonial thought (Alexander, 2010), the concept of cultural hybridity has been commonly used in explorations of diasporic and racial identities (e.g., Ademolu, 2021; Alexander & Kim, 2013; Dwyer, 2000; Saini, 2022; Tate, 2005; Werbner, 2004), however, its potential has been overlooked by researchers concerned with inquiries that are not focused specifically on race and with the more recent migratory movements and identities produced by those who were born in a different context to that in which their parents were born and grew up. My review of the

literature reveals the capacity for more research that explores the identities of British-born children of immigrants through the lenses of intersectionality and hybridity, especially where individuals in their young adulthood are considered. As discussed before, the life stage between adolescence and adulthood can be marked by a sense of ambiguity, in-betweenness, and a level of independence in defining oneself. It is through breaking away from the idea of studying attachment to groups, cultures, or a somewhat stable identities and, instead, letting go of assumptions of origins and homogeneity that research concerning young immigrant-background people could become more inclusive of how they desire, prefer, and sometimes feel forced to, identify.

"Asking someone a question about their 'identity' often produces a blank stare, a puzzled silence or a glib and formulaic response" (Anthias, 2002, p. 492), and therefore, as I reviewed the literature, I was interested not only in how notions of identity are conceptualised but also how they are accessed. Floya Anthias (2002, p. 492) suggests, and I agree, that even research participants "will know that what they say is situational and that their stories are not fixed but are continually being revised and changed". I argue that the focus on cultural and ethnic identities has made it difficult for researchers to capture the dynamic, complex, and changeable nature of self-identification. Over the past 20 years or so, this challenge has been addressed across different disciplines through, for example, the use of narrative and visual methods, ethnographies, and translanguaging practices (e.g., Bagnoli, 2004; Byrne, 2003; Dervin & Risager, 2015; Harries, 2017; Hemming & Madge, 2012; Johansen, 2014; Valentine, 2007), however, there remains a relative dearth of innovative qualitative approaches in research on young adults' identities and lived experiences (Schwab & Syed, 2015). Identifications, such as 'British', 'Muslim', 'pan-Asian', or 'Black', to name a few, as descriptors, are also elements of a dynamic system of languages, where their connotations may shift, thus, influencing one's narrative account of her identity. As researchers, we rely on a shared heuristic value of 'identity', which is a concept that the participants can only ground in cognitive and discursive repertoires available to them (Anthias, 2002).[14] I suggest,

[14] These repertoires are also specific to the studied context. For example, Kebede's (2017) study of transnational identities among second-generation Ethiopian-American professionals in Washington, DC revealed examples of immigrant-background individuals self-identifying as 'third culture kids' and 'bicultural', whereas, in the UK, terms such as 'citizens of the world' might be more common (see Chapter 7 in this thesis).

therefore, approaching the topic of identity and identification through an exploration of the changing roles of parental cultural heritage and the relationships that British-born children of immigrants have formed with their parents' cultural practices, resources, and embodied inheritances.

It is not unheard of for scholars interested in this population to consider different forms of parental cultural heritage as relevant to the processes of identity development and re-articulation. Researchers have made inferences about immigrant-background individuals' cultural identities based on their experiences of and level of attachment and non-attachment to linguistic heritage (Jaspal & Coyle, 2010b), religious beliefs (Kapinga et al., 2022), conservative views of gender roles (Scandone, 2022), embodied practices (Bhimji, 2008; Mirza, 2013), music and film (Mukherjee, 2021), traditional celebrations and cultural events (M. Bhambra, 2022), sometimes reporting on several of these at a time (Barber, 2015a; Jaspal & Coyle, 2010a; Ramji, 2006). Nonetheless, where cultural heritage is assumed as a proxy for cultural identity, there is often little problematisation of the potential disjuncture between practices (*doing*) and identity (*being*) (Kapinga et al., 2022). Moreover, cultural heritage acquisition is often constructed in research as determined by the demands of the social context, leaving little space for identifying agency. Peggy Levitt (2009, p. 1238), for example, after studying children of immigrants of different ages in the US, argues that

> The second generation is situated between a variety of different and often competing generational, ideological and moral reference points, including those of their parents, their grandparents and their own real and imagined perspectives about their multiple homelands.

There is evidence to suggest that these expectations that one feels from within their social circle and from the system that favours narrow and uncomplex identifications can lead to identity conflict, as well as family conflicts that centre around cultural heritage maintenance and transfer (Aboulhassan & Brumley, 2019; Archer, 2001). However, within such a portrayal of the relationship with parental cultural heritage, young people across ethnically and culturally diverse groups have often been seen as passive (Reynolds, 2010). I recognise the need for future research to go beyond acknowledging the pressures and expectations within which relations with ancestral cultures and practices are embedded, and to further

investigate the individualised nature of responsibility, guilt, and shame that those experiencing cultural in-betweenness feel and internalise. Even more importantly, I suggest that the process of navigating parental cultural heritage by young people is problematised, so they are not conceived of in research as passive, but it is also understood that cultural identities are not entirely a matter of choice either (White & Wyn, 2008). Regardless of what Kasnitz et al. (2009, p. 357 in Kebede, 2017) suggest, they are not simply "free to ascertain aspects of their parents' way and to reject others – allowing this cultural creativity to flower", instead, they are facing the task of trying to do so under the social conditions that they have limited control of.

To sum up, while quantifying and stabilising identities cannot be called a thing of the past, there has been a lot of progress made in how immigrant-background individuals' identities are conceptualised and studied. Through the perspectives of transnationalism, intersectionality, and hybridity, researchers have been able to contextualise identities within the multiple physical and symbolic locations that those who carry them may occupy and to destabilise assumptions of group homogeneity and hierarchy of difference. The notion of cultural heritage in its different forms has been present in such research and has helped access identifications through accounts of lived experiences that are easier to articulate than the abstract concept of identity. Nonetheless, these have been sometimes used uncritically to translate attachment and non-attachment to cultural heritage as a sign of adopting certain identities (although not always, and Afshar, 2008; Ahmed, 2009; Haw, 2009; Knowles & Alexander, 2005; and Mirza, 2013 deserve a notable mention for their critical work on culture, heritage, and identity). The further problematisation of the link between cultural heritage and cultural identity, as well as cultural community and collective identity, is vital for exploring ways in which the complex and dynamic self-identifications of immigrant-background individuals are represented in academic research. In this project, I start by inquiring into parental cultural heritage and notions of belonging, without a specific assumption of the role of identity in these, to allow 'identity' to emerge if and when appropriate, and potentially in forms that transcend the usual forms of identification young adults are often expected to share. Starting with the open-ended conceptualisation of identity, heritage, and community, I also ensure I design a study that invites participants to engage with narrating and re-narrate

identity and culture over time and gives them tools to appreciate and question not only what they share but also how and how much they share at a time.

2.4. Contributing new theoretical and methodological approaches to researching immigrant-background young adults' self-identifications and cultural heritage

The calls for new perspectives on what it can mean to be 'British' or 'ethnic minority', how people with migratory backgrounds can feel and claim a sense of belonging in the UK, and how the vision of identity could shift away from a demand to conform to narrow cultural norms have been present in research for decades now (Modood et al., 1994). Nonetheless, there is still relatively little that is known about how cultural identifications and cultural heritages are constituted and negotiated in the lives of immigrant-background young adults in the UK and worldwide (Landberg et al., 2018). Research has shown that individuals in their late teens through their twenties enter a key identity development period when they are likely to reassess their allegiances, question normative expectations, seek more independence, and wonder about their self-definitions. I suggested here that those born in the UK to immigrant parents experience these processes at a unique intersection of often competing and difficult to navigate and reconcile identifications related to society's and their own understandings of nationality, citizenship, cultural background, ethnicity, and race. While some research outputs on the topic have considered the potential for fluidity and the multifaceted nature of identity, for example, by reference to the concepts of intersectionality and hybridity, I observed that there is scope for a more deeply theoretical inquiry into British-born immigrant-background young adults' self-identifications. One that avoids deploying 'identity' as its foundational concept and problematises the link between cultural practices and heritages, group membership, and imposed and claimed identifications. The highly contingent concepts of culture, parental cultural heritage, collective identity, and self-identification will be further explored in Chapter 3 where—drawing on the works of Judith Butler, Mikhail Bakhtin, Homi Bhabha, and Stuart Hall—I will outline an original theoretical framework that, first, locates narratives of cultural heritage as negotiated through social interactions and contexts and considers individuals' agency within those processes, to, then, turn to the concept of self-identification and hybridity and consider what heritage and

identity can mean for formulations of collective identity and community. This thesis aims to address the following questions:

> *How is parental cultural heritage constituted, experienced, and negotiated in immigrant-background young adults' lives? How do these processes inform the ways in which immigrant-background young adults formulate their self-identifications? How can immigrant-background young adults exercise agency when navigating these processes?*

These questions will be further nuanced in the next chapter to formulate questions that reference the different theoretical lenses foundational to the analysis and conclusions put forward in this manuscript. In response to the criticisms of the "narrow methodological repertoire" in young adulthood research constraining "our ability to answer complex questions about the process, content, and structure of ethnic identity development" (Syed, 2015, p. 28), this thesis offers an innovative methodological approach (as detailed in Chapter 4) that marries grounded theory and narrative inquiry to elicit often tacit and never-before-articulated narratives and understandings of culture, identity, and heritage, and to encourage reflectiveness, analytical engagement, and re-narration over time.

CHAPTER 3: THEORISING THE LINK BETWEEN PARENTAL CULTURAL HERITAGE, SELF-IDENTIFICATION, AND COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

As emphasised in the previous chapter, the boundaries between cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity are porous and blurry. The concepts have been widely theorised from different ontological standpoints and operationalised as lenses for interrogation of the experiences of those from immigrant and diasporic backgrounds (Bhabha, 1994; Brah, 1996; Gilroy, 1997; Hall, 1990; Melucci, 2015). Nonetheless, I argue, the relationship between these three concepts, what they represent, and how they—as social constructs—shape the lives of those who we study need to be further problematised and destabilised. Postmodernist and postcolonial thinkers have certainly set strong foundations for undertaking such a theorisation, as they brought forward the notions of culture that is perpetually in motion in time and space (Bhabha, 1994), cultural boundaries that are "contested, fragile as well as delicate" (Benhabib, 2002, p. 7), and identity that is never "fully unified, completed, and secure" (Hall, 1992, p. 277). The understanding of cultural difference, collective identity, ethnicity, and race as complicated, uneven, and animated through and within social processes and interactions, rather than self-evident, objective, or homogenous, is essential to this theoretical (and empirical, in the consecutive chapters of the manuscript) exploration of one's encounters with cultural heritage through and against the different and multiple forms of identity and identification chosen or imposed on them (Dein, 2006; Gunaratnam, 2003). I echo Stuart Hall et al. (1997, p. 34) in acknowledging terms like 'culture', 'race',[15] and 'ethnicity' as contingent but also useful when alternatives are scarce:

> Ethnicity is the only terminology we have to describe cultural specificity, so one has to go back to it, if one doesn't want to land up with an empty cosmopolitanism – 'citizens of the world' as the only identity. But I don't go back to the concept in its original form. I use it with a line drawn through it. The diaspora has a line through it too: in the era of globalization, we are all becoming diasporic.

The unstable nature of culture that is perpetually in motion is not without its limits though. "The past narrows the field of contingency" (Hall et al., 1997, p. 35). Positionalities are related

[15] The concept of race is discussed in more detail further in this thesis (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.).

to particular histories which are “what makes your difference different from my difference” (Hall et al., 1997, p. 34). Collective projects, and therefore collective identities, while open to repositioning, have been historically present and continue to shape individuals’ identities and ways in which they self-identify. “The longer you live them, the more historical weight they have” (Hall et al., 1997, p. 35).

Historically, culture has often been defined as “a series of traits shared by a group of individuals” (Quijada, 2008, p. 223), “the socially learned ways of living found in human societies” (Harris, 1999, p. 19), “the distinctive customs, values, beliefs, knowledge, art and language of a society or community” (VandenBos, 2007, p. 250), or “feelings about, interests in, or identification with members of one’s group” (Frisby, 1992, p. 533), reinforcing a concept of culture intrinsically linked to group membership, shared identification, and commonality of traits, traditions, and practices. Such a view of culture is not to be disregarded. It has been present in academic writing and public discourse, and has shaped the discursive and linguistic repertoires available to those attempting to describe and make sense of their experiences of culture, identity, and heritage within the landscapes of uneven power dynamics and hegemonic structures influencing the notions of membership, citizenship, and belonging (Anthias, 2001; Mason, 2000). As Bhabha (1994, p. 237) points out reflecting on Fanon’s (1986) ‘The fact of blackness’, “despite the pedagogies of human history, the performative discourse of the liberal West, its quotidian conversation and comments, reveal the cultural supremacy and racial typology upon which the universalism of Man is founded”. Beagan (2018, p. 123), however, challenges a concept of culture as “overdetermining of the lives of Others”. Like her, in my theorisation—drawing on Judith Butler’s, Mikhail Bakhtin’s, and Homi Bhabha’s work—I emphasise the emergent nature of culture and inquire into the agentic ways in which individuals navigate and reshape the blurry lines between cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity. I do not deny the value that collective identities can have for individuals and political organising, but I question the prominence of certain lines of commonality (e.g., race, nationality, ethnicity) and highlight the role of discourse and social norms in extrapolating relationality between people’s pasts, origins, looks, behaviours, and their identifications and community memberships.

This current chapter introduces the theoretical lenses that will be used throughout the rest of the thesis to explore British-born immigrant-background young adults' relationships with parental cultural heritage, their agentic and dialogic ways of navigating it, and their identifications alongside, or oftentimes against, it. I emphasise here the value of a broader inquiry into and problematisation of parental cultural heritage as a concept and a lived experience. Rather than, from the outset, focusing on the narratives of cultural heritage as a portal into individuals' identities, I am interested more in the roles and meanings of heritage itself in young adults' stories and how these are negotiated within a range of social contexts and the rules, expectations, and histories inscribed in them. While also relevant to the project, instead of being one of the initial subjects of inquiry, 'identity' emerges through discussions of heritage, community, and belonging and through the notion of agentic, yet still contingent, self-identification. The theoretical framework proposed here finds its conceptual foundations in Stuart Hall's definitions of culture, cultural identity, identification, and collective identity. It, then, considers these concepts as it builds on Butler's theory of responsibility, Bakhtin's dialogism, and Bhabha's cultural hybridity to position and conceptualise parental cultural heritage within the discursive and dialogic frameworks that both shape it and allow for its reclaiming and reformulation, as well as to consider multiple forms of individual agency that one can draw upon in the process of self-defining. As I challenge the idea of a straightforward connection between culture and identity, I find it constructive to draw on theorists who explicitly engage with cultural studies and postcolonial thought (Hall, Bhabha) and those who, while also interested in the complex processes of identity formation, agency, and social interaction, do not (Bakhtin, Butler). This chapter aims to discuss Butler's, Bakhtin's, and Bhabha's contributions to the framework and highlight the complementary nature and relevance of their work to destabilising the sometimes-assumed connection between cultural heritage, group membership, and identification. Drawing on the works of these three theorists, the chapter also defines the concept of agency and positions it as key to the exploration of cultural hybridity, self-identification, and the relationship with cultural heritage. Hall's definitions are interwoven and discussed with reference to Butler, Bakhtin, and Bhabha throughout.

3.1. Parental cultural heritage, identity, responsibility, and Judith Butler

My conceptualisation of cultural heritage sits somewhere between theories of heritage as a discursive, co-constructed practice (Hall, 1999) and those that perhaps focus more on 'heritage' as a product emphasising *what*—be it in a tangible or intangible form—has been shared over time and between generations (Scarre et al., 2019), rather than *how*, *why,* and *between whom* more specifically this process of sharing has occurred or has been discontinued. In this project, parental cultural heritage can refer to a variety of practices, characteristics, and objects that encapsulate parents' cultural backgrounds and upbringing with a specific focus on the aspects of their cultures they carry forward and—consciously or unconsciously—transfer onto their children. These can include embodied characteristics (e.g., skin colour, facial features, hair type), values and beliefs (e.g., religiosity, family or gender roles), and practices (e.g., celebrations, language use, diet, dress, rituals, dating and marriage practices), and can be inherited through adoption (i.e., when the child embraces the element of cultural heritage), expectation (when the child might decide not to continue certain cultural elements, but is aware that the family expects her to), or imposition (when natural or agreed discontinuation might be occurring, but a cultural identity or practice are imposed on an individual within a social context). Parental cultural heritage also encompasses the embodied, performed, and lived aspects of the social constructs of 'race' and 'ethnicity' as signifiers and modes of representation (Hall, 1996b, 1997). It does not always carry a clear meaning in itself; it can operate as a symbol that one can use to transmit meaning, but that is also open to interpretation and resignification by others. While cultural heritage can be "a source of ontological security for minorities in a society where other citizens have distinct physical characteristics, cultural beliefs, informal practices, religions and languages" (Seglow, 2019, p. 13), Hall (1999) also points to the capacity for emphasising some events and foreshortening or silencing others in the process of heritage and collective social memory construction, drawing attention to heritage's malleability and individuals' agency in shaping which aspects of parental culture are maintained. Scarre et al. (2019, p. 3) suggest that "not all cultural traditions deserve to be handed on", to which I add, that also—regardless of the value one or the community might attach to a resource, tradition, or practice—not all heirs deserve the burden and guilt often associated with the task of preserving cultural traditions. Especially, when their understandings of culture and identity, and the context in which these are

negotiated, differ from those of their ancestors. In this thesis, therefore, while also considering how immigrant-background young adults relate to their parental cultural heritage based on its merit or a lack thereof (e.g., through questioning gendered family roles), I am even more interested in the processes, subjectivities, emotions, and power dynamics involved in the development of the complex relationships individuals have with different aspects of their cultural upbringing.

Judith Butler's (2005) theory of responsibility rooted in one's inability to ever fully account for his or her origins provides an effective framework for exploring the social conditions within which parental cultural heritages are navigated and can become a struggle to embrace, perform, and reconcile. According to Butler's (2005) theorisation in *Giving an Account of Oneself*, individuals are rendered into being through and within norms and discourses and their selves are formed and reiterated in relation to dynamic changes within the social realm. Butler's notion of identity describes it as situated within the confines of sociality where behaviours, responses, narratives, and norms continue to be re-articulated in a chain of citationality. Paradoxically, however, Butler argues, it is also this embeddedness within discourse that is a precondition for individuals' narrative capacity, agency, and them assuming responsibility for their actions. Responsibility manifests through this act of responsiveness to the other within sociality and through engagement with the chain of citationality. Parental cultural heritage, too, is expected to be citationally reiterated, whether it is, for example, an expectation set by the parents or the family that the child will continue speaking parents' mother tongue in the country of resettlement, or an expectation coming from a member of the public who assumes he will hear someone speak with a certain accent based on that person's skin colour. So, the process of navigating the cultural resources and expectations happens within a social context that constitutes the subject. Nonetheless, "to claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined" (Butler, 1995, p. 46). Butler does not deny the possibility of the subjects working on the self, re-articulating their positionalities, and acting critically under the conditions permitted within discourse. While this capacity for agency in a reflexive subject is something I will return to later in this chapter (see section 3.4), what is key from Butler's (2005, p. 19) work for the development of my theoretical framework at this stage is the emergence of the subject into "this primary condition of unfreedom", where one's origins, story, and identity are, to an extent, forever ambiguous, and where one

struggles “with the unchosen conditions of one’s life” and feels responsible and accountable for something she cannot ever fully know.

Cultural identities, in a similar way to cultural heritage, are negotiated within this ambiguity, unfreedom, and interrelationality. According to Stuart Hall (1996a, p. 6, original emphasis),

> Identities are, as it were, the positions which the subject is obliged to take up while always ‘knowing’ (the language of consciousness here betrays us) that they are representations, that representation is always constructed across a ‘lack’, across a division, from the place of the Other, and thus can never be adequate—identical—to the subject processes which are invested in them…[A]n effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is ‘hailed’, but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an *articulation*, rather than a one-sided process.

Hall’s definition of identity as a process equips it with similar capacities to those already discussed as features of parental cultural heritage. The interpellation of the self, rather than a singular event, as Butler (2005) argues, is an ongoing process continually reiterated—but with potential for re-articulation—throughout our lives, and both identity formation and the relationship with cultural heritage are embedded in this cycle and subject to agentic reshaping. However, cultural identity and cultural heritage are neither synonymous, nor necessarily consequential. Seyla Benhabib’s (1992, p. 161) discussion of identity and choice is helpful in problematising this link:

> Identity does not refer to my potential for choice alone, but to the actuality of choices, namely to how I, as a finite, concrete, embodied individual, shape and fashion the circumstances of my birth and family, linguistic, cultural and gender identity into a coherent narrative that stands as my life’s story…The question becomes: how does this finite embodied creature constitute into a coherent narrative those episodes of choice and limitation, agency and suffering, initiative and dependence?

Benhabib recognises, as Butler (2005) does, the emergence of the subject into an unknown and unchosen inherited reality within which certain elements are embodied and rigid and

choices—agency—are not limitless. The question that Benhabib poses is an important one as it suggests the potential for clashing of the finite embodied inheritance and identity and wonders about the impossibility of the task of coherently giving an account of oneself. Performing or embodying certain aspects of cultural heritage (*doing*) does not by itself imply specific identification, cultural orientation, group membership (*being*), or being in the process of achieving such (*becoming*). It, nonetheless, constitutes the context for individual and collective agentic identifying, and therefore, is deeply and—as I will soon argue drawing on Bakhtin—dialogically entangled in this process. I argue, while both identity and cultural heritage can be negotiated, destabilised, and reclaimed within the limits of sociality, the processes of their re-articulation can be different. I suggest that the consequences and emotional weight related to, for example, discontinuing the family tradition of wearing a head covering or observing Ramadan, might differ from redefining or eschewing one's identification as a Muslim. I also offer, following Butler, that these processes originate from a sense of responsibility towards the other, but it is also within this condition of responsibility that parental cultural heritage and cultural identity can be re-articulated in ways that challenge the chain of citationality.

3.2. Parental cultural heritage, identity, dialogic relations, and Mikhail Bakhtin

What cannot be overemphasised in this theory of cultural heritage negotiation that I am putting forward here is the context of social injustice and hegemony within which this process occurs; this "regime of truth [that] offers a framework for the scene of recognition, delineating who will qualify as a subject of recognition and offering available norms for the act of recognition" (Butler, 2005, p. 22). The theoretical capacity of an individual to articulate culture, identity, and norms in a reshaped form is not synonymous with the ease of access to social contexts and resources that could make it happen, especially for those marginalised through discourse. Immigrant-background individuals, as they navigate their experiences of parental cultural heritage, responsibility, and being constituted within social norms, are often reminded through discourse and interpersonal relations that their origins are difficult to erase or reframe 'labels of difference' and an unescapable context for their social interactions. Cultures and identities, thus, are experienced through the lens of the other and "constructed through, not outside, difference" (Butler, 1993; Hall, 1996a, p. 4). Identities and the

relationship with cultural heritage are also situational; constituted with the awareness of the ways in which one is categorised by discourse and within specific interactions in named sociospatial contexts (Dein, 2006). Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptualisation of the self as entangled in a network of dialogues that it also participates in, not only supports this earlier discussed notion of identity and the relationship with cultural heritage that are never finalised, but also provides substantial foundations for the consideration of the multiplicity of actors and players involved in the process of identity and heritage re-articulation. This, in turn, invites a more nuanced theorisation of the self within a social context and discourse. Therefore, upon originating from Butler's (2005) theory of responsibility within interpellated subjects that, notably, accounts for the role of intersubjectivity in the agentic reconciliation of the not self-grounded individual, I turn to Bakhtin's dialogism to interrogate and conceptualise this intersubjectivity further through the lens of dialogic relations.

Bakhtin's dialogism encompasses more than an act of conversational exchange. He argues that all sociocultural phenomena are constituted through an ongoing network of dialogues between social actors operating within and in relation to a multiplicity of discourses, languages, practices, and contextualities (Bakhtin, 1981). As such, dialogues are not dyadic phenomena, rather, they are manifold and, apart from encapsulating the utterance and the reply to it, they are composed of the complex relation between the two. "It is the relation that is most important of the three, for without it the other two would have no meaning. They would be isolated, and the most primary of Bakhtinian a prioris is that nothing is anything in itself" (Holquist, 2002, p. 36).[16] The subject's responsiveness and responsibility towards parental cultural heritage, therefore, is constituted within the broader relations of power, privilege, and marginality, but also within more specific, sometimes even named, social, cultural, ecological, and temporal conditions of the intersubjective exchange (i.e., who is asking, in what context, what belief systems and expectations might they be bringing into this dialogue etc.). Parental cultural heritage can be the utterance, the reply, and the relation; "[a]fter all, the utterance arises out of th[e] dialogue as a continuation of it and as rejoinder

[16] A kind of relation that James Joyce (1922/2009) also eloquently reflected on in *Ulysses*, "each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity".

to it–it does not approach the object from the sidelines" (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 276–277). In Bakhtin's theorisation, the subject can author herself thanks to the virtue of 'outsidedness' that affords her an 'excess of seeing' (de Peuter, 1998). He distinguishes between the 'I-for-myself' and the 'I-for-others' and suggests that it is through dialogue that the I-for-myself can gain the ability to gaze from the outside, which Bakhtin describes as 'transgrediance', and see herself as an intersubjective social actor (Bakhtin, 1990). In this way, also, gaining a level of understanding of the dialogic relations she is entangled in, realising that "[t]he dialogical-narrative self is not a fixed text, but is a multitude of situated, dialogic re-interpretations, re-ordered with each telling and hearing in changing social contexts" (de Peuter, 1998, p. 11). Parental cultural heritage can be reordered and retold too, playing an important part in this back and forth between the I-for-myself and the I-for-others and in the constitution of the dialogic self and cultural identity.

While acknowledging the dialogic exchange between the I-for-myself and the I-for-others, Bakhtin (1986, 1990) sees the formulation of selfhood through the process of transgrediance and situates it at the boundary between the self and the other. A boundary that, in his theorisation, is characterised by a multiplicity of "microdialogues" and by dispersion and incoherence (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 59); a boundary where the hegemonic privileging of certain social actors and narratives does not necessarily translate into their dominant position in the process of authoring the dialogic self (de Peuter, 1998). So, while "'[b]eing' for Bakhtin…is, not just an event, but an event that is shared…a simultaneity…always co-being" (Holquist, 2002, p. 24), his 'co-being' does not imply formulation of relationality and shared identification along any specific aspects of social dialogue. In this sense, Bakhtin's dialogic co-being is similar to what Hall (1996a, p. 4) argues about the role of history and culture in identity constitution:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.

When interpreted through a Bakhtinian lens, this "origin in a historical past" as well as "how we have been represented" are utterances in a dialogic exchange to which the self is connected through a relation. There is still space, however, for the self to produce a reply within these conditions and to affect—if not decide on—the way it represents itself. The concept of an incoherent, somewhat messy, boundary, or a state of in-betweenness, within this process of dialogic formulation of the self has been influential in the postcolonial destabilising of the notion of cultural identity. In the next section of this chapter, I will introduce Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity, to further theorise this dialogic, but not deterministic, function of culture—and more specifically parental cultural heritage—in the formulation of agentic identities in relation to the implied, imposed, imagined, and sometimes pursued and desired constructs of collectivity, community, and group membership.

3.3. Collective identity, cultural hybridity, self-identification, and Homi Bhabha

So far, the concept of identity that I have been putting forward has been that of identity as increasingly fragmented and constantly subject to transformation across intersecting and antagonistic discourses, social locations, power relations, and practices (Hall, 1996a). Identity that is characterised by discontinuity and ruptures that challenge ideas of 'one experience' and 'shared identity' across groups of people (Hall, 1990). There is, however, even within such a conceptualisation of identity, a role that history, community, and ideas of sameness play in how one's attempts to secure a sense of self and groundedness. "Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories", Stuart Hall (1990, p. 225) argues, and the importance of finding a community of people with common cultural codes and historical experiences that can assume shared identifications to emerge as a representational force should not be disregarded or considered inauthentic of the self. Collective identities can provide "a constructed form of closure" even if based on a previous inscription or imposition of a fixed identity rooted in assumptions about shared cultural or ethnic origins (Anthias, 1999; Hall, 1996a, p. 5). Cultural identities are not, nonetheless, "a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common" (Hall, 1990, p. 223). Nor are they about a re-enactment of ancestral past through mere maintenance of cultural heritage. They are the

positionings one can adopt within the narratives of the past, but also within the relation and with adaptation to the present and future. The authentic life and self, as Bakhtin would have it (1984), is situational and can only be articulated through open-ended dialogue. In a similar way, Catherine Nash (2004) questions the view of cultures and identities as rooted in place and invites a rethinking of the relationship with a 'cultural origin' amid the hierarchal and complex interconnections between places and the implications of both colonialism and nationalism for the multi-dimensional experiencing of difference lived by people structured through class, gender, and race. A task that has also been undertaken by other theorists of race and ethnicity interested in "captur[ing] the fluid and unbounded flows, mixings and transgressions of both historically located and contemporary migrant and minority identities" and reclaiming and redefining 'diaspora' (Alexander, 2010, p. 494). The interrogation of the link between one's cultural identity and the concept of collective being and belonging which encapsulates shared histories, experiences, and origins is, therefore, key to a better understanding of one's situatedness and agency within the process of navigating parental cultural heritage, finding a relatable form of self-identification, and establishing a notion of collectivity that one can resonate with.

Homi Bhabha's (1990, 1994) concept of cultural hybridity positions culture in the 'third space', that, instead of being located between fixed and named 'originary moments', destabilises the notion of origin and boundary and focuses on the possibility arising from in-betweenness. In doing so, rather than emphasising the available identity outcomes that those living across different social locations, discourses, and sociocultural settings might access, it "gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation and representation" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). While initially introduced by Bhabha (1990) in the context of the colonial encounter to transgress the binaries of coloniser/colonised, black/white, the concept of cultural hybridity has also been used to understand the more recent processes of globalisation, resettlement, and mobility, and the power imbalances and discriminatory structures embedded within them (Bonnett & Nayak, 2003). Although it has been argued that, to an extent, all cultures are hybrid and that cultural hybridisation is not a uniquely diasporic experience (Brah, 1996), I will suggest, in this thesis, that hybridity of cultures and identities might be more prominent and influential for those born in a country of resettlement to immigrant parents than those born in that same sociocultural setting to a

family with a longstanding history of settlement there and interaction within that context. Perhaps those from immigrant backgrounds stand in front of the task of navigating a broader, likely more complex, but also potentially more open to something new and unrecognisable 'third space', as they dialogically and agentically come to negotiate parental cultural heritage and social norms, as well as the day-to-day interactions with peers, family, and authority figures. Bhabha's (1994) theory, importantly allows for the challenging of essentialised identities within the process of hybridity in favour of recognising the emergence of new positions and prioritising new forms of representation over the moments, histories, cultures, or traditions that they might be originating from. In this process of hybridisation and cultural heritage negotiation within the 'third space', or 'in-betweenness', as new identification possibilities arise, new communities and collectivities can be formed as well to challenge the essentialised forms of grouping within discourse. In the remainder of this section, as I continue to consider the role of cultural hybridity within this theoretical framework, I will focus on the notion of agentic (collective) self-identification and how it can be enabled and hindered within the 'third space'.

Identification, according to Stuart Hall (1996a, p. 3) is "a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption". He argues that "[t]here is always 'too much' or 'too little'—an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality". Both Hall and Bhabha express a preference for the concept of 'identification' over 'identity' claiming that it is better suited to encapsulate the "process of identifying with and through another object" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211) and to describe the discursive and psychoanalytical work behind this "signifying practice…[that] operates across difference" (Hall, 1996a, p. 3). They also both located the process of identification within the conditions of existence and the material and symbolic boundaries and resources that can limit and support it. Hall (1996a, p. 3) says it is "conditional, lodged in contingency", Bhabha (1990, p. 211) adds, "always ambivalent because of the intervention of the otherness". It is this contingent and relational, or dialogic, character of identification that makes it susceptible to alignment with a collective 'we':

> [I]dentifications belong to the imaginary; they are phantasmatic efforts of alignment, loyalty, ambiguous and cross-corporeal cohabitations, they unsettle the I; they are the

> sedimentation of the 'we' in the constitution of any I, the structuring present of alterity in the very formulation of the I. (Butler, 1993, p. 105)

The sedimentation of the 'we' within the 'I', that Butler talks about, can be perceived as limiting—a kind of stabilisation of the self or essentialisation through discourse—however, there can also be a sense of anchoring and 'homeliness' within such a positioning. Bhabha (1994, p. 9) suggests that the process of identification within the 'third space' involves an "estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extraterritorial and cross-cultural initiations". The process of cultural hybridity "opens up a 'space-inbetween'…both the return to an originary 'essentialist' self-consciousness as well as a release into an endlessly fragmented subject in 'process'" (Bhabha, 1996, p. 204). Within this opportunity for agency, reformulation, and dialogic cultural translation, there is also a challenge in finding and maintaining the fluidity of identity while accepting the self as dialogic and intersubjective; a struggle to access a form of identification that allows for an 'I' that is continually re-articulated but also able to relate to the difference and sameness in the other. Bhabha's (1994, p. 116) theory helps to "break down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside" and to establish a form of self-identification that engages with the interstices and allows for a level of hybridisation and interrelationality between the fragmented 'I' and the collective 'we'.

3.4. Agency and navigating parental cultural heritage

As has been discussed so far, in the theoretical framework proposed in this thesis, I draw on Judith Butler's work to understand the self's constitution within discourse and the sense responsibility and possibility for agency that arise from its ambiguous origins. I, then, deploy Bakhtin's dialogism to extend my conceptualisation of relationality between social actors and account for the centrifugal forces of subjectivity and their role in the agentic and dialogic re-articulating of the self with and through parental cultural heritage. Finally, it is through the incorporation of Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity—which explicitly deals with the unequal cultural encounter—that I further interrogate the part that collective identities and the initial conditions of one's emergence play in the formulation of identity and how interstitial identifications and communities could be established in the 'third space'. In this

section, I focus on the concept of agency, as I account for it in Butler's, Bakhtin's, and Bhabha's work and discuss its importance in the processes of negotiating parental cultural heritage and navigating collective identities and self-identifications. Agency can be defined as one's ability to act independently and according to one's will within the societal, discursive, and cognitive structures that shape one's reality. As such, agency, in my conceptualisation, is not a sovereign agency, but it originates in a subject embedded in discourse and is exercised within the limits of subjectivation (Chambers & Carver, 2008). In the context of migration and resettlement, when the contrasts between the different social and cultural contexts one occupies might be particularly pronounced, there can be a lot of scope for self-identification in this cumulative setting where one might position oneself in a constant state of in-betweenness as she struggles or refuses to commit to any specific representations of culture or ideas of shared origins. With this scope comes agency, but also responsibility. As I discuss the concept of agency here, I also locate it within the networks of norms and expectations that one must face as she attempts to occupy an agentic positing in her relation to the parental cultural heritage.

For Butler (2005), morality, the sense of responsibility, as well as the subject's reflexivity and agency all inaugurate from interaction. It is within dialogue that one is prompted to reflect and ultimately respond upon a consideration—no matter how brief it can be—of her relation to the other. In Butler's (2005) theorisation, there is a level of unfreedom that accompanies interactions. She claims,

> Our capacity to reflect upon ourselves, to tell the truth about ourselves, is correspondingly limited by what the discourse, the regime, cannot allow into speakability…This struggle with the unchosen conditions of one's life, a struggle—an agency—is also made possible, paradoxically, by the persistence of this primary condition of unfreedom. (Butler, 2005, pp. 121, 19)

The first avenue to finding agency that Butler (1993, 2005) talks about is through the introduction of difference into the process of continual reiteration of social norms. The discourse and the regime of 'truth' that govern subjectivation are not universally powerful. The citationality of norms and laws is necessary to maintain "this primary condition of unfreedom", suggesting potential for change:

> Painful, dynamic, and promising, this vacillation between the already-there and the yet-to-come is a crossroads that rejoins every step by which it is traversed, a reiterated ambivalence at the heart of agency. Power rearticulated is 're'-articulated in the sense of already done and 're'-articulated in the sense of done over, done again, done anew. (Butler, 1997b, p. 18)

Paradoxically, it is within discourse that repeated, systemic marginalisation finds a somewhat stable ground to stand on, but it is within this same discourse, too, that agency can inaugurate every time that power is done over, again, and anew. This task of re-articulation, however, needs to be considered in the context of responsiveness and responsibility for the other with whom one's relation has been built under persisting conditions of discourse, urging one to engage and re-engage with power as it has been articulated so far, as if it were "already done". This theoretically available agency proves difficult to access by those who have been oppressed and racialised through histories. Expectations and norms around parental cultural heritage and its maintenance are deeply ingrained in the ways society functions on many different levels and scales—be it through immigration policy, institutional practices, or everyday interactions. Butler recognises the oppressive character of discourse and suggests an alternative, parallel avenue towards exercising agency, an avenue that originates in the subject's "willingness to acknowledge the limits of acknowledgement itself" (Butler, 2005, p. 42) (Butler, 2005, p. 42). For Butler, the subject's positioning within the interplay of intersubjectivity and the continuous incompleteness of the self creates a context for narrative capacity and agency. It is when the self realises the limits of her knowledge and her inability to account for her origins that she can move beyond the bounds of interpellation and reinforced unified cultural identities and re-narrate herself through this awareness that she can never claim to know her full story.

The theory of agency proposed by Bakhtin is rooted within dialogic relationality and, as such, like Butler's, dependent on the interaction with the other, too (Holquist, 2002). For Bakhtin (1993), the moral inclination and the sense of responsibility are perhaps more fluid and situational than for Butler. Rather than born of the subject's inability to account for her unchosen conditions of emergence, responsibility within the self, according to Bakhtin, is generated through relation and shared experiences. Bakhtin positions the self in a constant

dialogue with the other—be it in a form of another human being or the natural and cultural conditions of the world that one occupies—and emphasises the unique character of the place that one holds in this network of dialogues and one's role as the only one capable of encapsulating the dialogic conditions of this position through a response (Holquist, 2002). This unique relational positioning does not, however, preclude the possibility and desire to evaluate and question what is 'given' and define oneself with respect to the other. After all,

> [a]n utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable. (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 119–120)

It is within the dialogic character of existence and relationality, within the 'answerable act' (Bakhtin, 1990), then, that agency and the agentic self can originate. In a dialogic exchange, agency is created and can create too, as one engages simultaneously in the acts of addressivity and answerability. Individuals, in their response to what seems 'given', stand in front of a task of navigating an array of possible answers and authoring themselves through claiming agency over their unique dialogic positionings within the social structures of the worlds they live in. Bakhtin's agentic self is, to a large degree, independent, singular, and creatively capable, nonetheless, Bakhtin also recognises that the privilege to act in an agentic way comes at a price; the call to respond in dialogue can be as much an opportunity for change as for conformance (Bender, 1998; Holquist, 2002). Viewed through a Bakhtinian lens, the process of negotiating parental cultural heritage is very dependent on the unique combination of 'microdialogues' that shape one's reality. Every response of the self and its every utterance is formed within a relation. Within this multiplicity of dialogic interactions, some relations will be more open to agentic approaches to parental cultural heritage than others.

As established with Butler and Bakhtin, the role of the other and the dialogic actors is crucial to assuming an agentic stance. Agency in Bhabha's (1990, p. 211) conceptualisation is no different in that respect:

> [T]he agency of identification…is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of the otherness. But the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those

> feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings of discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior.

For Bhabha (1996a, p. 58), strategies of hybridisation allow for "construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism and inequality". Hybridity as an agentic position carries within it elements of the discursive contexts that it is constituted within. Bhabha argues, however, that it does not originate in discourse, it is merely preceded by it. In *Culture's In-Between*, he cites Bakhtin and draws on his work to theorise this space of opportunity, 'third space', for agentic enunciation through negotiation with discursive doubleness:

> The…hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented…but is also double-languaged; for in it there are not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents, as there are [doublings of] socio-linguistic, consciousnesses, two epochs…that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance…such unconscious hybrids have been…profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 360 in Bhabha, 1996, p. 58)

In this context, "where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal", Bhabha sees a possibility for 'interstitial' agency that calls into question the binary nature of social antagonisms (Bhabha, 1996a, p. 58). He argues for "a subaltern or minority agency [that] may attempt to interrogate and rearticulate the 'inter-est' of society that marginalizes its interests", claiming it could result in "new forms of identification that may confuse the continuity of historical temporalities, confound the ordering of cultural symbols, traumatize tradition" (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 191, 257). Still, while emphasising the location of agency within a subjectivated subject and the power relations and systems that it is embedded, Bhabha asserts that the terms of discourse can be reworked (Kapoor, 2003). While the contextualisation within discourse as well as the relational nature of agency have been also foundational to Butler's and Bakhtin's perspective on the concept, what Bhabha brings into my analysis of immigrant-background young adults' agentic relationships with parental

cultural heritage, in addition to that, is his focus on the "construct[ion of] visions of community, and versions of historic memory" through "articulation of cultural difference" (Bhabha, 1996a, p. 58; 1994, p. 2). For Bhabha (1994, pp. 1–2), the in-between spaces that reach beyond the "narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" form a terrain "for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular and communal" and "sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself". He positions self-identification side by side with collective identifying, providing a useful framework for considering the role of parental cultural heritage in both processes and in between these processes, knowing that one does not imply the other, but the boundary between the two is not clear either.

One aspect that perhaps has not been stressed enough in the conceptualisation of agency that I have discussed in this section is the role of privilege and intersectional positioning in accessing choices and freedoms within discourse. The theoretical availability of subaltern agency or a 'third space' that is free of "assumed and imposed hierarchy", only in some contexts, and certainly less in others, translates into lasting structural change, formation of commonality beyond essentialism, and access to agentic self-identifications (Anthias, 2001; Bhabha, 1994, p. 4; Rose, 1997). From a feminist perspective, Bronwyn Davis (1991, pp. 43, 52) argues,

> Subject positions which individuals may take up are made available through a variety of discourses. One subject position, more often made available to white middle-class males than to others, is of the agentic person who can make rational choices and act upon them…Within current ways of speaking it is a readily attainable positioning for some and an almost inaccessible positioning for others. Individuals who are positioned on the female side of the male/female dualism or on the negative side of any other dualism such as black/white, child/adult, mad/sane are rarely heard as legitimate speakers, are rarely positioned as one with agency.

Other dualisms that could be considered here are foreigner/native, Muslim/Christian, bearer of an English-sounding name/bearer of a non-English-sounding name in an English-speaking context etc. Not to mention the effect that occupying the intersection of multiple of these disadvantaged positionings can have on one's access to agentic acting and self-identifying. Davis (1991) emphasises the link between authorship and authority, problematising a social

world where the capacity to speak, to be heard, and to articulate meaning is available to those already in positions of power and vice versa. Hilde Lindemann (2001, p. xii) agrees that "[t]he connection between identity and agency poses a serious problem when the members of a particular social group are compelled by the forces circulating in an abusive power system to bear the morally degrading identities required by that system". Lindemann (2001) acknowledges how the bearers of such identities—what she calls 'damaged identities'—are restricted in their ability to exercise moral agency. The concept of agency, in this thesis, therefore, incorporates the recognition that power, authority, and privilege form an unequal context within which counterforce can co-exist. While it is not impossible for subaltern agency to emerge and disrupt these hegemonic forms, potentially even come to replace them, it can be a very difficult task for those facing structural consequences of their complex positioning at the intersection of multiple axes of disadvantage (Davis, 1991).

3.5. Conclusion

This framework, informed by Stuart Hall's definitions of culture, cultural identity, identification, and collective identity, brings together three theoretical lenses—Butler, Bakhtin, and Bhabha—to unpack the role of parental cultural heritage in identity and community formation and to account for the possibility of agency within these processes. Of particular importance in the context of this framework was the shared interest that these different theorists have (or had) in (1) the self as fluid, fragmented, and incomplete, (2) the formulation of identity within social interaction, in response to the other, and (3) the positioning of the self within the context of discourse, social norms, and power. In addition to these shared aspects, each theorist brings a unique point of focus into my inquiry. Butler's theory of subjectivation and responsibility effectively situates the self, culture, and the process of identity formation within the power-laden social world. Her discussion of the origins of the subject and one's responsibility towards the other, unlike Bhabha's or Bakhtin's work, emphasises how one's constitution predates one's emergence and points out the limitations of the self to give a full account of itself. According to Butler, freedom of identity and agency are born of the realisation of these ambiguous beginnings, Bakhtin argues, however, that they originate in dialogue and the self's intention to tell a story with a beginning and an end. Bakhtin's dialogism is used in this framework to build on Butler's suggestion of

the subject's narrative capacity and to move beyond Butler's rather abstract concept of the 'other' towards a consideration of named others in individuals' unique narrative accounts. The focus on the unique network of dialogues that one operates within, as conceptualised by Bakhtin, invites the analysis of the role of parental cultural heritage within one's life and processes of self-identification without the assumption of its relevance or priority—seeing it as one of many, potentially equally important, dialogic actors. Finally, Bhabha's contribution to this framework (N.B. influenced by Bakhtin's ideas of hybridisation and in-betweenness), allows for a return to the framework's foundations in Hall's postcolonial conceptualisations of culture, identity, and collectivity, and for a juxtaposition of the understandings of the self, its origins, and heritage, as developed through Butler's and Bakhtin's theorisations, with those found in a theory that explicitly engages with cultural difference, race, and cultural identity.

Following the next chapter (Chapter 4), which, in light of its theoretical underpinnings outlined here, discusses the methodological choices made in this project, I will engage with each of the theoretical lenses one by one (Chapters 5-7) to address the following questions:

(1) Drawing on Butler's theory of subjectivation, responsibility, and agency (Chapter 5):
How is immigrant-background young adults' parental cultural heritage constituted as responsibility?

(2) Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism (Chapter 6):
How is immigrant-background young adults' parental cultural heritage constituted, experienced, and negotiated dialogically?

(3) Drawing on Bhabha's cultural hybridity (Chapter 7):
How are immigrant-background young adults' parental cultural heritages and identities hybridised in the context of discourses of race and collectivity?

(4) Drawing on all three theorists (Chapters 5-7):
How can immigrant-background young adults exercise agency in navigating parental cultural heritage, self-identifications, and collective identities?

The theories and concepts presented here provide an effective framework for an inquiry into the dynamic nature of the role of parental cultural heritage in immigrant-background young adults' lives and the ways in which they narrate their realities, identities, and communities. Nonetheless, as this thesis deals with a number of contested terms and concepts (e.g.,

culture, ethnicity, identity, race) that continue to be re-articulated through discourse, academic and popular writing, and lived experiences, I maintain distance from claims of finding ultimate meaning or 'truth'. Instead, I deploy this theoretical framework as a tool for analysis, aware that as any framework it is also contestable. As the next chapter will show, the aim of this research project was not to capture narratives or stabilise complex realities, but to allow for reflection and re-narration and contribute to an ongoing conversation.

CHAPTER 4: ACCESSING AND MAKING SENSE OF YOUNG ADULTS' NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS

Poststructural, postcolonial, and feminist ontologies of culture, identity, and agency, as discussed in the previous chapter, are at the core of the methodology developed in this thesis. As I work with concepts that are contingent and fluid, both within my theorisation and the accounts of the individuals involved in this project, I do not aim to delineate or categorise different forms of cultural heritage and identification, instead, I focus on the infinite number and the ever-changing nature of the different typologies of experiences of culture, identity, and collectivity, and their roots and malleability within social reality (Schwab & Syed, 2015). In seeking to understand the role of parental cultural heritage in how immigrant-background young adults define themselves and interact within the social and cultural spheres of their lives, I also pay close attention to how they narrate their realities and, through this process—though often unconsciously—become active and agent creators of them. The structural context, collective ideologies, intersubjectivities, as well as the histories and the powers of nation-states, on which these narratives, and consequently my analysis, rest are recognised here as embedded within not only *what* we (the participants and I) see and experience, but also *how* we see it and talk about it (Charmaz, 2017; Stanley, 1993). This is to contextualise the narrative content and the availability of narrative repertoires at individuals' disposal, and to "recognise the continuing power of the state and the national order of things, how they work together to…order engagement with politics, with communities, and with the histories and cultures that we claim" or want to distance ourselves from (Anderson, 2019, pp. 6–7). The findings of this research emphasise the porosity of the boundaries of social relations and the possibility of agentic engagement with and through the ongoing processes of re-narration and re-defining, as one struggles—individually and collectively—for understanding, recognition, and peace with one's identity and background (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014).

As I have identified in Chapter 2, research on British-born immigrant-background young adults in the UK has (a) mostly relied on the accounts of participants recruited based on their, assumed or declared, affiliation to specified ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other groupings,

(b) drew unnuanced—or perhaps unjustified—conclusions of a direct link between one's involvement in cultural practices or maintenance of cultural heritage and their identifications, (c) while, in many cases, acknowledging the dynamic nature of identity, rarely studied it over time to allow for reflection and re-articulation, and to embrace ambiguity. This thesis, in response to these methodological gaps, and with a goal of problematising the link between cultural heritage, collective identity, and self-identification at its heart, introduces an innovative methodological approach, 'narrative grounded theory', that draws on constructivist grounded theory and narrative inquiry to develop research tools that encourage participants' critical engagement with re-storying and analysis. It also promotes recruitment practices that avoid relying on accessing participants through groups centred around a specific seemingly shared characteristic, practice, or identification. The aim here is not to *collect* data, *capture* narratives, or *record* self-identifications, but to devise an approach that allows for the articulation of identity as a process, an ongoing conversation. In this chapter, I discuss the foundations of my methodological approach and the methods that I used to recruit the participants, elicit their narratives, and—partly through a collaborative process—analyse them. I present here in detail the practical choices and implications that combining narrative inquiry and grounded theory within one study can entail. This chapter also discusses the ethical considerations that emerged over the course of the project.

4.1. Foundations of narrative grounded theory

With a near consensus in social sciences over the past two decades up to the unstable nature of identities, there still remains a need for research methodologies and methods to follow these theoretical advancements and develop in ways that equip studied individuals with the tools to express their identities as such. As "we are a species whose main purpose is to tell each other about the expected and the surprises that upset the expected, and we do that through the stories we tell", inquiring into identities as lived narratives has the potential for allowing the story-teller to construct and deconstruct their identification on their own terms, in their own words, and sometimes even between the lines (Bruner, 2002, p. 8). In my study of immigrant-background young adults' relationships with parental cultural heritage, I am interested in the process of meaning-making, in narration and re-narration, rather than recording precise meaning. For this purpose, I needed a framework that allows for revisiting

of a narrative time after time, welcomes digressions, and, while letting the participants take charge of the content and direction of their story, acknowledges the researcher's role in constructing meaning through narrative. I found these qualities in narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). At the same time, having identified a relative dearth of innovative theoretical approaches to the study of young adults' identifications and relationships with cultural heritage (see Chapter 2), I also approached this project with an interest in making a theoretical contribution by investigating—through the participants' narratives—the interstices within and between processes and concepts of culture, identity, and collectivity. Drawing on constructivist grounded theory has proven useful in facilitating that (Charmaz, 2014, 2017). In this section, I discuss the key tenets of narrative inquiry and constructivist grounded theory, explain their roles in this project, and make a case for marrying these two approaches and introducing a new methodology, 'narrative grounded theory'.

The philosophical roots of narrative inquiry can be found in the concept of narrative as a mode of knowing (Bruner, 2002; Caine et al., 2022).[17] "Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). It is through stories and storytelling that one can establish knowledge about oneself, make sense of one's experiences, and participate in the process of collective knowledge production. The role of narrative inquiry, then, is "to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). The story or the narrative, then, is both the structured experience to be studied and the means through which it is inquired into. Narrative inquiry, as rooted within the theory of experience, always seeks to understand individuals and their stories in relation, within a social context, and as positioned on a continuum of experience. This aspect of the methodology is of relevance to my project, as it allows me to gaze beyond the material manifestations of cultural heritage and explore its storied, interrelational, and lived nature. It also corresponds with notions of culture and identification as experienced through the other that I began to unpack in Chapter 3 and will discuss in more

[17] See Clandinin and Rosiek (2006) for a discussion of narrative inquiry's foundations in the theory of experience, as well as how it has been influenced by other philosophical traditions, including post-structuralism.

detail further in the thesis. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20) also suggest that narrative inquiry is a "collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus", naming the researcher as relevant to the experiencing and narration, acknowledging the interview as an episode, a glimpse into someone's perspective, and encouraging a back-and-forth between the researcher and participants in the process of co-production. The methods of narrative elicitation and analysis commonly used by narrative inquirers have also proven suitable for this project. Narrative interviewing (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000), where the interview starts with a single broad question and lasts until the participant's story comes to its natural end emerged as an appropriate way to engage in conversations with participants on the topics of heritage, identity, culture, and belonging—topics so abstract and experienced in so many different ways that I could not imagine myself drafting a detailed interview schedule to address them without being suggestive.[18] In the case of this project, the first 'interview question' was replaced by a journal prompt to allow for narrating without the presence of the other, the researcher (see subsection 4.3.1. in this chapter). The difficulty in articulating these abstract concepts, as well as narrative inquiry's recognition of the "fluidity and recursiveness as inquirers compose research texts" and the invitation to "negotiate them with participants" (Clandinin, 2006, p. 48), were also reasons for drawing on narrative analysis methods when deciding on the analytical tools adopted in this project and for incorporating 'co-analysis' into this process (see subsection 4.3.4.) (Arvay, 2003; Esin et al., 2014; Kim, 2016; Riessman, 2012).

Grounded theory, on the other hand, and in a complementary way, is interested in finding meaning and, indeed, theoretical inferences, in groups of thoughts, experiences, and processes across data sets and studied populations, rather than focusing on a singular account—or separate accounts—of a particular phenomenon. In this project, I bring together two notions of in-betweenness, i.e., (a) as a period and associated sense of transitioning and choice between adolescence and more settled adulthood, and (b) as ambiguity around one's cultural identity and relations with one's cultural pasts, presents, and futures, and I identify

[18] Aleni Sestito and Sica (2014) encourage the use of narrative with individuals who are in the transitional phase of emerging adulthood and faced with identity consolidation. See their paper for examples of studies that confirm the effectiveness of narrative approaches with this age group.

an underexplored potential for building theoretical links and developing a better understanding of these processes operating in tandem or in parallel in immigrant-background populations in the UK. While there have been examples of narrative inquiry studies contributing to theory development (Mills et al., 2006), I found the analytical tools embedded in grounded theory traditions (e.g., theoretical sampling, action coding, memoing, constant comparative method) more suited for this purpose and more effective as navigated across 15 narrative accounts. Kathy Charmaz's (2016) constructivist take on grounded theory has particularly resonated with this project, as, in a similar way to narrative inquiry, it emphasises the methodological implications of both the researcher's and the participants' situatedness within the social contexts, temporalities, power structures and collective ideologies. She claims that "[d]ata do not provide a window on reality. Rather, the 'discovered' reality arises from the interactive process and its temporal, cultural, and structural contexts", a process in which the researcher should acknowledge her role—and its consequences—as a co-author (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524). The researcher, according to Charmaz (2001), should, nonetheless, aim to give the participants and their words visibility within her analytical writing, to both acknowledge their contribution and invite future readers to evaluate the connections made between the analysis and the data it is derived from. Such a commitment is yet another aspect of constructivist grounded theory that is reflected in my approach where I focus on young adults' self-identifications, and highlight the ways in which these are phased, rephrased, as well as discursively limited.

Narrative inquiry and grounded theory are sometimes seen as contradictory on the count of the former's interest in information within the context of a larger story, and the latter's tendency to 'dissect' textual accounts in the name of drawing conclusions about the broader social processes, contexts, and interactions within which the individual accounts are embedded (Lal et al., 2012). This, however, is precisely where one of the strengths of my combined approach lies; in bringing the two traditions together in a complementary fashion. This potential has been also acknowledged by other researchers (e.g., Cohn et al., 2009; Drew, 2005; Schow, 2006) who justified their incorporation of narrative approaches in grounded theory studies by acknowledging how by paying greater attention to individuals' stories they were able to compensate for the inevitable data fragmentation characteristic of grounded theory. Another benefit of marrying these two methodologies, one that is unique to my

narrative grounded theory approach, is how through their common emphasis on knowledge co-production, both traditions create space for incorporation of collaborative analysis ('co-analysis') that invites interpretations from the researcher and the participant and welcomes potential discrepancies and disagreements as natural elements of analytical co-construction. Co-analysis, alongside other methods of narrative elicitation and analysis will be discussed further in section 4.3. where I take the reader through the practical choices involved in combining narrative inquiry and grounded theory. I will, then, invite the reader to engage with the participants' accounts and pay attention to the co-analysis contribution (marked in green font) reported throughout Chapters 5-7, before returning to the discussion of narrative grounded theory in the thesis conclusion (Chapter 8) where I will evaluate the approach in light of its role in this project. This study is not a grounded theory piece, nor it is a narrative inquiry. It borrows from these two traditions and creates a unique approach that allows for both an in-depth dialogical exploration and theory development.

4.2. Meeting participants

Planning and pivoting

I approached the field hoping to recruit about 15 participants who would meet the following criteria: (1) age between 18-29, (2) UK-born to immigrant parents and currently living in the UK; (3) born to parents whose first language is/was not English, with both parents sharing the same first language (unless raised by a single parent). The age criterion was put in place to encourage participation from young adults likely to be at the transitional life stage when they attempt to consolidate their identities and reflect on their belonging, as suggested by emerging adulthood scholars (Arnett, 2000). The age range, while inevitably arbitrary to a degree, has been chosen carefully with reference to statistical data on marriage and childrearing in the UK (ONS, 2022a, 2022e), following Arnett's (2014) recommendation, to enable the study's focus on adults with relatively high levels of independence and choice, as opposed to those potentially more settled in their life. Moreover, I decided to only include in the project participants who were born in the UK, rather than, for example, those who moved with their parents in the first few years of their lives. These groups are often treated as the same in research and I wanted to explore whether factors such as place of birth or British

citizenship would play a role in the participants' narratives. Similarly, I excluded mixed-nativity families to acknowledge the unique social scenarios that the participants are born into—where their parents share the same language and potentially some other cultural practices (e.g., traditions, religious beliefs, clothing), but these are not reflected in the majority of society that the participants encounter in the UK (Ho & Kao, 2020). As this subsection continues, I will acknowledge further, unwritten criteria that affected who took part in my project, as well as discuss the strategies I followed to allow the participants to formulate identification on their own terms and in their own time and to avoid implying expectations of a level of commitment to parental cultural heritage. I will also consider here several of the decisions I had to make during the recruitment process to ensure the theoretical relevance of the narratives and conversations shared between me and the participants and will discuss how these choices, ultimately, affected whose stories are included in this thesis.

While the three selection criteria listed above are the only ones shared with potential participants and mediators, there is a number of unwritten criteria that determined who showed interest and engaged with my project. All but one of my calls for participants (see Table 1, Call 5) asked potential participants to consider, before volunteering to participate, whether they would be willing to talk to me about their experiences of belonging, culture, language, family, and adulthood (Appendix 1). (The last call did not include the question for brevity). This most likely excluded from the study those who do not have an interest in the listed topics or would prefer not to discuss them. Importantly, it still attracted participants with various levels of experience in reflecting on the mentioned topics—ranging from those who have deeply considered these topics and even discussed them with friends and family, to those who admitted this project was the first time they stopped and gathered their thoughts around belonging and cultural heritage. Moreover, the willingness of my potential participants to engage with the research methods I chose, inevitably affected who ended up deciding to volunteer. I agree with Kristensen and Ravn (2015, p. 725) that, "[n]o matter how one looks at it, it is an undisputed fact that the persons whose lives, experiences and meaning-making processes researchers are able to study in interview-based projects are those who respond positively to requests for interviews; the rest remain unknown". And to this, I add, let alone projects that require participants to engage in a range of different ways—from

journaling, to being interviewed, to analysing a transcript of their own speech and discussing it with a researcher. One thing that definitely was not a criterion, however, was a defined level and form of engagement with cultural heritage. While potential participants, as they came across the study, knew that I was hoping to recruit "young adults of immigrant background", the materials used to communicate the purpose of the project and the tasks involved in it (Appendices 1-3) were carefully crafted to emphasise my interest in experiences, feelings, and individual understandings, and not any specific or stable identifications with certain categories or collectivities. This was done to encourage participation from individuals whose sense of identity and relationship with cultural heritage might be complex, ambiguous, and unique.

I adopted a version of theoretical sampling (characteristic of grounded theory approaches) and focused on attracting participants whose accounts could help me better understand the conceptual ideas I was starting to identify and was hoping to unpack (Rapley, 2014; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). I identified my first five participants using criterion sampling (Patton, 1990) and then, based on these first engagements, I started to recognise how I could direct my recruitment efforts to explore, confirm, or disconfirm my early analytical observations and develop them into substantive theoretical ideas. In this process, for example, I decided to look for more participants who would self-identify as white, as being a person of colour in predominantly white settings and struggling to fit in emerged as important theoretical properties in the participants' narratives, making me wonder how white immigrant-background adults discuss and position whiteness in their accounts of culture and belonging. At the time this decision was made, out of the twelve first participants, only one (of Balkan heritage) self-identified as white, and even then, she commented on being made feel like she did not belong when her peers questioned her race and told her she was not white. These questions started to surface from my analysis after engaging with participants recruited in the first two calls for participants, however, it was not until the last call, after I noticed that white participants were not joining my study,[19] that I decided to narrow down the focus of my calls and advertise to European-background young adults specifically. This was done to

[19] Some showed interest but did not meet the selection criteria (e.g., their parents did not share the same first language).

increase the *likelihood* of recruiting participants who self-identify as white without revealing the potential relevance of one's racial background to potential participants. This last call yielded three theoretically relevant accounts of negotiating cultural heritage and identity.

Aware of the disproportion between studies of emerging adults that focus on student populations—these dominate—and those that include employed participants, I hoped for my study to attract also the members of this 'forgotten half' (Rosenbaum, 2001). While these efforts were limited by my student status and my university-centred network, by the time I brought data collection to a close, I did have a few employed participants in my sample, as well as some who, despite their student status, reflected on their experiences of working part-time or seasonally. This variation in occupation does not, however, compensate for the lack of educational level diversity amongst those I studied; all of the participants have at least one university degree or are studying towards one.[20] Access to higher education and mobility between educational contexts, therefore, inevitably play a role in the participants' stories of finding belonging amongst peers and developing agency in navigating parental cultural heritage and self-identifications as will become apparent from the narrative excerpts shared further in the thesis. I acknowledge the participants' accounts' situation within the context of high educational achievement and—in light of research showing that, in the UK, ethnic minorities constitute a disproportionately high portion of the category of working-class (G. K. Bhambra, 2017)—recognise the need for further studies—likely using different methods and recruitment channels—to engage those who I did not manage to, namely, young adults of working-class backgrounds who have not pursued university education.

In sum, as will be shown further in this section and when exploring the narratives in the consecutive chapters, this study attracted participants from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds. Nonetheless, while in many ways diverse, by design, the sample could only include those showing interest in the topics discussed in this project and in engaging with the chosen methods. How could I study narratives of belonging—in a way that prioritises participants' perceptions—if I recruited participants who are not interested in

[20] Karlsen et al.'s (2020) paper on ethnic, religious and gender differences in intergenerational economic mobility in England and Wales based on census data collected between 1971 and 2011 provides a broader context for considering access to educational and occupational mobility amongst minoritised populations.

either sharing narratives or considering their experiences of belonging? I do not, however, consider this a limitation of my research design or a source of bias. This thesis, as planned, explores and analyses the stories of fifteen individuals who, when the study was conducted, had the time and narrative capacity to participate in it. It is thanks to their openness and reflectiveness that this research manages to offer theoretical insight into ambiguity, intersubjectivity, and agency embedded in the process of narrating and re-narrating parental cultural heritage and shaping identity. With the aim to destabilise the link between cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity, from the project's conception, it has been outside of its scope to deliver conclusions inclusive of the experiences of every immigrant-background young adult living in the UK. As highlighted above, there is vast potential for further research on the topics of identity and belonging amongst young people from minoritised populations. Researchers could build on some of the specific findings of my thesis and study—perhaps using different methods—their applicability across the various populations of young adults (e.g., those who did not pursue university education).

Recruiting participants

Participant recruitment for this study took place between March and December 2020. This subsection introduces and evaluates the multiple recruitment channels used in this project and describes the challenges I faced when recruiting online. It also includes a brief discussion of the strategies used to encourage participation, as well as participants' motivations to get engaged in the project. As the time dedicated to data collection fell within the period when face-to-face interactions were prohibited or limited due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I had to rely on online channels and tools to find the participants and record their narratives. While I cannot confidently claim that recruiting online made my study inclusive of all potential participants, according to the Office for National Statistics in 2018 (pre-pandemic), over 99 per cent of individuals aged 16-34 in the UK reported having used the internet within the three months leading up to the survey ONS was reporting on (ONS, 2019b). Moreover, in 2020, over 90 per cent of adults in Great Britain aged 16-34 identified themselves as social media users (ONS, 2020). Nonetheless, I am aware that some individuals in the studied population might have been experiencing limited access to computers and the internet, as the demand for these resources has increased in many British households as a result of work,

education, and socialising all (to a large extent) moving online during national lockdowns (Baker et al., 2020; Coleman, 2021). Additionally, with this shift towards performing most daily activities online, which affected a vast portion of the British population, there have been cases of digital fatigue with individuals retreating from social media (Liu et al., 2021). While not fully inclusive, the reality of doing research at the time of a global pandemic meant that I had to adapt my study to allow for online data collection, and therefore, I had to focus on recruiting participants who would be able and willing to engage with my proposed online methods.

I tried several online recruitment channels, including, among others, posting calls for participants on my social media profiles (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) and groups (e.g., Facebook, Reddit), and using mailing lists (e.g., my university's staff and student newsletters, a network of ESOL teachers). Table 1 below summarises the level of effectiveness of each channel and identifies poster calls on Facebook groups as the most effective. This was thanks to the groups giving me access to people with shared characteristics (e.g., postgraduate students at a specific university, young professionals in a named city) who already met some of my selection criteria (e.g., are of specified age and live in the UK). My familiarity with Facebook as a platform and over a decade-long presence on it likely contributed to the effectiveness of Facebook as a recruitment channel, too. Any potential participant with interest in my study had the ability to access my Facebook profile, see some of my photos and public posts, and perhaps start perceiving me as a peer rather than an anonymous researcher. This blurring of the boundary between my personal life and work, however, could have also invited assumptions from potential participants which might have discouraged them from participation. On the contrary, the social media platforms that I was newer to (Twitter and Reddit) and had a less established profile did not yield as much engagement.

Most of the participants (except two with whom I was acquainted via college affiliations) were people that I have not met before beginning this study.[21] Some of them had something in common with me (e.g., a mutual friend, studied at the same university), some potentially saw their participation as a friendly transaction that can be mutually beneficial (e.g., because they

[21] To the best of my knowledge, the participants also did not know each other.

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Call 1:
March</th><th>Call 2:
June</th><th>Call 3:
September</th><th>Call 4:
October/November</th><th>Call 5:
November/December</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Poster calls on my social media profiles: 3</td><td>Facebook wall, Twitter feed, Instagram story</td><td>Facebook wall and Twitter feed</td><td>Twitter feed, Instagram story, Reddit</td><td rowspan="2">Twitter feed</td><td rowspan="2">Twitter feed - 2 tweets (focused on recruiting European-background participants)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">encouraging friends to repost and/or consider contacts within their networks</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Poster calls on Facebook groups: 10</td><td rowspan="2"><10 groups showing interest in the topic of migration (general, not focused on specific communities/ nationalities)</td><td>~10 groups (that I became a member of for personal reasons before starting this project) aimed at young adults (mostly university student groups)</td><td>~40 groups, mostly aimed at postgraduate university students and young professionals (e.g., young journalists, young teachers)</td><td><10 groups, for university students centred around their shared interests (e.g., studied discipline or hobby) and university alumni groups</td><td>~30 groups for university students and alumni (some repeated from Call 3), ~5 groups aimed at residents of specific cities (e.g., New in Glasgow), a few groups interested in Europe and the EU (e.g., EU nationals in the UK) (all posts focused on recruiting European-background participants)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">sending direct messages to anyone who showed interest in the post (e.g., liked it) to invite them to participate (if eligible) and check whether they could share the post to their networks</td></tr>
<tr><td>My university newsletter: 2</td><td>general call for participants</td><td></td><td></td><td>general call for participants</td><td>call for European-background participants</td></tr>
<tr><td>Other: 0</td><td></td><td>sending personal messages to (transnational) friends to ask whether they know of anyone who might be eligible and interested and whether they could share my call within their networks</td><td></td><td>(1) sharing the call for participants within an ESOL teachers' network (mailing list, Twitter) to encourage ESOL teachers to share it with parents who might have eligible adult children, (2) including the call within a blog post I authored directed at the postgraduate student community</td><td>(1) emailing ~60 schools and some vocational training collages in the local area, (2) asking my supervisors to share my call within their networks</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1. All recruitment channels used and the number of participants recruited using each channel category (first column). Table cells highlighted in grey indicate which specific channels during each call period supported recruitment of one or more participants.

too were PhD students studying a similar population and wanting to remain colleagues after their engagement in my study), some agreed to participate as they knew from experience that research participant recruitment can be a challenging task, and some simply found the thematic focus or approach undertaken in this study interesting. As will be detailed in the next section, the study that I designed required engagement from participants on several different occasions, sometimes spanning a few months, and as such, regardless of initial

motivations, I also stood in front of the task of trying to ensure that as many participants as possible continue with the project to its completion. “Researchers must be persistent, must follow-up on calls that are not returned, must send reminders and must repeatedly ‘sell’ their projects to persons they do not know”, Kristen and Ravn (2015, p. 725) notice. The line between friendly reminders and being intrusive is blurry though, and it is positioned differently for everyone. Sometimes, as it was in my case, researchers also must find a way to maintain the balance between respecting participants’ time and space, incentivising them, and relying on their genuine interest and will to participate to allow the participants to volunteer stories and information at a pace and in ways that are comfortable to them. Having this in mind, I decided not to mention any monetary incentives in my calls for participants and the initial communication with potential participants until they confirmed their willingness to take part in the project. I asked anyone who came across my call for participants and matched my selection criteria to contact me directly for more information. Then, I provided them with the consent form, the information sheet, the privacy notice, and a document outlining instructions for journal writing (the first stage of the study) (Appendices 2-5). I used encouraging language in my email to highlight the potential value of participation:

> I realise that this study may seem unusual, and it does require more involvement from participants than an average study might, however, I do believe that this process can be rewarding for everyone involved. And the participants whom I've worked with so far felt that this research gave them an opportunity to reflect on some things that they don't think about very often and they said they enjoyed being involved in the project. I hope it will sound exciting to you. (excerpt from an email sent to potential participants)[22]

Only once participants read through all the documents, returned the signed consent form, and confirmed their intention to participate, I informed them that, as a token of my appreciation, I would be able to provide them with a £25 gift card from their chosen retailer. They also had the option of donating this money to a charity of their choice.

[22] This version of the email was drafted once I received some initial feedback from the first few participants.

Participants' profiles

The profiles of the 15 participants who joined the study are summarised in Table 2. The information presented in the table was volunteered by each participant at the end of their engagement using a short questionnaire which invited self-identifications by leaving the answer boxes blank and not offering any options or examples of responses (Appendix 6). The table is used here to introduce the participants' backgrounds and social positioning, however, it does not imply relations of attachment; "there is no necessary connection between social location and a particular social identity" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 203). While the information included below was offered by the participants themselves, these identifications were offered along specific predetermined lines,[23] which cannot be seen as indicative or representative of the complex narratives of formulating identity, navigating parental cultural heritage, and searching for understanding and community that this thesis will uncover. In addition, Figure 1 below accounts for the geographical spread of the sample. The data presented in the figure was also drawn from the questionnaires, however, to protect participants' anonymity, I decided to include it separately and in a collated form. What should be noted while engaging with this information is that the localities in many participants' narratives remained unnamed and disembodied and I would often only learn the exact names of the places where they lived when reviewing the answers in the questionnaire. The participants' relationship with these places, rather than formulated through the lens of materiality and specificity of a particular town or city, was more about the experienced and perceived characteristics of the space (e.g., predominantly white, diverse, racist) and about what it meant to move between different contexts, especially in the sense of stepping into new social contexts as will be further discussed later in the thesis.

[23] Rationale for the type of information included in the table will be given later in the chapter when I discuss the use of the questionnaire as a method.

Pseudonym and gender	Age	Parents' country of origin and first language	Race/ethnicity	Nationality	Citizenship	Religion	Education level (highest achieved)	Participant's occupation	Parents' occupation
Laura (F)	27	Uganda, Luganda	Black African	British	British	Christian	Master's	receptionist, job seeker	(not disclosed)
Karima (F)	25	Bangladesh, Bengali	Bangladeshi	British	British	Muslim	Master's	PhD student	takeaway owner, care home worker
Fia (F)	21	Kosovo, Albanian	White European	British Kosovar	British	Agnostic	Bachelor's	postgraduate student	both in managerial positions
Lee (M)	27	China, Mandarin Chinese	Chinese	British	British	Atheist	PhD	research scientist	university professor, housewife/retired
Tommy (M)	25	China, Mandarin Chinese	Chinese	British	British	Agnostic	Master's	PhD student	university professor, secondary school teacher
Sarah (F)	19	Pakistan, Urdu	Pakistani/Iranian	British	British	Spiritual/ agnostic	A-levels	undergraduate student	self-employed
Alea (F)	22	Pakistan, Urdu & Punjabi	Asian - Pakistani	British	British	Muslim	Bachelor's	postgraduate student, part-time role in retail	shopkeeper and housewife
Sabina (F)	28	Sri Lanka, Sinhala	British Sri Lankan	British	British	Buddhist	PhD	operational role in higher education	cost engineer and nurse
Sierra (F)	18	Hong Kong and Vietnam, Cantonese	Chinese	British-born Chinese	British	none	A-levels	undergraduate student	(not disclosed)
Helen (F)	21	Hong Kong, Cantonese	Chinese	British	British	none	A-levels	undergraduate student	both work at a Chinese takeaway
Cam (F)	24	Vietnam, Vietnamese	Vietnamese	British	British	none	Bachelor's	planning assistant	convenience store owners
Danuta (F)	23	Poland, Polish	White - Eastern European	British/Polish	British/Polish	none	Master's	operational role in public health	administrative analyst, no contact with the other parent
András (M)	22	Hungary, Hungarian	White European	Hungarian, British	Hungarian, British	none	A-levels	undergraduate student	medical doctor and stay-at-home mum
Adam (M)	20	Germany, German	White	British German	British, German	Christian	A-levels	undergraduate student	medical doctor and teacher
Raya	(Raya opted out from filling the questionnaire.)								

Table 2. Participant profiles. Names included in the table and used throughout this thesis are pseudonyms.

Figure 1. Places in the UK where the participants have lived. All participants (with a possible exception of Raya who did not disclose this information) have experienced cross-regional mobility at least once in their lives. Only one participant accounted for having lived outside of the UK (not included on the map). In his case, it was during his childhood for a period of 9 months.

4.3. Narrative grounded theory in practice

Upon joining the project, participants were asked to engage with the research tasks independently of each other and followed their individual timelines with me as they progressed through journaling, interviews, co-analysis, and the final questionnaire. In this section, I outline the multiple methods deployed in this design and position them within my narrative grounded theory methodology. The practicalities of marrying grounded theory and narrative inquiry are far from being straightforward and the approach to this task that I am suggesting here, rather than being prescriptive, is tailored to the population that I chose to

study and the socio-temporal context within which this study is situated. The different components of this design will be discussed in turn with particular attention paid to the motivations behind choosing the specific method, the way it was applied, and the benefits and limitations of such incorporation. This section aims to showcase the narrative grounded theory methodology in its applied form and highlight its suitability for the study of young adults, cultures, and identities. While I present the research process here in a linear way, some participants, as would be expected in a multi-stage qualitative study, introduced variations to the method, e.g., by rearranging or skipping certain steps. These variations are outlined in Table 3.

Participants	Completion level
Laura, Karima, Fia, Lee, Tommy, Alea, Alarna, Sierra, Helen, Danuta, András, Adam	Full completion
Sarah, Cam	Questionnaire with limited follow-up questions and reflections
Raya	Journal entries and interview, chose not to complete the co-analysis or the questionnaire

Table 3. Variations in completion levels. While most participants chose to be involved in all of the research tasks, some decided to leave the study sooner or asked for the tasks to be adapted to their needs.

Journaling

'Producing' journal entries on five assigned prompts was the first research task that I asked the participants to engage with. I say 'producing' here to highlight the non-prescriptive nature of the task. Participants were encouraged to follow any format (e.g., hand-written, audio recorded, typed, mind-mapped), structure (free flowing, paragraphed or sectioned), and entry length, to accommodate for a range of expression styles and comfort levels in sharing one's story (Ellis et al., 1997). They were provided with a Q&A-format document (Appendix 3), to reassure them of their autonomy in this 'production', and, as suggested by Hayman et al. (2012), provide clear content expectations. The only specific instruction given was that they were asked to share—through journaling—their experiences of (1) belonging, (2) culture, (3) language, (4) family, and (5) adulthood. I also requested that they dedicate their first entry to the topic of 'belonging' and their last one to 'adulthood', giving them choice regarding the order of the three remaining entries. I chose these prompts to guide the

participants towards reflecting on the role of family and cultural heritage and its effect on their sense of belonging, at the same time, leaving enough room for them to bring in their own interpretations of these terms and share what is most relevant and prominent to them. Starting with a broad question (or a series of questions in consecutive interviews) is characteristic of narrative interviewing commonly used as a starting point in narrative inquiry (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Here, having in mind that for many of the participants articulating their feelings of belonging and sharing experiences of navigating their cultural background might be a foreign task—something they perhaps have thought about before but have not had a chance to put into a cohesive narrative—I used journaling as my first method, to give the participants an opportunity to rethink and revisit their narratives, rather than rely on their in-a-spur-of-the-moment accounts, which probably would be the case if I decided to begin the study by interviewing. Moreover, it is possible that this task helped me develop better rapport with participants—not through interaction, but through becoming a named, embodied audience for their story. The process of journaling gave the participants time to negotiate within themselves how much they were willing to share with me for the purposes of my academic project. It is possible that through 'producing' their journals for me they grew accustomed to me as their audience and felt more at ease expanding on their narratives in the subsequent interviews. On the other hand, it is also possible that, as they were 'producing' their entries they forgot about me and my research and proceeded to include more intimate details than they would when sat face-to-face with me.[24]

On average, each participant contributed a collection of five entries consisting of approximately 3,000 words covering all mentioned topics. These, however, varied in length, likely, in the cases of shorter initial contributions, limiting the level of depth achieved further in the research engagement. Following the submission of journal entries by the participant (and subsequent transcription in the case of audio-recorded entries), I analysed them using a four readings approach: (1) reading to familiarise myself with the text, (2) reading to identify processes (line-by-line 'action coding' common in grounded theory research) (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014), (3) reading to note how things are said and what is not said (narrative

[24] It should be noted, however, that, at the point of uploading their journal entries to a shared folder, participants are naturally reminded that their narratives will be read/listened to by another person and used as part of a research project.

analysis) (Arvay, 2003; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000), and (4) reading to identify the potential for development or clarification (Riessman, 2012). These readings aligned with my 'narrative grounded theory' analytical approach and allowed me to identify follow-up questions that were highly individualised and relevant to furthering specific narratives, at the same time having potential for supporting theory development. Identified questions were then grouped (into categories that emerged from that specific participant's journal entries, e.g., experiences at school, use of language, discrimination) and used to prepare an interview schedule.

Interviewing

Each participant was interviewed within 1-2 weeks of receiving his or her journal entries. The method was used to expand on individuals' narratives, and not to try to steer their account into contributing to collective meaning-making. To avoid letting "the voice of the inquirer…write over the voices of participants" (Clandinin & Huber, 2010, p. 439) and to maintain the participant-led nature of this process of narrative making, I used participants' statements from their journal entries to form the questions used (for example, by reading out to them a fragment of their entry and asking them to elaborate or clarify, as is often done by narrative inquirers). The interviews were semi-structured allowing for diversions from the list of questions to follow participants' leads and ask spontaneous probing questions, where appropriate. Interviewing was chosen—over, for example, further journaling or written/recorded asynchronous communication—as an appropriate method at this stage to widen the range of expression modes available to participants. In the interviews, participants often offered very quick, spontaneous answers, sometimes even before I finished asking the question. They also allowed them to digress more frivolously. While I am aware that spontaneously given responses in interviews might only be participants' first, perhaps superficial or rehearsed, thoughts (Nunkoosing, 2005), I believe, following de Sola Pool (1957, p. 192), that "these variations in expression cannot be viewed as mere deviations from some underlying 'true' opinion, for there is no neutral, non-social uninfluenced situation to provide that baseline". I argue this to be more of an issue in research designs that rely on singular isolated interviews, unlike my project, where participants had been invited to reflect on the

discussed topics before the interview (through journaling) and also engaged in co-analysis of their interview transcripts (explained below) following our conversation.

Unlike during journal writing, in the interviews, the presence of the researcher as an audience and an active collaborator in narrative and meaning-making is inevitable (Dortins, 2002; Esin et al., 2014; Holstein & Gubrium, 1997). I was entering each interview setting with a level of awareness—increasing as the project progressed—of the theoretical threads beginning to emerge from the data. I, therefore, must have unintentionally taken part in co-constructing these accounts through verbal (e.g., encouraging or sympathetic comments) and non-verbal cues (e.g., nodding, smiling, silence), through my personal commentary and embodied presence that partly revealed my sociopolitical and ontological positioning, and through the choices I made up to which parts of the narratives to inquire about further. I agree with Briggs (1986) that, interviews as speech *events* shape—in a fundamental, not incidental, way—what is being said and how it is said. Sharing a narrative within an interview setting with a researcher present is different to writing it down or recording it in a journal; the researcher's presence can be a reminder that the stories shared are now becoming a part of a larger narrative that is outside of participants' control. On the other hand, the researcher's presence and the way she interacts can reassure the participant of her trustworthiness, integrity, and good intentions in ways that would not be possible if communication was limited to written correspondence. Following every interview, I reflected on the interaction and the content of the narrative in my fieldnotes. Then, I transcribed the interview and proceeded to co-analyse it with the relevant participant. The processes of transcription, co-analysis, and fieldnote-taking are detailed below.

Transcription

I used dictation software to capture the words said in the audio recordings of the interviews and then altered this raw transcription by assigning parts of the text to the appropriate speaker and adding corrections and punctuation. The transcriptions were not detailed in terms of reporting how things were said (e.g., pitch, tone, volume, pauses). This was because I wanted to leave room for the participants' observation of such speech elements when they were working with their transcript and interview recording in the process of co-analysis.

Importantly, in this project, transcripts were not "accepted uncritically as…accurately reflecting the mental, social, affective and cultural components of…individual…performance" (Kowal & O'Connell, 2014, p. 65); audio recordings were used alongside transcripts in analysis to compensate for the only partial representation of speech that transcription can provide (Arvay, 2003; Chafe, 1995). Being aware that the transcript would be shared with the participant whose narrative it reported affected my process of transcribing. I spent extra time and attention double-checking every transcript with the recording before sending it off. Knowing that likely most of the participants had never read a transcription of their own speech (Forbat & Henderson, 2005), I considered removing fillers (e.g., 'like', 'you know') and false starts from the transcript, to make it easier to read. Nonetheless, upon careful consideration, I decided to leave these disfluencies in the text, to make it easier to follow the transcript while listening to the audio recording. I did, however, gently reassure every participant, before asking them to start co-analysis, that listening to one's own voice and reading it transcribed might feel odd at first and that speech disfluencies are very common in spoken language even among those with media training.

Co-analysis

In this project, it is not a transcript that is a data unit, but an individual's story, a narrative. Freeman (2010, pp. 85, 4) argues, however, that "the stories we tell are always provisional and revisable" and "[s]elf-understanding occurs, in significant part, through narrative reflection, which itself is a product of hindsight". This is why, I ensured my research design included the time and space for the participants to look at their narratives reflectively; on their own, as well as dialogically, in conversation with me. The interview was their first recorded moment of hindsight, the second one was their engagement with the process of co-analysis and the subsequent co-analysis meeting. Every participant had their transcript returned to them with a list of three analytical tasks that they were asked to engage with (see Appendix 7 for a complete co-analysis manual with more detailed explanation and examples for participants):

(1) Read the transcript and listen to the recording of the interview at the same time. Pay attention to what is not in the text (e.g., elements of speech, such as pauses, emphasis, pitch, hesitations) and try to reflect on whether the things you identified have any

meaning. Feel free to also reflect and comment on anything that you or I said or did not say.

(2) Read the interview transcript again, this time focusing more on the content. Try to identify the 'processes' that you're describing in your story, i.e., what is happening (e.g., feeling safe, showing understanding of my peer's position, becoming independent, appreciating…, hoping…).

(3) Answer three short reflection questions:

   a. You have just listened back to our interview. Is this how you would usually speak to a friend/parent/teacher/stranger/...? Did this conversation feel natural to you? What made it feel natural or unnatural?

   b. Is there anything that perhaps you did not get a chance to say or you were reminded of in the process of analysis of the interview transcript? Do you feel that what you shared represents your experiences well?

   c. What did you expect coming into this research project? How did these expectations affect your participation?

These tasks were designed to bring together, in a jargon-free form, grounded theory and narrative inquiry by inviting participants to engage with narrative analysis and action coding. This was to stimulate reflection on multiple levels; consider what was said, what was omitted, how things were said, and why. The intention was also to allow for comments and reflections that could go beyond the outlined 'rules' of co-analysis. Participants were encouraged to complete the tasks in their own time and within 2-3 weeks, however, owing to their individual circumstances, some only needed a few days, while others took several months before returning their analyses. This was expected, considering this research was undertaken during a global pandemic, when lifestyles and routines were disrupted for many. In the spirit of *co*-analysis, a collaborative process, I also analysed each transcript following the same guidelines. Naturally, in my analysis, I was unable to assign meaning to every pause or hesitation that I noticed in a participant's speech, but I was able to recognise them as something worth further inquiry in our future interactions. Similarly, some of the 'processes' that I identified in participants' stories were read between the lines, however, knowing that I would have a chance to bring them up with the 'storyteller' and verify, meant I was more confident in my interpretations. As the project went on and my researcher's voice—inspired by the grounded

theorist in me—was slowly making more and more contributions to this co-production process, the co-analysis was still ensuring there was space for doubt and questions and that my voice did not dominate the narratives (Kornbluh, 2015; Thomas, 2017). Once both pieces of analysis—mine and the participant's—were ready, I would compare them, draw some discussion points, and draft a schedule for the co-analysis meeting. Most of these meetings lasted for about an hour and involved looking at the interview transcript containing the analytical comments from both the participant and the researcher, to clarify, expand on, or otherwise discuss specific parts of the narratives. Such parts were usually identified where there were inconsistencies in participants' accounts given at different stages of the project, where I needed to verify my interpretations, or where extensive comments would be added by the participant at the co-analysis stage and they would raise further questions.

The emergence of co-analysis as a suitable method in this research project was twofold. First, it was inspired by Arvay's (2003) collaborative narrative method which, in a similar way to my co-analysis, invites participants (or, for Arvay, 'co-investigators') to comment on the transcripts of their initial interviews and then participate in the collaborative interpretation of the text in a subsequent meeting. While Arvay and I place analytical emphasis on different aspects of the narratives (for example, Arvay explores answers to a specific research question with his co-investigator, while I intentionally step away from my research questions and let the narratives take their own course), our objectives align. We both put reflectiveness (both researcher's and participant's), collaboration, and the dialogical nature of the research process at the forefront, to situate our research within the network of multiple perspectives that inevitably influence social science and knowledge production. Second, returning to Freeman's (2010) notion of self-understanding being developed through narrative reflection, I was aware that experiences and feelings around culture, identity, and the sense of community can be challenging to articulate for the participants. I wanted them to know that they would be given time to reflect and, where necessary, rephrase their thoughts. This thesis rather than recording complete and polished accounts of one's life and reality, presents multiple journeys of narrative exploration of how cultural identity and heritage can be constituted and negotiated. Co-analysis—in a similar way to Harvey's (2015) dialogic analysis—acknowledges the participants as capable and agentic theorists of their own stories

and helps to maintain a balance between the realness of lived experiences and the academic ways in which they are represented as research findings.

Co-analysis as a method can be situated within a broader body of literature on member checking (Thomas, 2017), and more specifically, enhanced member checking (E. Chase, 2017). Over the past two decades, member checking has evolved away from its positivist roots to begin to offer tools and practices that disrupt traditional participant-researcher power dynamics and situate academic analysis alongside the voices and interpretative inputs from studied individuals and populations (E. Chase, 2017). This has meant a departure from the practice of sending interview transcripts back to participants to request factual checks and allowing minor corrections (although, this form of member checking still does take place), and a shift towards collaborative reflective and analytical processes between participants and researchers. Unlike the examples of enhanced member checks available in the extant literature (e.g., Candela, 2019; Doyle, 2007; Harvey, 2015) that tend to introduce collaborative analytical methods to the discussion of the themes recognised by the researcher, the co-analysis I propose here invites each participant to look reflectively at the full narrative shared in the interview, both in its vocal and textual form, preceding any analytical input from the researcher. Co-analysis done in this way stimulates narrative co-production of more in-depth and layered individual accounts and guides the participants and the researcher into establishing relevant themes, or theoretical threads, collaboratively and inductively, hence, fitting well with the narrative grounded approach I adopted in this study. The method also promoted dynamic self-identification and invited the participants to embrace ambiguity and incompleteness, as it allowed for storying and re-storying over time, for changes of mind, and for narration through interaction. The input from co-analysis will be highlighted in young adults' accounts as they are presented in Chapters 5-7 and its role in knowledge production will be further evaluated in the concluding chapter (Chapter 8).

While certainly illuminating and productive as a method, co-analysis can be a difficult and unfamiliar task for participants to engage with. Out of a total of 15 participants who submitted their journal entries and met with me for an interview, three opted out of the co-analysis task, all justifying it with a lack of time to properly engage. Out of them, two agreed to complete the questionnaire (discussed below and included in Appendix 6) and answer—in written

form—a few interview follow-up questions each. While in no way as in-depth as the full co-analysis, the expanded questionnaire gave me an opportunity to verify some of my understandings of these participants' narratives without requiring them to spend significant amounts of time on the task. Unfortunately, it also meant that I was unable to elicit their unprompted reflections and analytical comments on the interview interaction, as would have been a case if they engaged in co-analysis. The final of the three (Raya) found the questionnaire "quite personal" and preferred not to share the information. She agreed for her journal entries and the interview data to be used as part of the study. The participants who did engage with co-analysis showed an impressive level of thoughtfulness and reflectiveness which not only deepened their narratives but also showcased their ability to consider their own experiences and the way they talk about them in an analytical way. As expected, some participants resonated more with Task 1 (speech analysis) and others with Task 2 (action coding), which demonstrated by the uneven distribution of comments and reflections between the tasks. However, most did attempt both tasks. Moreover, while I acknowledge co-analysis as a potentially empowering process that gives the participants more ownership over how their narratives are understood and interpreted, I am aware that unequal power dynamics might be still present in how participants navigate giving feedback to the researcher and how they approach the idea of having their analysis compared to the one done by the researcher. In my project, some participants felt comfortable enough to disagree with me in the co-analysis meeting and suggest other ways of understanding their words. Nonetheless, I cannot be certain that all such disagreements were vocalised, and if some were not, the participants' perceptions of the power relationship between them and I is a plausible justification. While pleased with the outcomes of the co-analysis, I want to reemphasise that my sample consisted of university students and graduates. As I advocate for incorporating co-analysis in future qualitative research designs, I urge researchers to tailor this method to the populations they study.

Questionnaire

As my research invites the participants to tell their stories and define their identities on their own terms—or even leave them undefined—I have debated whether asking them for their short-answer responses to questions about their nationality, ethnicity, gender, etc. (see the

full questionnaire in Appendix 6) would align with my onto-epistemological stance. In the end, I made the decision to use a questionnaire for the following three main reasons. First, the questionnaire allows me to situate the participants' social positionings in relation to the power structures existing in British society. "When it is said that people belong to a particular gender, or race, or class or nation, that they belong to a particular age-group, kinship group or a certain profession, what is being talked about are social and economic locations, which, at each historical moment, have particular implications vis-à-vis the grids of power relations in society" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). I do not (at least not consciously) see the participants in this research through the lens of the groupings that they chose to identify with, but I am aware that other members of the society might. The biases and tensions created when social groups are essentialised play a part in shaping immigrant-background individuals' lived experiences and identifications and, therefore, cannot be ignored. Second, the information collected in the questionnaire can be a basis for a summary—though very incomplete and simplified—of who is represented in my sample. Just by presenting an overview of participants' social characteristics, I can draw the reader's attention to the diversity within the sample and interest her in the further complexities of identification that will be unpacked through the narratives. Such a summary can also help other researchers quickly identify some of the similarities and differences between my sample and the populations that they study. Lastly, a questionnaire can be easily modified to include new questions that start to emerge as theoretically relevant but perhaps were not addressed by every single participant. To illustrate, as the study went on, I added a question about parents' occupations, to be able to better understand the participants' economic backgrounds and their potential relevance to the analysis. In an effort to ensure that my questionnaire did not feel to the participants like yet another form in which they do not see themselves and have to identify as 'other', I left the answer fields completely empty to invite personalised and open-ended responses. I also gave the participants a choice of leaving any questions unanswered. The questionnaire was shared with every participant at the end of their engagement, once rapport had been established and both written and verbal justifications given for collecting this kind of data.

Fieldnotes

Following every interview and co-analysis meeting, I took the time to write down my observations, reflections, and theoretical ideas in a form of fieldnotes (Appendix 8). This process began with structured notetaking on the setting of the interaction, the participant's demeanour and engagement with the discussed topics, and my performance as the interviewer, as well as on tentative theoretical coding ideas and any biases or assumptions that I noticed as potentially impacting the conversation. A great majority of reflection prompts included in these structured notes were inspired by Phillippi and Lauderdale's (2018) recommendations. Then, I would proceed to record, this time in an unstructured manner, any further observations, for example, noting parts of the narrative that surprised me or identifying similarities and differences in consecutive participants' accounts. As advised by Wolfinger (2002), I differentiated between any thoughts and observations that occurred to me during the interactions and those that became apparent as I was typing up the notes. Fieldnotes are an important tool that provides contextual data (both of a single researched meeting and the whole study as it unfolds over time), facilitates the identification of preliminary codes and themes emerging from interactions, and supports an iterative approach to research design (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). Also, perhaps most importantly, they encourage the researcher's reflexivity and acknowledgement of assumptions and beliefs underlying her thinking. Nonetheless, "irrespective of all formal strategies for notetaking, researchers' tacit knowledge and expectations often play a major role in determining which observations are worthy of annotation…Observations often stand out because they are deviant, either when compared to others or with respect to a researcher's existing knowledge and beliefs" (Wolfinger, 2002, pp. 85, 90). Having in mind that fieldnotes may end up reinforcing the very thing they promise to eliminate, I turned to Kathy Charmaz's (2017) concept and practice of methodological self-consciousness to further explore the impacts of my thinking presence on the interactions with participants, as well as on the project as a whole. I discuss my application of this practice below.

Research diary

"[A]ll knowledge is marked by its origins, and…to deny this marking is to make false claims to universally applicable knowledge which subjugate other knowledges and their producers" (Rose, 1997, p. 307). Aware that I cannot fully understand—and therefore, disclose—my positioning within structures of power that I am embedded in within the research project and the broader society, I incorporated into the project the space and time for continuous reflections on my biased ways of experiencing and interpreting the participants' realities and truths. I approached this project as an embodied process with an awareness that, with my involvement, I am also bringing into this knowledge co-production my emotionally engaged perspective, as well as my integrity and empathy (L. Finlay, 2003; Samson, 2013). I found myself attracted to Kathy Charmaz's (2017, p. 34) constructivist take on grounded theory, which, "unlike other versions…, locates the research process and product in historical, social and situational conditions". And while the language Charmaz uses, when she introduces the practice of methodological self-consciousness within grounded theory, seems to suggest that the researcher's tacit individualisms and unearned privileges can become visible—and I see this as more complicated—the self-inquiring questioning of the researcher's self that she encourages can, nonetheless, invite some highly relevant gazing into how and in what context the relationships within the research project are constituted. Charmaz's work prompted me to consider the meanings, worldviews, and language that I bring into the project, to examine the roles I occupy within the multiple pockets of society, and to maintain continuous interest in the instabilities of relationships and positions within those interactions that shape this research. These considerations, together with a few additional reflective questions inspired by Clandinin and Huber's (2010) research practice recommendations for narrative inquiry, helped me formulate a list of reflection prompts (see Appendix 9). These were addressed in my research diary where I considered my positionality as a researcher, an immigrant, and a co-producer of knowledge, and the implications these might have had on my interactions with this specific cohort of participants, and consequently, the conclusions I was able to draw. While I was able to reflect on my national and racial background, my migratory story, as well as where I might be positioned within the class structures in the UK, I am also aware of the possibility of unexpected commonalities and unique personality or positionality intersections between me and the participants that might have contributed to balancing out some of the

potential divisions between us (Nowicka & Cieslik, 2014; Shinozaki, 2012). Rather than trying to identify my positionality separate to the research context and separate to the participants' realities, in this subsection and in my approach to reflexive thinking, I focus on the interaction to highlight how it is within this relational context that anything about me and my positionality gains importance.

In order to bring my stories and subjectivities into the project before I began engaging with the participants' narratives, I decided to write my own journal entries using the prompts I was about to give to the participants: belonging, culture, language, family relations, and adulthood. This process of journaling helped me recognise where my personal and research interests might be originating from my own experiences and helped me engage with in-depth reflections on my story so that, during the research process, rather than remembering my own experiences I was fully invested in following participants' leads. As I returned to these journals after completing fieldwork, I certainly could notice parallels between mine and the participants' experiences and ways of thinking. For example, I too have to navigate my heritage as I become more and more embedded into British society and, similarly to the participants, with age, I feel more freedom and independence in this process ("I guess now I get to decide whether I want to carry [the heritage, the rituals] forward or not", my journal entry on belonging). I also can relate to the participants' frustrations with being perceived as experts in their parents' country of origin's culture and language ("I'm not an expert on everything to do with Poland. Don't ask me about the differences between the UK and Poland because you're asking me to essentialise, to perpetuate stereotypes", my journal entry on culture). Nonetheless, I think their narratives were more different than they were similar to mine. A lot of the participants focused on their experiences of making first friends, going to school, and transitioning into an English-speaking social context from a household where a different language was more commonly used. My narrative, while it mentioned childhood too, was mostly comprised of reflection on the more recent years. This observation reemphasised to me one of the biggest differences between me and the participants—I grew up in a place where I was considered a member of the majority, and most of them did not. The process of writing my own journal entries allowed me to establish different kinds of relationships with the research and the participants than I would if I merely maintained the role of an interviewer and analyst. I was able to tell the participants that I also wrote the

journals myself, reassuring them that I do not expect something of them that I would not be ready to do myself and helping close the hierarchical gap between them and I (Ellis et al., 1997). Writing my own narrative also helped me better understand how time-consuming and emotionally engaging this process can be and appreciate the challenges that the participants might have faced.

The writing down of the reflections on my positionality continued throughout the project to incorporate, for example, consideration of my racial identity as arising from interactions with the participants and as "produced in the ethnographic encounter itself rather than coming to precede the event" (Nayak, 2006, p. 426). This can be seen in my research diary entry following a co-analysis meeting with one of the participants:

> The reflection on my whiteness that [the participant] prompted was very important. She admitted to hesitating when saying that she was comparing herself to 'white peers' because she was worried it would come across as othering towards me. This was the first time in this research that *my* whiteness was pointed out to me…On the one hand, when entering this research, I felt even a level below my participants because I am (or I can be seen as) an immigrant and they were born in the UK and have British citizenship. On the other hand, racially I am white which may make some of my participants uncomfortable when talking about race and racism. When I go back to my journal entries that I wrote before starting data collection, I think I probably will not find any mention of race. This shows my privileged position. When my participants would mention 'white peers', 'white British', or 'the majority', I would also consider these groups us 'them', but actually they are in some ways 'us', I am a part of these groups in some ways.

As I went back to the transcripts of the interviews and co-analysis meetings, I noticed the participants' careful language when they spoke about racial discrimination in the UK. They would usually say they suffered it from 'the white British'. In a way, for the sake of this research, I am glad I am not 'British' in their eyes. This makes them feel more comfortable using this collective noun to describe oppression that, indeed, has been produced by a collective of people over generations. But, while the participants avoided openly acknowledging that I am a part of this collective, I do now, and I proceed to write this thesis with this awareness. I also acknowledge my inability to account for the untold parts of the

participants' narratives; the parts that perhaps were not shared with me due to my whiteness.[25] At the same time, I want to recognise that some of the participants—as Sabina shares in the quote below—accounted for 'race' in their experiences and reflections as more than the skin colour and discussed the politics and histories surrounding racial supremacy and oppression:

> When we're talking about white people, we're almost talking about the colonial white and obviously [my Italian friend] is not part of it…white covers a whole load of people and so does black. They're all useless descriptors.

This same participant told me that she did not consider me white. The research diary, therefore, was not only helpful as a tool for reflection and preparation prior to engagement with participants, but it also served as a reminder of the state of my thinking and identity at the beginning of the research process as compared to the more refined thinking following the study (e.g., as related to how my racial identity is shaped through interaction). This research project has inevitably prompted me to re-narrate my own identity and cultural heritage and the research diary helped me record these reformulations over time. Being able to experience this process of re-narrating myself informed the ways in which I then conceptualised the participants' accounts of heritage, self-identification, and collective identity.

Further analysis

Upon leaving the 'field', thanks to my engagement in co-analysis, I had already identified some initial analytical codes (some suggested by participants) and had a very good level of familiarity with the shared accounts that I developed by revisiting them at the different stages of the process. Co-analysis—while centred around analysis, as the name suggests—still generated a new level of detail in the participants' accounts. They shared with me their interpretations of the way they spoke, clarified certain ambiguous parts in their stories, and some even developed a thicker emotional description to accompany the facts and thoughts they were sharing. The written comments gathered in co-analysis remained part of the

[25] See Bhopal (2001) for participants' reflections on sharing more openly with someone who shared their ethnicity than they think they would have with a white interviewer.

interview transcripts that underwent further analysis. So did the fieldnotes taken in the co-analysis meetings and the audio recordings of the meetings.[26] The textual data gathered in this project (i.e., journal entries, interview transcripts with co-analysis comments and coding, fieldnotes) was then further coded within ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. At this point, the analysis was guided by grounded theory principles and theory development tools (e.g., incident with incident coding, memo-writing, constant comparison method) to identify the key processes involved in the phenomenon of navigating heritage and identity by drawing on several narrative accounts and exploring potential parallels in participants' experiences, instead of focusing on a singular narrative and its development as was done during co-analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Examples of codes and code groups that this part of the analysis yielded are included in Table 4 below. Once grouped, the codes and parts of the narratives associated with them were then put alongside each other in memos where, initially, only six narratives were analysed in detail. These memos, while firmly grounded in excerpts from the participants' accounts, began to turn more analytical and started to incorporate influences from literature as the process went on. The theoretical threads and categories emerging from the memos (e.g., cultural heritage as responsibility and debt, experiencing hybridity, agency in navigating heritage and identity) were, subsequently, 'tested' by using them as a lens to analyse the remaining accounts and to consider any compatibilities and divergences.

Having developed dense theoretical categories rooted in participants' narratives, I began to engage more closely with theoretical literature and available conceptualisations of agency, cultural hybridity, and navigating selfhood through interaction. This is when the works of Judith Butler, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Homi Bhabha were introduced into the analytical process and used alongside participants' narratives in formulating the thesis' key arguments and findings. It should be noted that upon identifying the theories and concepts for each of the findings chapters, in the first instance, I returned to my memos and worked again with the narrative excerpts that were foundational to my theorisation, this time, analytically gazing at them through the lenses of Butler's, Bakhtin's, and Bhabha's theoretical contributions. I then also consulted the broader body of data to identify other relevant quotes and ensure that a

[26] Due to time constraints, only parts of the meetings were transcribed.

variety of reflective accounts was presented, that no potentially contradicting statements were omitted, and that the findings were drawing on the stories shared in this research by *all* participants. Complementarily to this process, I also worked with narrative analysis techniques (e.g., identifying the core narrative, relying on larger story excerpts, focusing on the co-produced nature of the narrative and the role of the researcher and the other) when drafting Chapter 7 that introduces two of the participants' narratives in more detail (Riessman, 2012).

Code group	**Codes**
Navigating/exploring selfhood	- Noticing changing feelings around identity and belonging - Embracing not fully belonging (seeing positive sides) - Struggling to answer when asked "Where are you from?" - Starting to feel prouder of heritage - Caring less about other people's opinion - Identifying with multiple countries/being a "collection of things" - In vivo: "still trying to figure this out for myself"
Feeling the burden of heritage	- Experiencing pressures and hardships in the UK - Feeling embarrassed when her name is mispronounced - In vivo: "feeling annoyed and sad because of racism" - Feeling ashamed because of parents' heritage - Wishing for change - Reflecting on the struggles of being black - In vivo: "being looked at as second-class citizen"
Navigating heritage positioning	- Growing up being told that family/blood relations are very important - Noticing how parents might be culturally "conditioned" - Questioning family/cultural rules, traditions, and values - Wanting to speak parents' language more - Wondering about passing on the culture - Growing proud of one's background - In vivo: "a part is lost"
Showing agency and opposing	- Formally complaining about discriminatory behaviour - Contesting labels - Being at ease when disconnecting from parents' country of origin - In vivo: "now that I am older, I can be my own person" - Picking and choosing - Reclaiming the question ("What is it that you're asking me?") - Being different in a good way - In vivo: "as long as I feel like I belong here, then that's all that should matter"
Moving towards/away from belonging	- Becoming more independent - Becoming one's own person - Feeling comfortable with who s/he is - Feeling normal - Finding oneself - Moving towards "new" belonging - Redefining identity labels to see oneself as fitting

Table 4. Sample codes within code groups.

Combining methodologies and methods: overview

The boundaries between data collection and data analysis, as well as between drawing on narrative inquiry and following constructivist grounded theory, are not clear-cut in this project. While borrowing certain tools from two different methodologies, the narrative grounded theory approach was first and foremost developed to find a new way of accessing knowledge about storied and lived identities and establishing its potential implications for the theory of culture and self-identification. These goals were crucial to navigating the construction of narrative grounded theory in practice. The decisions made along the way are summarised in Table 5 below.

	Narrative inquiry	**Constructivist grounded theory**
Journaling	*Data collection:* ▪ starting with a broad open-ended question, allowing for the narration to come to its 'natural' end ▪ acknowledging the narrative's situational and incomplete nature and allowing for it to be revisited before it is shared *Analysis:* ▪ looking for opportunities to expand on the narrative, paying attention to the ways one expresses oneself (e.g., through different modes, such as image, reported speech, and voice modulation, in the case of recorded entries)	*Analysis:* ▪ line-by-line action coding ▪ identifying early interpretations and potential assumptions to be able to verify these with the participant later in the process
Interviewing & co-analysis	*Data collection:* ▪ seeking depth in the narrative through questions aimed at expanding the narrative ▪ formulating questions using participants' words (often quoting what they said/wrote in their journal entries) ▪ welcoming digressions *Co-analysis:* ▪ inviting participants to expand on their narratives or change elements of them upon reflection and in their own time ▪ acknowledging potential ambiguities and discrepancies appearing as the narrative is constructed over time ▪ paying attention to speech (hesitations, pauses, volume, etc.) ▪ considering each participant's contribution as a whole and asking her to reflect on how representative it is of her experiences ▪ welcoming comments from participants on the role of the researcher	*Data collection:* ▪ inevitably, as the project progressed, my decisions regarding which parts of the narratives I was inviting the participants to expand on were likely informed by the emerging theoretical threads *Co-analysis:* ▪ fostering attention to detail by encouraging dense 'action coding' ▪ inviting participants' reflections on the processes involved in storied incidences (e.g., feelings, consequences, thoughts) to create thicker, multi-layered descriptions and interpretations ▪ acknowledging the role of the researcher in knowledge production and facilitating discussion around early theoretical findings

Questionnaire	*Data collection:* ▪ welcoming narrative exploration of identifications within listed categories	*Data collection:* ▪ expanding the questionnaire to add questions that, over the course of the project, emerged as likely theoretically relevant
Fieldnotes	▪ taking notes acknowledging how, where, when, and to whom things were said, paying attention to the narrative as an interaction within a set context ▪ interrogating the role of the researcher within interaction ▪ *(in the post-interview notes)* noticing gaps in the narrative and potential for expansion	▪ noting down potential theoretical threads and similarities in narratives emerging across the different accounts ▪ interrogating the role of the researcher within interaction
Research diary	▪ following Clandinin and Huber's (2010) recommendations for narrative inquirers when formulating reflection prompts	▪ engaging with the practice of methodological self-consciousness encouraged in constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2017)
Further analysis	▪ limited further engagement with narrative analysis through centring analysis around the core narrative, developing interpretation from broader, more contextualised excerpts of accounts, and focusing on the co-produced nature of the narrative and its location within relations	▪ deploying theory building tools to guide the analysis (incident with incident coding, memo-writing, constant comparative method)

Table 5. Influences of narrative inquiry and constructivist grounded theory on the different stages of the research project.

4.5. Ethical considerations

In this project, I undertook to abide by Durham University's ethical guidelines and further ethical principles appropriate in geographical and educational research. However, I also understand my ethical responsibilities towards the participants and the disciplines I am contributing to as reaching beyond the well-established practices of data pseudonymisation, signing of consent forms, and storing the data in secure and password-protected digital repositories. This section outlines some of the most prominent ethical considerations that I engaged with in this research as I was finding ways to ensure continuity of consent, confidentiality, as well as negotiate the researcher-participant relationships and understand my responsibilities and powers within the research interactions and beyond. Ethical questions cannot be fully answered in one thesis section though; they "cannot be answered and tidied away for the duration of the project. In qualitative…research, by its very nature, ethical issues will be emergent" (Shaw, 2003, p. 25). The study participants are not mere 'data providers', but rather, human beings whose lives I have intersected on multiple occasions, and in some

cases I still do. Aware of my moral and ethical obligations, my human nature, and the power of research in its many forms, I committed to 'do my best' at 'doing no harm', humbly acknowledging harm as relative, subjective, and outside of my full understanding and control.

Negotiating consent

Consent forms, while institutionally necessary and established for a reason, fail to capture the dynamic processes that inevitably unfold in a multi-stage research project. "We might like to secure consent that is informed, but we know we can't always inform because we don't always know" (Eisner, 1991, p. 225). I believe, and strive to represent through my research practice, that conversations about data confidentiality and use should be ongoing and not limited to the early stages of participant engagement (Kaiser, 2009). Many authors have advocated continuous consent over the past few decades (e.g., Allmark et al., 2009; S. Chase, 1996; Nunkoosing, 2005; Richards & Schwartz, 2002), however, discussions of the specific practices of ongoing consent negotiations between the researcher and participants are still scarce in the literature (see Kaiser, 2009 for a notable exception). In my case, I made sure to include frequent, yet subtle, reminders for the participants that they are sharing their narratives as part of a research project. Firstly, when I provided their interview transcripts to them, I encouraged them to make corrections and feel free to remove anything they did not feel comfortable sharing. I also informed them that I was planning to 'clean' their speech of fillers, repetition, and grammatical mistakes before publication (I also gave them a chance to opt out of this), in this way reminding them that the stories they shared would be used in research outputs. Secondly, participants were invited to reflect on the co-analysis process and the process of reading through their transcripts and asked (in writing) whether the way in which the stories they shared were captured in our conversations was representative of their experiences. Finally, following the co-analysis meeting, participants were asked to fill in a sociodemographic questionnaire, in whose introduction I explained to the participants how I was planning to protect any identifiable data they shared and invited them to ask questions if there was anything they wanted to discuss further. Additionally, in our conversations, I mentioned to the participants in what ways I was planning to disseminate the findings and offered them access to these research outputs, as well as reassurance that their feedback would be welcome. One of the participants, before joining the study, expressed concerns

about the intended data use and strategies to protect his confidentiality I was planning to deploy. I suggested we would revisit his concerns at subsequent stages of the research once we are more aware of the type of data he shared and have concrete examples that we could discuss to decide on his level of data contribution (or withdrawal) to this project. This agreement is ongoing, as the participant requested that the drafts of some of the early research outputs that use his narrative are shared with him, so he can verify whether he wants to remain part of my project. Informed consent should reach beyond the agreement between the researcher and the participants on what and in what ways is shared in the researcher's publications and other outputs. Consent can overrun into the day-to-day non-research interactions and include third-party actors. To prevent the disclosure of confidential information to people not involved in the project, I instructed the participants to find a private space where they would not be heard before connecting with me for an online conversation. I also made appropriate accommodations on my end to ensure the research conversations were not overheard. This was especially important as my study took place during a global pandemic when most household members would stay home, making it potentially difficult for the participants to find privacy.

Anonymisation

In narrative research, where the researcher is given access to rich descriptions of participants' lives, relationships, and thought processes, data anonymisation is not merely the activity of name changing. It becomes a process of avoiding 'deductive disclosure' and engaging in ongoing consent to protect the anonymity of the participant and those mentioned in their story (Kaiser, 2009, p. 1632; Lahman et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). The study participants were informed that their identifiable data (e.g., their names, names of anyone they mention, disclosed locations, such as place of birth, workplace, etc.) would be pseudonymised. Moreover, I discussed with them how they can protect their anonymity by, for example, not disclosing my name or the title of this project in conversations with their friends and family. I explained to them that, while I can ensure they are anonymous to the general public, people who are acquainted with them would most likely be able to identify them amongst the small number of 'anonymous' participants in my project. I also sought further consent (from all parties involved) when introducing the participants to each other upon the completion of the

project. Participants were invited to choose their own pseudonyms in the final questionnaire, however, most of them decided to leave this space blank and handed this responsibility over to me. When approaching this task, I was aware that, "renaming participants…is not merely a technical procedure but has psychological meaning to both the participants and the content and process of the research" (Allen & Wiles, 2016, p. 149). This process at times felt like walking a thin line between choosing names that would work well within the narrative and avoiding reinforcing ethnonational labels (Lahman et al., 2015; Lulle, 2022). For example, if participants complained about people mispronouncing their names or misusing diacritics when spelling them, I tried to find pseudonyms that would suit these stories. I also ended up assigning English pseudonyms to participants whose real names were common amongst the British population and names that are less popular in the English language to those who carried such names in real life. In this process, I paid attention to the origin (the root) or the name itself, not to the participant's ethnicity or their parents' first language.

Rapport and friendship

I am unsure whether it was due to our shared age and some experiences, the fact that the pandemic made a lot of people seek human connection, or the need to even out the imbalances of unilateral story sharing (i.e., participants as sharers and the researcher as a listener in the study), but several participants have remained in contact with me after the study. I agree with Tillmann-Healy (2003) that some degree of friendship between the researcher and her participants is desirable in narrative research, and as such, I do not perceive the development of friendships within the project as ethically problematic per se. I want to acknowledge, nonetheless, my awareness of the different shades of friendships; 'friendships' can be transactional, reciprocal, imbalanced, and sometimes even difficult to get out of. Throughout the project and beyond, I strove to give the participants space and time to interact with the research tasks as well as find a way of interacting with me that is within their comfort zones. I wanted to avoid letting the research process or my presence intrude on their time and personal lives in ways they could have not anticipated when joining the project. However, while I provided the same information to all participants, it was interpreted differently. Participants ranged from those who wanted to continue discussing their narratives even beyond the project to one participant who when asked to fill in a

questionnaire as a final research task, jokingly said, "this research is a gift that keeps on giving", perhaps gently implying that he was finding this relationship/'friendship' difficult to get out of. While, in line with my university's guidelines, I informed the participants that, during the study, they might feel inclined or be asked to speak about potentially sensitive topics, I perhaps underestimated the value and effect that sharing of these experiences and stories would have on them. A few participants mentioned to me towards the end of their engagement how the process felt therapeutic to them. One even contacted me several months after his completion of the study to share that he had started seeing a professional therapist following our interactions. He mentioned that our discussions were an important first step for him to open up and start seeking clarity around previously unaddressed issues. I am aware, however, that regardless of my effort to 'do my best' as a compassionate listener and conversationalist, every positive experience might be matched with a negative one that perhaps was not disclosed to me.[27]

4.6. Conclusion

Grounded in poststructuralism and feminism and supported by conceptual thinking that draws on postcolonial theory, the methodology used in this project approached the exploration of the blurry boundary between cultural heritage, identification, and community by blurring the lines between narrative inquiry and grounded theory. This new approach, 'narrative grounded theory', appreciates participants' agency and subjectivity as they negotiate social reality and construct their individual and diverse experiences and conceptualisations. It draws on their accounts and a process of collaborative analysis to identify theoretical implications of their experiences and interpretations. By revisiting the narratives with the participants on a few occasions using various forms of communication and expression, I began to uncover the complex and multi-layered nature of each individual's storied live and identity, going beyond merely capturing what would feel true to them in one specific moment in time (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Perhaps surprisingly, even with the initial project engagement task being very open-ended (i.e., writing or recording journal entries the topics of belonging, culture, language, family relations, and adulthood), the methods did not

[27] See Allmark et al.'s (2009) review for a discussion of the therapeutic benefits and risks of qualitative research.

leave me overwhelmed by the sheer amount of unrelated data struggling to draw parallels or comparisons. Quite the contrary, the project drew my attention to how a lot of the participants' experiences, while often lived in isolation, are, in fact, a part of a larger story. A story that, instead of being centred around migration and cultural affiliations, has its core in shared reflections around hybridity, struggles to find understanding, and the search for ways to navigate complex identities and heritage positionings. A story that—as explored through both grounded theory and narrative analysis tools—can contribute to a better theoretical understanding of the complex relationship between the notions of heritage, culture, self-identification, and collective identity.

Knowledge in this project is acknowledged as co-produced, as emerging from within the researcher-participant relationship and influenced by the multiple dialogic relations with named and unnamed others that each individual involved in the project has navigated. As such, knowledge presented in this manuscript should also be understood as embedded within the sociopolitical context in which it is constituted. The narratives shared here—while, in many cases, impressively reflective and agentically reformulated—are formed and reported within the constraints of the linguistic repertoires available to the research participants and the researcher; repertoires dictated by the hegemonies that this research also tries to challenge. To minimise the influence of such constraints on the outcomes of this project, from the very start, I have applied extra care when communicating with potential participants, to avoid implying expectations of stable identifications with specific groups or affiliations and, instead, leave room for self-identifications to emerge through narrative. The next three chapters adopt different theoretical lenses to present and contextualise this co-produce knowledge. Chapter 8, then, will offer my concluding remarks, including a further evaluation of the methodology applied in this study.

PART II

CHAPTER 5: CONSTITUTING PARENTAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AS RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH THE LENS OF BUTLER'S THEORY OF AGENCY[28]

Discourse, social norms, and power relations not only create a social backdrop for the constitution of cultural heritage and its experiencing but, importantly, they continually operate throughout individuals' and communities' lives to determine what is possible and what is unthinkable within a social realm. On the philosophical level, still acknowledging the collaborative and analytical contributions of the participants involved in the study reported here, I echo Judith Butler (2008) in conceptualising all individuals as subjects rendered into being through norms and discourses in the process of subjectification. I see identity as socially situated and born and reshaped within the confines of sociality—a social reality where normative identity categories *produce* subjects rather than capture their pre-existing forms (Butler, 2008). This view of identity, Butler (2005, p. 17) argues as she comments on Foucault's (1985) refined position on the subject-discourse relations, does not deny the possibility of one operating critically within discourse, creating something new, and working on the self:

> This work on the self, this act of delimiting, takes place within the context of a set of norms that precede and exceed the subject. These are invested with power and recalcitrance, setting the limits to what will be considered to be an intelligible formation of the subject within a given historical scheme of things.

The theoretical advancements that I propose in this thesis are grounded in the understanding of subjects as discursively constituted; formed historically, culturally, and socially through subjectification and socialisation. I argue, here, that the individual's emergence into specific historicities and temporalities of the social world creates an interesting, yet difficult-to-navigate, context for cultivating responsibility and agency within a subject whose origins can never be fully accounted for. The notions of personal and social responsibility are theorised, in this chapter, as grounded in an ungrounded subject, and particularly a subject that

[28] This chapter was adapted for a single-authored publication in *The Geographical Journal* and is currently (i.e., February 2023) under review.

recognises her existence in between and beyond identity categories and predetermined social groupings. To start with, this chapter sheds light on the participants' awareness of being subjects entangled in the workings of discourse and dependent on the socialities they occupy. Drawing on the participants' narratives and Butler's theoretical work—in particular, *Giving an Account of Oneself*—I will show here how immigrant-background young adults' realities and identities can be understood as constituted by social norms and interpellated within their families and wider social contexts. I will then focus on parental cultural heritage, conceptualise it as responsibility, and explore the agentic ways of navigating it that might be available to young adults. I will suggest, however, and reiterate in the chapter's conclusion, that this evidence of agency does not imply immigrant-background individuals' capacity to indefinitely deal with these unjust consequences of heritage negotiations within a discourse that continues to marginalise them as 'immigrant Other'. Instead, I will offer that individuals' agency has a limited reach in face of xenophobic and racist ideologies rooted in colonialism and white supremacy that illegitimise cultural expressions which are perceived as 'non-British' and 'non-white'.

5.1. Subject contextualisation within discourse and social interactions

As discussed above, subjects are born into social norms and, as such, they cannot be of single essence and stable; the self is formed in relation to dynamic changes within the social realm. Butler (2005) extends on Althusser's claim that the subject is formed at the moment when she is hailed, or interpellated, by observing that interpellation is not an event, rather it is a process that is continually reiterated throughout our lives. Individuals' identities, realities, and even narratives are created within a repeatedly restructured chain of citationality, she offers (Butler, 2005). The effect of this continuous recitation of damaging social norms can be seen in the narrative contributions of the study participants.[29] One of the participants, Laura, who was born in the UK to Ugandan parents, discussed with me how she perceives herself and constructs her reality and ambitions through the prism of racial and gender categorisations. Her words also point to racism in its many forms (institutional, tacit,

[29] The effects of the continuous recitation of social norms will be experienced differently by individuals depending on their social positionings. The role of privilege is discussed further in this chapter.

microaggressions) intersecting with experiences of gender discrimination, providing an example of an intersectional relationship between different forms of subordination (Crenshaw et al., 1996), something that—even if not always explicitly stated in the analysis—echoes through other accounts reported in this thesis:

> Interviewer: Is that the only reason why you are thinking about moving to Uganda?
>
> Laura: It's the pressures of being black as well. It's hard. I haven't really felt it too much, maybe one or two times, but I hear a lot of things, especially in the workplace, in general society, there is a lot of pressure. You feel maybe you're not treated equally, and it's not overt, it's under the cover. Maybe you'll be getting paid differently or maybe you won't get promoted as fast as someone of a different race, who is not a minority race.[30] It could be a range of things. So, I feel like if I were living in Africa, since, obviously, it's primarily black people there, not that I have anything against other races (I was almost shouting when I said this to reinforce the fact that I like all races–race is a very sensitive topic),[31] but then you don't have to deal with that stress. Also, being a woman, it's hard. Being a woman and black is not easy. I listened to something, and they said that black women are probably at the bottom of, let's say, the pyramid of people in society. Black women are at the bottom. So, having to think about that…And also, the career I want to get into, banking, I don't think there are many minorities there, so even though people do go through it and they do succeed, I don't know if I want to deal with this, with being looked at as a second class citizen, I don't want that stress.

Laura not only has lived at the disadvantageous intersection of gender and racial discrimination but has done so in a social context that continues to interpellate her as a woman and as black, leaving her doubting the possibility of breaking the chain of citationality and seeing mobility between social contexts—into a context where she thinks she would be perceived as a member of 'minority'—as her only chance to escape. Laura, as she accounts for herself and her positioning, understands the structural constraints that being constituted

[30] Research supports Laura's claims. Gyimah et al.'s (2022) report records 42 per cent of women of colour reporting being passed over for promotion despite good feedback, compared to 27 per cent for white women. Ethnic pay gap disclosure is currently not mandatory in the UK (Gyimah et al., 2022).

[31] Green font will be used throughout the next three chapters to present comments that participants added to their narrative in the process of co-analysis.

within these specific social norms brings to her life. Even though, elsewhere in her account, she presents a more optimistic view of the position of the African and black communities in the West which she based on a documentary she watched, and claims that they and their cultures are "more embraced these days", on an individual level, she and her story of herself seem more entangled in those damaging and discriminatory intersections of social norms that she occupies. Based on the excerpt above, Laura's understanding of her position in the society could be misunderstood as rooted in others' experiences of racism as intersected with other forms of oppression ("I haven't really felt it too much, maybe one or two times, but I hear a lot of things"), nonetheless, as I will go on to show—when discussing Laura's conflicted position regarding covering her natural hair with a wig—she has been subject to symbolic violence based on the interpellated descriptors that society continues to use as a prism to perceive her through (black, woman, black woman) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Consequently, limiting her freedom of self-identification and contributing to Laura's continued view of 'race' as a "very sensitive topic".

The continual citationality of social norms and expectations takes place within families and communities, too. In addition to the pressures related to her gender and racial positioning, Laura also tries to navigate her relationship with parental cultural heritage and the sense of responsibility for performing—and perhaps also embodying, believing, and living—certain aspects of that heritage:

> I completely agree with those communities that push their children to learn, whether they're going to use the language or not. I think you should know it because it's like a part is lost. Let's say, if I marry someone who isn't Ugandan, then how are my kids going to know Luganda?[32]

Laura's account, however, as she shared in our conversations, was constructed alongside her experiences of being frequently encouraged—or even pressured and implicated as

[32] Narrative excerpts cited throughout the thesis originate from participants' journal entries, interview transcripts, and co-analysis contributions (either in a written form or as shared verbally during the co-analysis meeting). Where relevant (e.g., to account for the chronological order of narrative construction or to draw attention to whether the reflection was shared within the interaction with the researcher or in the process of independent engagement with the narrative), the specific sources of quotes are identified in the text.

'responsible'—by her grandmother to learn Luganda, the national language of her parents' country of origin. And, while she has received minimal help from her family in this endeavour, it, nonetheless, is her who is left with the feeling of guilt and unfulfilled expectations, which she made apparent when reflecting on her limited ability to communicate in Luganda ("It's a shame, I'm not happy about this. I feel dumb that I can understand but not speak"). This reflects Manosuthikit's (2018, p. 157) assertion—also echoed in Verhaeghe et al.'s (2022) empirical research—that the younger generation (i.e., children of immigrants) "is branded as culprits for language shift or loss". I suggest that Laura's feelings of shame are not helped by living within a social context that, on the one hand, inferiorises you for your linguistic heritage, on the other, expects you to capitalise on it, perceive it as a 'gift' (K. King & Fogle, 2006; López-Robertson, 2014; Piller & Gerber, 2021), and hold onto it as part of your identity (Blackledge et al., 2008; Oh & Fuligni, 2010). If the conditions of emergence are never fully known, as Bulter (2005) suggests, making the subjects unable to give a complete account of themselves, perhaps that 'part' that Laura is hoping to hold onto has never been there in the form that she imagines and her family and society expect. This is not to say that there is no merit in maintaining linguistic heritage, but perhaps—especially in those instances where it produces more guilt and indebtedness than it allows for an exploration of one's self and story—there is space for becoming aware of how this responsibility for maintaining something that you cannot fully know was born within social relations and as such is open to change.

The experiences and reflections shared in this project suggest that for immigrant-background individuals the process of navigating heritage language maintenance can be associated with a unique set of rules and expectations that other forms of cultural heritage perhaps do not carry. Based on the discussions with participants, I argue that language is both deeply cultural and political. As a cultural practice, language can be a carrier of the ancestral past and a connector to specific—although not stable—cultural backgrounds. Many of the participants also perceive it as an identity-forming element, mostly seeing it as a missing link, as Laura suggested before ("a part is lost"), that if learned and performed would help them feel more connected to the parts of their identity that they associate with their cultural 'origins'. Fia, of Kosovar heritage, echoes this sentiment here:

> I feel like I haven't tried hard enough to retain this part of my identity, I haven't practised the language enough to be able to be Kosovar when I go to Kosovo and speak with my Kosovar relatives. It's a shame, I am ashamed (this was said with conviction; in the same way as someone might say 'yeah as a matter of fact...')…Sometimes I wish that my command of the language was better to balance out the idea that my parents didn't enforce identity upon me, they didn't force me to be Kosovar, because they wanted to allow me to just grow the way I wanted to grow.

And, while elsewhere in her account, she emphasises that no one is to be blamed for her poor command of Albanian,[33] explaining that she neither blames her parents nor herself, there is an undeniable admission of guilt and shame in her narrative that might be arising from a sense of responsibility for the language as a cultural resource. I argue that this cultural responsibility emerges as a result of occupying a problematic sociopolitical context that interpellates and essentialises immigrant-background individuals as carriers of unified cultural identity and as bilinguals. A context that pushes them not only to associate with specific cultures or collectivities but also to associate with them in the specific ways that meet society's expectations; you should know your heritage language, otherwise, you missed out on the opportunity to be bilingual, on the other hand, you should not use your (non-Western) heritage language in public spaces, or you'll be perceived as an 'immigrant' and 'non-British' (see Badwan, 2021 for a broader discussion of linguistic essentialism and language in place and Welply, 2022b on the construction of the 'linguistic Other' in educational systems, policy, and practice). Moreover, alongside navigating the linguistic domination of English and symbolic domination of whiteness in the UK, Fia is also influenced by the complexities of the linguistic landscape in Kosovo and its perceived role as a site of identity and nation-building for Kosovars in post-war Kosovo and beyond (Demaj, 2022).

My evidence suggests that the cultural, linguistic, and racial privileges deeply ingrained in the discourse and relations of power present within the UK's migration politics, educational policies, and media reporting more broadly can also be citationally reproduced in and through

[33] Albanian is an official language in Kosovo alongside Serbian.

immigrant-background individuals' experiences of heritage language use. Adam, who self-identifies as a British German, shared with me his reflections on bilingualism:

> I feel incredibly lucky that I grew up bilingual, as it has given me a whole other worldview and enriched my life so much. To understand another culture, you have to understand that language. Being able to speak German gives me a very strong connection to my heritage and my family…Being bilingual also means that I find the acquisition of other languages easier, as my brain has a larger language inventory than if I were monolingual. This has undoubtedly helped me in my life and my degree, and it has played a large part in getting me to where I am today.

András, of Hungarian heritage, shared a similar view:

> I've always been proud of speaking another language living in the UK. Especially in earlier years when the majority of my peers were only just starting to learn French at school, my knowledge of Hungarian was a bonus and something I would gladly brag about.

Adam's and András's level of appreciation for growing up bilingual was unparalleled by my other participants, the majority of whom described their ethnic and racial backgrounds as other than white. This observation sheds light on the complex interplay of linguistic heritage, race, and discourse within the hierarchical ordering of language in the UK. Dina Mehmedbegovic (2017), for example, delineates the difference between what in the UK (especially in the education system) is perceived as a heritage language and what is perceived as a modern foreign language, bringing my attention to Adam's privileged position in this system that sees German as 'higher status' and worthwhile whilst attaching lesser value to languages such as Urdu or Luganda. In a similar argument, Verhaeghe et al. (2022) discuss a difference between what is perceived as 'good' and what as 'bad' multilingualism in Europe, asserting that European languages are generally more valued, while, for example, Arab and Turkish are not considered an asset. This, however, is not to say that German speakers in the UK can always occupy the position of symbolic domination amongst foreign-language speakers in the UK's linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991). When reflecting on not feeling a sense of attachment to any country or nationality, Adam mentioned, "I feel like most Germans don't feel like they're allowed to be proud of being German", suggesting that there might be

discursive obstacles to his capitalising on cultural and linguistic heritage, too. In András's case, while Hungarian is not a language taught in British schools, and as such is not legitimised through the education system, I speculate that thanks to the privileged position he occupies as a white person, as well as his parents' intention—though unrealised—for return migration to Hungary he was able to find a level of stability and pride in his identification as Hungarian. In one of his journal entries, he wrote, "What I believed quite strongly for a long time (until my teenage years) was that I was Hungarian through and through". András also described his joy in sharing his cultural background and practices with his peers, a kind of feeling that was not available to Laura, for example, who shared with me that, during her school years, she felt the need to blend in and strive to be identified "purely as British".

Although neither András nor Adam reflected on linguistic othering, this is not to suggest that those of European backgrounds have been universally spared or that 'white' is a homogenous category (Bonnett & Nayak, 2003). During the time when both boys went to school, the media 'moral panic' around the 2004 EU accession immigrants that, in large part, was concerned with language was likely still echoing through the education system (Welply, 2022a). In the context of this chapter, it is important to notice how privilege can facilitate the maintenance of cultural heritage and operate to absolve or lessen the burdening sense of debt that many less privileged immigrant-background participants carry. It also emerges as a complex, non-unitary notion that draws on a multiplicity of social positionings, discourses, and forms of power. What cannot be disregarded, however, are the assumptions of 'deficit' (in education systems) and 'otherness' (more broadly) attached to users of languages other than English that are rooted in nationalist and imperialist ideologies that construct immigrant-background individuals' linguistic practices as illegitimate (Kroskrity, 2021; Welply, 2022b). The emergence of these ideologies from a landscape infested with racism and white supremacy makes those in racialised bodies more exposed to linguistic othering and marginalisation (De Costa, 2020). Alea, of Pakistani heritage, provided a somewhat contrasting—to those of András and Adam—account of being bilingual in the UK:

> When I was younger, even up until my late teenage years, I didn't like speaking Urdu in public. And, again, I guess it was for this recurring reason here, just because it was weird,

> it was different, I wanted to fit in, I didn't want to stick out like a sore thumb, I thought it was embarrassing, so I would try to speak English wherever possible.

As the conversation went on, she did mention that now, as an adult, she "embraces bilingualism" and feels more confident using Urdu in public. This shift, however, as will be discussed further in the chapter, does not seem related to any drastic changes within the broad ideological and social context in the UK. What seems to have changed is Alea's relationship—and agency within it—to her cultural heritage and her positioning within society. Another aspect, one that likely enabled this agency, was Alea's transition to university where feelings of being supported by her peers coincided with her ability to look at her family's practices from a more distant perspective and with an opportunity to attach her own meaning to culture, language, and heritage (see Kebede, 2019; Min & Kim, 2000; Sundar, 2008 for a broader discussion of the transition to university/college as influential to identity formulation).

These social norms, discourses, and relations of power and privilege, while ever-present, inescapable, and impactful, do "not produce the subject as [their] necessary effect", as will be shown further in this chapter (Butler, 2005, p. 19). Butler (2005, p. 22), inspired by Foucault, acknowledges the role of these social and ideological influences in providing "the framework and the point of reference for any set of decisions [subjects] subsequently make", noticing at the same time that "we are not deterministically decided by norms". She recognises space for "agency or, indeed, freedom in this struggle", but also locates this opportunity for freedom "in the context of an enabling and limiting field of constraint" (Butler, 2008, p. 19). The subject's constitution and situatedness in the social world is "a site of permanent openness and resignifiability" (Butler, 1995, p. 50), however, "one invariably struggles with conditions of one's own life that one could not have chosen…[and] is [not] fully free to disregard the norm that inaugurated its reflexivity" (Butler, 2005, p. 19). As I showed above, based on Laura's, Fia's, and Alea's narrative account, the complex processes of ongoing interpellation and discrimination can affect how immigrant-background young adults perceive, interact with, and feel about cultural heritage. Alea for a long time limited her use of Urdu in public to avoid being interpellated as 'weird' or 'the other'. Laura, aware that there are parts of her heritage (i.e., her skin colour) that she cannot invisibilise and having felt

continuously excluded and othered—if not through her personal experiences, then the awareness of the marginalisation of black women in the UK—decided her only chance at being valued and feeling like she belongs might be in a place where she would be part of the racial majority, in Uganda. Fia, regardless of her parents' efforts to provide an environment where she could "grow the way [she] wanted to grow", has not been able to escape society's expectations regarding her linguistic identity and how it might be indicative of other identities. These examples show, how this theoretically possible process of breaking the chain of citationality and becoming agent, as per Butler's suggestion, can be particularly difficult to access for those marginalised through discourse. As I will go on to show in the next section, the sense of responsiveness and a responsibility to respond well are what paves the way to agency. The quality of the response is judged, however, under the conditions of discourse that disadvantages individuals with migratory backgrounds.

5.2. Parental cultural heritage as responsibility

My grounded theory analytical approach revealed a number of roles that parental cultural heritage plays in immigrant-background young adults' lives, including, for instance, forming an obstacle in social interactions and personal growth, or serving as an anchor that grounds the individual—although, I would argue, never fully—within a certain cultural sphere. However, the part that I identified as most theoretically dense was the participants' accounting for parental cultural heritage through the lens of guilt, sense of debt, and their attempts to ensure continuity of something—be it linguistic heritage, culture, collective identity—that in many cases they did not see as a representation of their selves and stories. In this section, I deploy the ethics of responsibility within the context of social norms and the unchosen condition of one's origins to consider how parental cultural heritage is constituted as a sense of debt, unmet expectations, and responsibility, and how the impacts of such a framing of parental cultural heritage manifest in immigrant-background individuals' narratives and lives. My argument will support Butler's—inspired by Adorno—claim that conceptualisations of the subject-ethics relationship should "mov[e] away from conceiving ethical principles as based upon the beliefs or convictions of subjects, and focus…on an ethics of responsibility that understands action to be…embedded" in a social context where consequences matter (Butler, 2003, p. 41 in Magnus, 2006, p. 92; Butler, 2005). It is this

embeddedness of the subject in social relations that, Butler (2005) argues, generates and shapes one's narrative capacity, which in return, becomes a precondition for assuming responsibility for one's actions. Through giving an account for the self—an account that is created within discourse and to be shared under the conditions of discourse—the subject finds herself responsible and guilty. While Nietzsche (1969, p. 93, original emphasis, in Butler, 2005, p. 14) sees this "*will* of man to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for" cruel and unexampled, in a contrasting view on the matter, Butler (2005, p. 18) paraphrases Foucault (1985) to suggest that:

> the 'I' engendered by morality is not conceived as a self-berating psychic agency. From the outset, what relation the self will take to itself, how it will craft itself in response to an injunction, how it will form itself, and what labor it will perform upon itself is a challenge, if not an open question.

The morality and sense of responsibility of the subject as well as her reflexivity— her ability to take herself as an object of reflection—inaugurate from interaction. They arise in response to a relation prompting reflection, and they are only possible in a subject that is responsive to the prompting and feels responsibility towards the prompter. Responsibility, in Butler's theorisation, is not simply a matter of response though, but it entails the urge to respond *well* (Thiem, 2008). The evidence in this section will point to the often-painful struggle with the unchosen conditions of one's life and the different aspects of the participants' reflections that lead them to feeling responsible for cultural heritage and guilty for some of the responses they produced.

As I explore the role and the origins of responsibility towards parental cultural heritage through young adults' narratives, I will be considering the different temporalities in relation to which the sense of responsibility arises. Starting with responsibility rooted *in the past*, Cam's and Laura's accounts serve as effective examples of how feelings of regret are produced retrospectively in reflection on what cannot be undone:

> Adulthood has also made me realise how stupid I was to lose my connection with my Vietnamese background. I have made a promise to myself to ensure that my future

> children[34] learn the language and understand their background more than I ever did as a kid. I am now making up for the lost time by trying to learn how to recreate my mum's classic Vietnamese foods and have been attempting to speak Vietnamese more to my parents. I talk more openly about my culture to my friends too, especially now that Vietnamese cuisine has become a lot more mainstream.

With age, Cam acknowledges how her narrative, or self-accounting, capacity and sense of awareness have changed to bring feelings of guilt and regret into the forefront of her account. She not only tries to operate with more recognition for her cultural heritage, but she also undertakes to "make up for the lost time" and even commits to bringing her future children up with more awareness of Vietnamese culture than she was exposed to in her childhood, potentially taking on more responsibility for Vietnamese culture and language than her parents manifested raising her. This, interestingly, coincides with favourable shifts in discourse which seem to legitimise Cam's exploration of her cultural heritage. Cam's account brings to the surface the risk of remaining stuck in the vicious circle of developing more self-awareness (without addressing the ambiguity of one's origins) and, in return, realising more responsibility; a risk that immigrant-background individuals face as they navigate parental cultural heritage. Without reconciliation and a better understanding of the unchosenness of their conditions and origins, they remain burdened with a sense of responsibility for something that is outside of their control and, in some cases—as Fia's account later in this section will show—impossible to fulfil. In other instances, the participants suggested that a sense of responsibility can also be generated by the prospect of guilt and regret *in the future*. For András, it was a responsibility towards cultural heritage as a resource and a calling to preserve it for the next generations:

> I definitely wish to pass on the Hungarian language to my children. It is in some ways a dying tongue, and as a native speaker, I feel it is my duty to pass it on to the future generation…Though my grasp of the language is weaker than my parents', I believe I can still pass on enough for my child to be able to feel comfortable navigating Hungary; meeting relatives, making friends etc.

[34] None of the study participants has children. Here, they are all reflecting on the prospect of becoming parents.

Unlike Cam, who regrets losing touch with the Vietnamese language and returns to this aspect of her cultural upbringing to "make up for the lost time", András considers himself a native speaker of Hungarian and his responsibility for the language is rooted more in a sense of duty, rather than guilt. He recognises his limited capacity to maintain linguistic heritage as compared to his parents and likely takes on a more manageable level of responsibility for the heritage language to Cam who wishes to do better than her parents did. These differences should be considered along discourses of race and structures of privilege, as discussed in the previous section, to embed the task of language maintenance within the broader hierarchal linguistic landscape in the UK.

The excerpt from Laura's narrative below shows her reworking her account to reveal feelings of regret and shame for her relationship with parental cultural heritage *in the past*. She also seems to realise that she might continue to hide certain parts of her heritage *in the future* as she acknowledges, "It's a work in progress". In a similar fashion to Cam, Laura commits to a continued effort to find a stronger, more comfortable connection with her cultural background:

> Coming from an immigrant background, sometimes people don't really understand the things that you go through and how your life is a bit different to someone who is, let's say, white British. So, I would say, 'to belong' is to be understood. You know, I wear wigs (I said this in a quiet and unconfident tone which points to the fact that I am not proud of this. I should feel comfortable wearing my own hair regardless of what society thinks. It's a work in progress…), I am black, and most people in the African community wear wigs, or they wear braids or weaves because it's quite hard to maintain our hair. It's super curly and to be managing that every single day is a lot of effort. So, we wear wigs to make things easier for ourselves (This is a justification as to why I wear wigs, but probably the primary reason is that afro hair is less accepted in the Western world which I was probably too embarrassed to say). Trying to explain that to someone who has no idea about this aspect of the African or black community, they'll be like, 'What the hell, why are you doing that, blah blah blah'. So, there is a lack of understanding I think.

Laura feels the responsibility to show pride in her origins and embodied cultural heritage. She also, when speaking to white people, opts for a practical explanation for wearing a wig, rather

than attributing it to racial discrimination which as she admits is the primary reason for her choices. This short excerpt from Laura's narrative reveals multiple burdens and intersecting responsibilities that she has to navigate as she performs the everyday task of getting her hair ready, a task that for her is very different than for those privileged to live in a society that recognises their embodied cultural heritage as valuable (Tate, 2007b). In a context, where "'race' structures social relations of power, hair—as visible as skin color, but also the most tangible sign of racial difference—takes on another symbolic dimension…within racism's bi-polar codification of human worth, black people's hair has been historically devalued as the most visible stigmata of Blackness second only to skin" (Mercer, 1994, p. 101). The first burden that Laura is trying to overcome, I suggest, is that of not being accepted by the society because of the deeply embedded hegemonic definitions of beauty that promote as desirable the physical features that those in white bodies are more likely to have. The second one surfaces when she manages to find a solution to the first one—i.e., starts wearing a wig—and she begins to feel embarrassed that she is hiding her natural hair and has to deal with the awareness that those around her will not be able to relate to her struggle and understand her reasoning. Laura's reflections on wearing a wig show how she is not only disadvantaged within the sociocultural context of the UK, but she is also made feel embarrassed for not feeling included ("afro hair is less accepted in the Western world which I was probably too embarrassed to say"). Here, Laura is juggling contrasting responsibilities. On the one hand, wanting to be proud of her natural hair and represent the black community, on the other, having to hide it to help Western society perceive her as its member. On the one hand, feeling a responsibility towards her narrative and a need to share a story that feels true to her, on the other, showing a level of responsibility for the collective narrative and trying to avoid painting her heritage as a burden.

The participants' relationship with parental cultural heritage can also become an ongoing negotiation of responsibility *across temporalities*, as Fia suggests:

> I feel like that's one area of thought where my cultural identity comes up again, when I ask myself, 'Am I going teach my kids Albanian?' I can't speak Albanian (therefore it would be ridiculous to hold myself to such an ideal like teaching my own children Albanian). I would probably teach them completely gobbledygook wrong language

> because my grammar is horrendous, apparently, according to my mom. But then would my mum and dad want my kids, their grandkids to know it…All these different dynamics about how I'm going navigate my cultural identity in furthering my family and what sort of emotions I feel around that. Whether I'll feel guilty if my kids have English names and speak English and I have an English husband or whatever. ('Am I going to feel bad about that?', asked as an open-ended question that I still don't know the answer to.)

Fia's considerations show how immigrant-background individuals may attempt to extend their narratives into the future and apply the ethics of responsibility to their current actions to avoid the prospect of guilt. However, this transcendence of temporalities cannot be fully known or controlled by them; I propose, this fear of indebtedness and guilt has a preontological beginning. The subject is formed in passivity in a scene that is unwilled and unchosen, in an act that happens before the subject's ability to act herself or in her name. Butler (2005, p. 88) argues, following Levinas, that "we are radically subject to another's action upon us", and that "there is no possibility of replacing this susceptibility" determined within our unknown origins "with an act of will or an exercise of freedom". It is within this susceptibility and unfreedom that one becomes indebted to the other, too. However, Butler (2005, pp. 87–88) adds,

> [t]his passivity, what Levinas calls 'a passivity before passivity,' has to be understood not as the opposite of activity but as the precondition for the active-passive distinction as it arises in grammar and in everyday descriptions of interactions within the established field of ontology…To understand this, we must think of a susceptibility to others…that is a condition of our responsiveness to others, even a condition of our responsibility for them.

Responsibility for heritage language—and, indeed, other forms of cultural heritage—therefore, has origins in interaction and, indeed, language and its limits. Butler's (1997a, p. 7) theory of linguistic performance notes how subjects can "do things with language", but it also assigns power to language, recognising the difficulty in distinguishing the doer and that to whom things are done in the subject-language relationship. The unchosen world that the subject emerges into is constructed of and through language. The susceptibility and

responsibility towards the other are embedded in norms of language that affected the subject long before her origin and the origin of her agency to do something with language.

In the quote below, Fia speaks about the sense of guilt that she carries for the unchosen conditions of her emergence and the sense of responsibility for knowing her 'mother tongue' that are rooted in traditions and expectations that predate her existence:

> I think being able to speak fluently in your mother tongue is one of the pillars, one of the main ways of honouring your cultural identity. And I think it's a lot to do with communication with your family. When I go [to Kosovo] and I struggle to articulate myself, I feel quite bad about that…because that was the least I could do being a child who went to England and was raised in England away from my family. When I go back, the least I could do is be able to speak fully with them, and I haven't kept up my end of the bargain (the shame really comes through in this utterance), if you will. That makes me a bit sad, but it is what it is (I don't think it's anyone's fault).

Fia feels indebted to her family in Kosovo ("I haven't kept my end of the bargain") as if her birth away from her parents' country of origin was her first sin. She was born into susceptibility and a social context that predetermined her relationality and responsibility for something she has had no freedom to choose or control. While, Butler (2005, p. 91) would argue, "[i]t is, in some ways, an outrage to be ethically responsible for one whom one does not choose", Fia is still obligated by virtue to her relationship with her family to make use of this "unwilled susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other". This kind of preontological responsibility is inescapable; the passive act of emergence brings the subject into being within a social realm that continues to make ethical demands on her, a realm that continues to promote a notion of homogenous cultural identity and to assign symbolic value to cultural resources (such as language) based on hierarchal structures and privilege.

This infinite responsibility that immigrant-background individuals carry, while essential to their ability to assume greater agency, sends them into a never-ending state of reconciliation. Below, Fia reflects on whether she would consider her positioning as a British-born child of Kosovars a blessing or a curse:

> [sighs] I think if I had to pick one or the other, I'd probably say it's a curse (despondently said, almost like giving in to this perspective that I was maybe resisting). I definitely struggled, especially when I was younger…So, it swings and roundabouts, but I think if I had to pick one, I probably would say a curse, because I think the difficulty in reconciling that with yourself is quite hard.

The participants' narratives revealed that, while they may try to, intentionally or not, downplay it ("quite hard") and might struggle to voice or phrase their thoughts and emotions around this process of reconciliation, this difficulty has had a large impact on their lives and relationships. Some of the participants admitted to having to seek professional mental health support as they experienced identity crises and depression. Some of their accounts resonate with Butler's (2005, p. 79) theoretical synthesis of the extent of the burden that subjects carry as they grapple with their inability to give a full account of their origins and assume responsibility within social interactions:

> If I am not able to give an account of some of my actions, then I would rather die, because I cannot find myself as the author of these actions, and I cannot explain myself to those my actions may have hurt. Surely, there is a certain desperation there, where I repeat myself and where my repetitions enact again and again the site of my radical unself-knowingness. How am I to live under these circumstances? Perhaps death would be better than to continue to live with this inability to render myself ethical through an account that not only explains what I do but allows me to assume greater agency in deciding what to do.

Butler acknowledges how dire are the conditions of the subject's reality where one who is not fully transparent to oneself has to take responsibility for actions that she is not an author of (e.g., Fia's birth in the UK). However, the above quote also positions these conditions as a site for agency. Responsibility is a sign of responsiveness to the other and discourse and, when it manifests within a self-accounting subject, one that acknowledges the limits of self-understanding and the conditions of her constitution within the social norms, it can inaugurate greater agency within the self and her actions. It is precisely this kind of agency within a reflexive subject that will be explored in the next two sections. What must be emphasised, nonetheless, is that availability is not synonymous with accessibility. Accessing

agency is a continued struggle to find reconciliation and remain an agentic self while facing a social world that actively oppresses you and judges your actions through a lens of social norms, hierarchical structures, and relations of privilege and power, but also, at the same time, being aware of your responsibility for the unwilled and unchosen conditions of your origin.

5.3. Agency: breaking the chain of citationality

Agency understood as one's ability to act on one's will and shape one's own story has no meaning outside of the context of the repeated performance of recognisable social norms. "Our capacity to reflect upon ourselves, to tell the truth about ourselves, is correspondingly limited by what the discourse, the regime, cannot allow into speakability" (Butler, 2005, p. 121). Therefore, agency exists within the limits of discourse and subjectification and is accessed through the introduction of difference into this process of continual reiteration of social norms (Butler, 1993). The gaps in the chain of citationality become a location of agency and a site of recognition that repetition is necessary for social norms to retain their power, suggesting they are not universally powerful and can be subject to change:

> Painful, dynamic, and promising, this vacillation between the already-there and the yet-to-come is a crossroads that rejoins every step by which it is traversed, a reiterated ambivalence at the heart of agency. Power rearticulated is 're'-articulated in the sense of already done and 're'-articulated in the sense of done over, done again, done anew. (Butler, 1997b, p. 18)

Paradoxically, Butler (1997) argues, the subject emerges into a dependency relationship with discourse, however, it is also this same—although 're'-articulated—discourse that constitutes a context for agency to inaugurate and be sustained. It is often this responsiveness to and *responsibility for another*—that I discussed in the previous section—that urges one to continually perform norms that put her at a disadvantage. "I begin my story of myself only in the face of a 'you' who asks me to give an account" (Butler, 2005, p. 11), and through this account, prompted through relation and shared under the conditions of the scene of address, I may give into the chain of citationality or attempt to break it. In this section, I will show how immigrant-background individuals can challenge the citationality of norms, however, I will

also argue that there are limits to such an agentic stance. The section concludes with an overview of other avenues that immigrant-background individuals navigate to develop a greater sense of independence and ownership of their narratives and identities.

To start with, Alea's recounting of a racist incident she fell victim to serves as an effective example of discourse being re-articulated to allow for more agency:

> When I was 15 or 16, I had my first experience of racism in public. I volunteered at a charity shop and this elderly woman came up to me and said, 'It's because of people like you that the world is a terrible place'. I was just so shocked and taken aback because I've never had someone say something like that to me before. It really hurt because I would always be thinking, 'I fit in and I want to make myself fit in, and I want to be Scottish', but to have other people say to me, 'you are not one of us, you're different', it made me feel really different…It was escalated to the police as my manager was there and I told her what happened…We filed a complaint together. The store didn't have CCTV footage, so it was impossible to track down who the lady was, and she wasn't a regular. So, it would just be a case that if I saw her, I would recognise her, but that was it. The police came to my house, and we had a bit more questioning…Then a few weeks later, I got a phone call, and they said, 'you're going get a letter in the post for a court trial if we ever find the lady because it is a crime, and she could be prosecuted for it'. I didn't realise it was that serious. And I was like, 'Oh, whoa, really?', and they said, 'Yes, this is a serious crime'. And obviously, I think I mentioned that before, when you're in school and you complain that someone said something about you, teachers say, 'Oh, just brush it off, it's fine, it's not a big deal', and then to have this realisation, wait, it is a big deal, you need to report stuff like this, you need to stand up against it. And then, I think that really hit me hard because all my life I was taught to just deal with it and learn with it, and now I know this is not okay.

The incident described above was Alea's "first experience of racism in public", however, she also shared with me other stories of being discriminated against based on her race which took place in her schools. Alea felt unheard and silenced within the school system. The discourse that she was continuously up against when trying to oppose racism was operating to illigitimise Alea's experiences, reiterate the narrative that they are not valid, that her

emotions were out of place, and that the oppressor should be given the benefit of the doubt and protected. Retrospectively, as Alea reflects on it, she recognises how powerful schools—often perceived as trustworthy institutions—can be in reproducing damaging social norms:

> Alea: I think I mentioned in my journal that I had some bad experiences in high school, especially with one teacher and that really brought me down because, you know, a teacher is someone who you trust…
>
> Interviewer: Do you remember what he said?
>
> A: What did he…? Honestly, it's been so long that I can't remember what he said (I did remember but I didn't want to say. He had asked me a question which I didn't know the answer to. He stated that I wasn't listening because I was listening to music with earphones under my headscarf, and he said that for all he knew I probably was using earphones all the time and I would actually know the answer if I was listening to him. I remember when he made this remark I felt extremely embarrassed and nobody in my class said anything about it.), but I remember being so taken aback by it, and obviously, when he apologised to me, he didn't do it of his own accord, it was because I'd made a complaint (to my guidance teacher) and he then told me, 'Oh, don't tell anyone I apologised' (I think he said he couldn't be racist because he had Sikh friends who wear turbans. I think he was trying to justify his remark.). So, obviously, other students in my class whenever he made that remark towards me, they thought, 'Oh, it's okay to say something like this', because you see an adult doing it and then you want to mirror that (I don't think I meant to say 'want', just by nature you mirror that).

With regard to the incident at the charity shop, Alea's agency manifests subtly in her ability to oppose and call out a racist remark, even though in the past she had been told and taught to tolerate and "brush off" similar instances of discrimination. She regains confidence in her actions and is met with acceptance from other members of society (her manager, police officers) and with a form of institutionalised acceptance that legitimises her resistance and acknowledges her struggle. Importantly, Alea's retelling of these two stories of navigating racist responses to her cultural heritage is different. She openly shares the details of the incident from the shop, but in the same interview, she avoids revisiting the experiences of

racism in school and how the complaint made there were treated. This might be because her resistance to racism in school was not validated back then. She only decides to elaborate during co-analysis. A comparison between these two situations and Alea's accounting of them sheds light on how prevailing discourse and reiteration and legitimisation of dominant social norms could be keeping immigrant-background individuals away from realising their agency and advocating for themselves. While Alea might never get a chance to testify against the racist charity shop customer, she can (and does) use this story and the police's affirmation "this is a serious crime" to oppose future acts of oppression with more confidence and agency and to share her experiences having an awareness that her perception of and reaction to what happened was recognised as valid.

In Cam's narrative, on the other hand, I see an example of the dominant social context in the UK supporting a weakening of the chain of continuous reiteration of gender roles that older members of the Vietnamese diaspora seem to adopt. This, in turn, affords Cam more space for agency:

> Although the family-orientated culture is something I really like I don't like the fact that my dad was seen as the head of the family. My mum has never had to get a job because my dad has always earnt money for the family. This does mean though that my mum has to do all the gender stereotypical activities like cooking all his meals, looking after me, my brother and my sister all by herself, cleaning the house and doing as my dad asks of her. I always hated this growing up because I saw how my mum just tolerated this. When my dad tried to do this to me and get me to do things for him, instead of asking my brother, I would feel so angry and annoyed. But this was normal for us because my cousins' families were the same…Now that I am older and I can be my own person, my dad doesn't really bother me so much, but the strict gender roles are still very real between my mum and my dad.

Cam, while constituted within certain social norms and traditions and exposed to the dominant discourse, with age, has deepened her self-awareness and criticality, and has developed views that do not align with those of the rest of her family. I argued earlier in this chapter that immigrant-background individuals' relationship with parental cultural heritage is socially embedded and burdens them with significant levels of responsibility. And, while

Butler (2005) suggests the lesser role of subject's beliefs and convictions in light of this dependency on sociality, I recognise—drawing on Cam's narrative and similar evidence regarding opposition to gender norms emerging from Kebede's (2017) study of "second-generation Ethiopian-American professionals"—how immigrant-background individuals can make agentic decisions that resist these ethics of responsibility. However, I suggest, this needs to happen under favourable conditions, for example, when one's convictions oppose traditional values in ways supported by dominant discourse, as it was in Cam's case.

Further, as can be seen in Alea's reflections on wearing a headscarf, the opportunity for agentic decision-making and opposing the ethics of responsibility can be enabled by mobility between social contexts:

> I wore it because I'd seen my mother wearing it growing up. She had obviously discussed it with me (I forgot to say that she basically told me that at some point I would wear it and it is easier to start wearing it while you're young rather than when you get older), and I thought, 'You know what, sure, I'll wear it'. For me, it wasn't a religious thing, I just wore it because I've seen my mum and other women of Pakistani background wear it. It's just a thing we do, so I wore it. But then, with that, I noticed behavioural differences towards me as well. Especially when I was volunteering in the charity shop, I think I mentioned, when I had my first proper racial aggression and I was like, 'Oh my god, did this really happen?' So, I wore that throughout high school and then I went to university and you become your own person a bit more, become more independent, and then I decided I didn't want to wear it…I wasn't wearing it because of its significance, obviously, in the Islamic religion, it has significance of wearing it, I wasn't wearing it because of that, I just wore it because it was a thing that I saw other people do, I saw my mum do. So, I realised, 'I'm not wearing it for the right reasons', and personally, even though I do identify as Muslim, I didn't see it as a necessary requirement. So, I took it off, I don't wear it anymore. But at university, even when I was wearing it, and even when I stopped wearing it, it didn't cause any differences in the behaviour of other people towards me. So, even when I wore it, I was still treated the same as when I didn't wear it, if that makes sense…I was surprised that no one ever commented on it, no one ever treated me any differently. I do think, again, that when you come to university, you're exposed to a lot

> of different things, people are a little more mature and educated and I think especially at university a lot of people tend to be more left wing. So, um, there was never any sort of aggression.

For Alea, moving away for university marked a beginning of a stage in her life when she started to navigate her identity and parental cultural heritage with more independence and agency. She started to recognise that she might have followed certain traditions because that was expected of her and because, even though she was aware it did not align with her beliefs, she was enmeshed within the ethics of responsibility operating in the social environment of her family house and the place where she grew up. In my interpretation of Alea's decision, I do not see it as an act of opposition to the tradition of wearing a headscarf and the religious and cultural significance behind it. Alea did not take it off the moment she left home; she said she continued wearing it throughout her first year at university. Alea's agency manifests in her transition to trusting and following her beliefs and convictions and questioning the relations of power and responsibility that she was born into. Upon her move to university, she became a more aware wearer and non-wearer of the headscarf, which, I argue, was facilitated by her mobility between social contexts. Mobility into a context that she found more accepting of her being the way she wanted to be, a context that allowed for more independence and self-awareness, as well as mobility away from a context that required her to re-enact cultural practices and traditions that she did not find fitting with her unique versions of Pakistani identity and Muslim identity that she continues to agentically construct. Alea's surprise at being allowed space to make her own decision is important here too. As Heidi Mirza (2013, p. 6) argues, "a woman's right to wear the veil should be a matter of choice whether it be a personal, religious, or political one". In Alea's case, however, it was not until she entered university that she found herself in a context where she could exercise her rights and agency without facing the consequences of not following her family's expectations and being treated differently in other social encounters, often with racial implications.[35]

[35] A further discussion of the politics of head covering and the forms of agency that women can exercise in relation to this practice is beyond the scope of this thesis. It can be explored, however, through the work of Chapman (2016), Mahmood (2005), Bilge (2010), or Williamson and Khiabany (2010), as well as in Meijer and Prius's (1998) interview with Judith Butler.

Immigrant-background individuals, as they commence their quest—whether intentional or not—to break the chain of citationality of traditions and norms, might be setting out to conquer not only those specific ideas deeply ingrained in the everyday functioning of society but also the context within which these ideas are established and reiterated. Fia's reflections on adopting her friend's positive views "blindly" point to the complex and multi-layered task of narrating the relationship with parental cultural heritage:

> Interviewer: You said in your journal, 'I don't think I really belong to either group, either culture fully, but it means I sit somewhere between and I get quite a nuanced image of each culture which, I suppose, is something valuable'. But you also talked a bit about the difficulties in trying to think about your identity and belonging, and I was wondering whether it is more of a blessing or a curse, this situation that you are in. How do you see it?
>
> Fia: Interesting question. To be honest, this view actually only came up…I have a friend and her mum is Japanese, her dad is Italian and she was raised in Milan, and she was doing her dissertation on the whole 'sitting in between these two cultures', because when she's in Italy she doesn't look like her friends, so she doesn't feel European enough, Western enough (interesting that I used 'enough' here, I'm not sure what prompted that because it sort of implies there's a quantifiable amount of Euro/Western that you should be? Which isn't something I remember her insinuating to me in our discussion.), and when she's in Japan she doesn't feel Japanese. And she was talking to a professor about it, I think from a Japanese university, and it was through that conversation that she came up with this idea and brought it to me. This idea about how not being a part of either culture and not being fully entrenched in one cultural group means that you can see both groups differently. So, I think, in a way, it's a blessing because it gives you a bit more of an abstracted perspective on cultures, it makes it almost more accessible (maybe not 'accessible' but more of an option; you are more empowered to view culture and cultural values as less static because you are not bound tightly to a group) to pick and choose cultural values that you resonate with without feeling like you owe it to one group or another to fully conform in some sort of way. (Upon reflection, I do think I adopted my friend's view here quite blindly because it feels

nicer cognitively to feel good about this competition of cultures, but as I go on to say, I probably would emphasise the 'curse' stance.)

It has been suggested in the literature that immigrant-background individuals might, as Fia initially reported, perceive growing up in and between multiple cultural settings as an opportunity to get "the best of both worlds" (cited in both Hosany, 2016 and Jeon, 2020). What Fia's account reveals, however, as she develops it through co-analysis, is that such positively charged statements might fail to encompass the burdens (or the cost, as I suggest in the next paragraph) of the unique circumstances and sociocultural worlds that young adults with migratory background attempt to agentically navigate. The participants in this research have shown awareness of those potentially rewarding sides of their cultural positionings, nonetheless, overall, the difficulty in reconciling the responsibilities, expectations, and discrimination that they face was more prominent in their accounts than the positive outlook. While highlighting agency in this research could be read as suggestive of immigrant-background young adults' freedom and power to control and shape their own realities, for many this will not be the case. Rather, what I argue is that even the reflective, aware, and agent individuals that participated in my research struggle to find peace, understanding, and opportunity for choice as they navigate their heritages and identities amid the day-to-day reminders (or, interpellation) of their position as 'different' in the eye of discourse.

Agency is limited in society where those in power strive to protect their hegemonic stance and do not want those marginalised through discourse and lacking privilege to identify the possibilities for change within the chain of citationality. The accounts presented in this section showed how the participants were able to gaze critically at the roots of the sense of responsibility that they felt towards cultural heritage and follow their beliefs and convictions to oppose some of the norms, practices, traditions, and identifications imposed on them by their families and others. Cam made a conscious decision to resist gender norms that her parents continue to perform. Alea realised that she was only wearing a head covering because she saw others in her family and the Pakistani community do that, and she decided to discontinue the practice upon recognising that she was following it to meet others' expectations, rather than for the symbolism it carries. The participants' narratives also shed light on the importance of validation and legitimisation—whether it comes from the police,

peers at university, or broader society—of these attempts to break the choice of citationality. Finally, as Fia's account suggests, the influence of the ethics of responsibility—the call to respond *well*—can be difficult to distinguish from one's beliefs and convictions, which takes me back to the earlier discussions in this chapter regarding the subject's constitution in the social world and the effort it might take to resist being deterministically decided by the norms. Butler (2005, p. 120) asks, "How much does it cost the subject to be able to tell the truth about itself?" and claims that the price of agency cannot be known to the subject, but this inability to find an answer does not stop one from posing the question. This, I argue, could constitute an added hurdle for immigrant-background individuals to overcome when trying to account for cultural heritage. As I have shown so far based on the participants' narratives, many of the young adults I spoke to feel burdened with feelings of responsibility for the conditions they emerged into and with the prospect of guilt in the future if they do not navigate their relationship with parental cultural heritage in the right way. Many of them are also already aware that they cannot know the 'right' way to go about this. Agency inaugurates within a regime of truth which is not chosen or shaped by these individuals, and which is subject to subsequent change:

> [A]s we do tell the truth, we conform to a criterion of truth, and we accept that criterion as binding upon us…So telling the truth about oneself comes at a price, and the price of that telling is the suspension of a critical relation to the truth regime in which one lives. (Butler, 2005, pp. 120–122)

I applaud those who take on the task of exercising agency under these difficult conditions, and I am particularly grateful to the project participants for sharing their truths and skilfully navigating the scene of address and the truth regime that we constituted together in our interactions.

5.4. Agency and intersubjectivity

Agency viewed as subjects' inclination and ability to oppose social norms that oppress them, as was discussed in the previous section, is extremely limited and challenging to establish within the confines of discourse and the specificities of social contexts one occupies. I argue, however, that immigrant-background individuals can also traverse other avenues to re-

establish themselves as more agentic. In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Butler (2005, p. 134, original emphasis) expanded her conceptualisation of agency beyond the view of agency arising within the gaps in the chain of citationality, to look more closely at intersubjective relationships:

> When we come up against the limits of any epistemological horizon and realize that the question is not simply whether I can or will *know* you, or whether I can be *known*, we are compelled to realize as well that 'you' qualify in the scheme of the human within which I operate, and that no 'I' can begin to tell its story without asking: 'Who are you?' 'Who speaks to me?' 'To whom do I speak when I speak to you?'

This agency through intersubjectivity, as Butler suggests, paradoxically begins in an inability to give a full account of oneself. A "new sense of ethics" can be found in the "willingness to acknowledge the limits of acknowledgement itself" (Butler, 2005, p. 42). The consecutive and continuous incompleteness of the self within this ever-changing intersubjectivity—the need to self-identify to and through the other—creates space for freedom and agency. An agent self is a narrative self that acknowledges the limits of her knowledge of herself and sees her unknown conditions of emergence as liberating from the bounds of interpellation and reinforced unified cultural identities. Therefore, the role of an agent self is not to produce a final subjective narrative, but to continually "attempt to not close down the task of narrative itself" (Simmons, 2006, p. 86) and to theorise—but not account for—her emergence. In this final section of the chapter, I consider how through self-reflection and realisation of the limits of one's knowledge, immigrant-background individuals navigate responsibilities related to parental cultural heritage and exercise agency as narrative selves finding freedom in ambiguity. I will argue that immigrant-background individuals can manifest agency as they critically embrace their parental cultural heritage and try to make sense of their social and temporal positionings. This is not to disregard the workings of the discourse and the burdens of responsibility, but to acknowledge immigrant-background individuals' perseverance amid it all.

In the excerpts below, Laura and Fia identify this space for agency and freedom within the cultural ambiguity that has shaped their realities:

> I have come to the conclusion that I neither truly belong to the UK nor Uganda. When I was younger this did bother me quite a bit, not having a sense of truly belonging to one specific place. However, as I have gotten older, I am now embracing this aspect of myself. I actually like not belonging to a particular place. This has enabled me to be open and identify with so many people from different backgrounds…[L]ooking back to how I felt in high school in comparison to how I feel now I can say I am a lot surer and more confident in myself, my background and SURNAME [Laura's capitalised surname redacted]. The experiences I have had with belonging, language, culture, and family relations have certainly evolved over the years for the better.

With age, Laura has found more acceptance for and confidence in the parts of her cultural upbringing that she can acknowledge as inherited, such as her surname, her background, and her skin colour. She realised that she is unable to control certain parts of who and how she is and that it is not her role and within her power to change the social environment around her. However, Laura also recognises what she can influence. She notices shifts in how she feels about her cultural identity and manages to exercise agency by exploring its fluid nature. She finds some comfort in this state of in-betweenness. Fia, though in a different way, also has managed to let go of some responsibility for certain aspects of her parental cultural heritage:

> Culturally speaking, the culture in Kosovo is very different to that in England. I probably wouldn't even consider Kosovo Western in terms of the culture. It's quite, what we might call backwards thinking. There's a lot of racism, there's a lot of sexism, there's a lot of homophobia, a lot of very traditional attitudes…like attitudes towards men and women. There are a lot of traditions that people obey. So, I remember one example, when my Nana died, she was buried in Kosovo, she had a Muslim burial because she was being put into the same grave as my grandad, and he had a Muslim burial, and she didn't want to disturb the grave, even though she didn't believe in that. But as a result, we then had a Muslim wake, I suppose that's what you'd call it, where the men and the women stay in different places. This could be two different rooms in a house, or two different houses next to each other, which is what we did. The women will go visit the women, and the men will visit the men, and they're kept completely separate. So, I didn't see—it was my dad's mom—and I didn't get to see my dad for three or four days. I was with my mum and my auntie which, obviously, it was nice to be with them, but it

> definitely didn't feel very natural. My auntie couldn't be with her brother in this time. So yeah, culturally I don't feel like I resonate very strongly with the Kosovar culture, especially because I consider myself quite progressive.

Fia consciously positions herself in disagreement with some of the values that she sees in the "Kosovar culture". Her agency does not manifest through attempts to oppose tradition and interrupt the process of reiteration of long-held norms. Fia finds agency by being able to disassociate from certain aspects of the Kosovar culture that she does not resonate with, and retell her story—prompted by the other, but relevant to the self—in a way that establishes her as an agentic, self-reflexive subject navigating her identity within the limits of discourse. This is likely aided by her upbringing in the UK and her parents' own reflective journeys and how these manifested in their parenting and their relationships with their cultural backgrounds. Other participants (e.g., András, Tommy, Danuta – see participants' profiles in Table 2) also spoke about distancing themselves from certain cultural traditions or values, pointing to the possibility of a more affirmative notion of agency, where it does not only emerge through resistance to oppression but also has creative capacities in producing freedom and subjectivity (Magnus, 2006).

While often described by the participants as oppressive, especially when accounting for their relationships with parents and socialising in predominantly white British contexts, intersubjectivity and dependence were also viewed by some as empowering means enabling access to agency. Subjects are embedded within socialities and so is their agency, whether it emerges from negative or positive relations. Butler (2005, p. 63) notices,

> Something is being done with language when the account that I give begins: it is invariably interlocutory, ghosted, laden, persuasive, and tactical. It may well seek to communicate a truth, but it can do this, if it can, only by exercising a relational dimension of language.

Some of the participants shared with me how they reframed their personal notions of 'being different' through their interactions with others. Cam said, "I guess that was a turning point for me where I realised that having a different culture didn't make me the 'weird foreign child' but it made me more interesting to them" commenting on her peers' reactions to her wearing

"Asia-style clothes" to a pyjama party at her school. Before the event, when her dad was strongly encouraging her to opt for this culturally relevant outfit, she anticipated she would be made fun of at school and feel out of place. However, while still acknowledging that Cam was wearing something different, her peers made her feel unique and interesting, rather than "weird", in her view. Alea experienced a similar turning point when she went to university:

> I stopped questioning my belonging so much, because when you go to university, you're exposed to so many different cultures and people coming from so many different social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds, and it made me realise there is no one definition of being Scottish or British or anything. It's okay to be different, but it's okay to also sort of be Scottish. Even though I have slightly different values or beliefs, I can still call myself Scottish. I don't have to be white with blue eyes, blonde hair…So, I started to feel a sense of belonging a bit more. I very much developed as a person, I became more independent and I still am.

Alea speaks about the sense of independence and freedom that she unlocked through developing relations with a more diverse social group. Her narrative echoes Min and Kim's (2000, pp. 743, 746) participants' accounts that suggested higher education settings—in their case, American colleges—as more "multicultural", "cosmopolitan", and "tolerant" compared to the environments that immigrant-background children might be exposed to at the earlier stages of schooling. Interestingly, Alea's experiences at university not only made her feel better navigating cultural heritage but also helped her broaden her definition of what it means to be Scottish and reassured her of her membership in this group. As described earlier, with age, similarly to Laura, Alea gained more confidence in her cultural heritage, including her use of Urdu in public spaces. I argue that, rather than being related to noticeable changes in the discourse of people of immigrant background, people of colour, or those of Pakistani heritage in the UK, this shift was enabled by Alea's mobility between and within social contexts, agentic use of language for re-narrating, and engagement with ambiguity through acknowledging the flawed nature of the essentialising social system that she comes to operate in. She redefines the meanings of 'Scottish' and 'British' and "re-invent[s] new language imaginaries", as she reclaims the language of the colonisers and inscribes herself in these 're'-articulated definitions (Mbembe & Mabanckou, 2018 translated in Welply, 2022b).

Butler's "creative incorporation of the concepts of self-reflexive unaccountability and intersubjective responsibility into [the] theory of the interpellated subject" (Magnus, 2006, pp. 99–100) in *Giving an Account of Oneself* finds grounding in the participants' narratives. Becoming agent does not have to mean separation from others but can be enabled through interaction and intersubjective relations, as I will continue to explore in Chapters 6 and 7. Accounts presented in this section, indeed, suggest that immigrant-background individuals, to an extent, might be able to take charge of shaping their identities, stories, and value systems, and that their morality is not a mere symptom of social conditions and discourse, but it can be reshaped to generate capacity to act and the possibility of freedom and hope. Nonetheless, the sense of burdening responsibility is still prominent in the narratives shared and appears to have more formative currency in the participants' experiences and realities. This evidence of agentic reshaping of the self should not be misinterpreted as supportive of policies and views that responsibilise individuals by assigning the task of managing difference and diversity to them, nor does it suggest that the damaging and discriminatory structures governing subjectification and reiteration of social norms can be disregarded owing to individual agency.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I contextualised immigrant-background young adults and their experiences of navigating parental cultural heritage within the social norms, discourse, and relations of power and privilege that constitute and subjectivate them. Through applying Butler's ethics of responsibility, I conceptualised cultural heritage as a struggle that is difficult to reconcile within the unchosen conditions of one's emergence into the social world which can manifest in feelings of guilt, shame, and (unmet) expectations. I argued, nonetheless, that there is also space for freedom and agency within these ambiguous origins. The narratives presented in the chapter provided evidence for Butler's (1995, p. 46) assertion that "to claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined". Responsibility seen as responsiveness to discourse, social norms, and the social setting that one interacts with can also be perceived as an invitation to an agentic response. A response that might, but not necessarily has to, challenge the discursive patterns and break the chain of citationality of oppressive norms. It might also be a response born of one's self-reflexive unaccountability; a

place of realisation that one cannot fully account for oneself or change the conditions of one's origins and inheritance. It can be within this space that immigrant-background young adults find agency through redefining themselves, their experiences, and heritages as they embrace ambiguity. What must be noted, nonetheless, is that availability is not synonymous with accessibility. I find it paramount to emphasise that this space for agency arises within a "regime of truth [that] offers a framework for the scene of recognition, delineating who will qualify as a subject of recognition and offering available norms for the act of recognition", making the process of breaking the chain of citationality and, otherwise, agent acting difficult, especially for those marginalised through discourse (Butler, 2005, p. 22). Some immigrant-background individuals, as they navigate cultural heritage, responsibility, and being constituted within social norms, are constantly reminded through the workings of discourse that their origins are a difficult-to-erase marker of difference and an unescapable context for their social interactions. Having started to explore notions of responsibility and agency as rooted in a relation between the self and the other, in the next chapter, I turn to Mikhail Bakhtin and narrative analysis to present a more nuanced picture—based on an in-depth exploration of two narrative accounts—of this entanglement in norms, discourse, and intersubjectivity that Butler theorises. Through the lens of dialogic relations, I will consider the different overlapping, and often contradictory, influences ('others') that play a role in shaping the unique interactions and contexts within which cultural heritage and identity are navigated.

CHAPTER 6: NAVIGATING PARENTAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AGENTICALLY AND DIALOGICALLY THROUGH THE LENS OF BAKHTIN'S DIALOGISM

The previous chapter, drawing on Judith Butler's *Giving an account of Oneself*, positioned agency and responsibility as rooted in intersubjectivity. In my current discussion, by deploying Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, I expand on the role of the self and the other in how immigrant-background individuals navigate parental cultural heritage. According to Bakhtin (1981), all sociocultural phenomena are constituted in an ongoing dialogue between social actors within a multiplicity of discourses, practices, and languages. Bakhtin's (1981, pp. 276–277) dialogism, with the concept of the utterance at its core, encompasses much more than an act of linguistic communication, rather, the utterance is a specific response to the specific interplay of social, cultural, ecological, and temporal conditions of the intersubjective exchange:

> The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads ...it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue. After all the utterance arises out of this dialogue as a continuation of it and as rejoinder to it – it does not approach the object from the sidelines.

The constitution of parental cultural heritage as well as how it is expressed and represented are embedded in a continuous dialogue where they operate as both an utterance and a response to the other and the social conditions within which they are performed, embodied, and lived. Bakhtin's dialogism also emphasises the triadic nature of dialogue, pointing to the role of the relation between the utterance and the response, as likely the most important of the three (Holquist, 2002). In this triadic dialogic relation, "'properties' of selves [are] liminal, in neither the mind nor the text, but between interlocutors" (de Peuter, 1998, p. 7). His dialogical self, rather than through being an actor in the dyadic or dichotomous relationship between the self and the other, knows itself through the multiplicity of 'microdialogues' and through "the responses of [and to] real, imagined, historical and generalized others" (de Peuter, 1998, p. 8):

> A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and onesidedness of these particular meanings, their cultures. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7)

So, importantly for my discussion of agentic navigating of parental cultural heritage, the utterance is an act of an individual but is not a purely individual act as it is constituted within social dialogue and cannot be understood outside of it and outside of relations. Bakhtin, sees "being" as a simultaneity; "it is always co-being" (Holquist, 2002, p. 24), and perhaps—as I will offer in the analysis below—also co-experiencing, co-navigating, and co-agency.

I begin this chapter by situating Bakhtin's dialogic self alongside the understanding of the self gained from Butler's *Giving an Account of Oneself*, to provide a rationale for applying a new theoretical lens of dialogism to the study of the agentic and interrelational ways of experiencing and negotiating parental cultural heritage. While, to the best of my knowledge, Butler does not cite Bakhtin as a source of inspiration for her theorisations, I would not be the first one to suggest that there are parallels in the ways these two theorists discuss identity construction, social interaction, and ethical obligation (Thomson, 1993). However, the consideration of affinities and potential points of divergence between Butler (and more specifically her philosophical stance in *Giving an Account of Oneself*) and Bakhtin in terms of conceptualising agency, narrative capacity, and the self's uniqueness and authenticity is missing from extant literature. Butler's theory has proven helpful, in the previous chapter, for the purposes of locating the individual within the broader and, importantly, unchosen, sociocultural landscape. It also pointed to individuals' inability to give a complete account of themselves and how such ambiguity of the self might create conditions for agency. Nonetheless, as I will explain below, I found Bakhtin's dialogism useful in extending Butler's interrelational agency and considering the multiplicity of actors and factors *responsible* for—and *responsive* in—the intersubjective process of parental cultural heritage navigating, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the specific self within specific social, spatial, and temporal contexts. The majority of this chapter will be spent zooming in on specific accounts and experiences shared by the participants in order to name the dialogic relations that can affect subjects and situate them within defined (to a degree) scenes of address—or, as I will

continue to call it, using Bakhtinian terminology, 'answerable acts'. An additional aim of this chapter will be to identify the dialogic tools that immigrant-background individuals may have at their disposal to agentically approach the task of navigating parental cultural heritage. Throughout the discussion, I will stay with each participant for longer, diving analytically into the stories they shared during their entire involvement in the project, across their journal entries, interview responses, and in the co-analysis. And, while I will use some specific dialogues (e.g., dialogue with time or dialogue with privilege) as my points of departure, these will be contextualised to reveal the complexity and uniqueness of these specific narratives and the dialogic existences they describe.

6.1. Bakhtin and Butler: the relation between the self and the other

For Bakhtin, the self "is certainly 'decentred', but not erased altogether" and fragmented, as per Butler's theory (Gardiner & Mayerfeld Bell, 1998, p. 5). Bakhtin emphasises human creativity, agency, and responsibility, and constitutes the self as an embodied entity that "organise[s] [its] world through time and space categories from [its] unique place of existence" (Holloway & Kneale, 2000, p. 74). He acknowledges, however, as mentioned before, the shared nature of being ('co-being'), recognising the "resulting paradox…that we all share uniqueness" (Holquist, 1985, p. 227). According to his theorisation, 'the other' represents a broad multiscalar range of actors and influencing factors, and the workings of discourse and social norms should not automatically be seen as more powerful and formative, than other smaller-scale dialogic relations such as those between named human actors within a specified answerable act. Bakhtin's dialogism sees dialogic interactions between social processes and social actors as simultaneously structuring and structured, acknowledging the meaning-making forces of the apparatuses of power and knowledge, but not seeing them as being-making; they are just some of the threads in a broader web of dialogic relations. On this point, I see him in agreement with Butler (1995) who claims that the subject is constituted, yet not determined, by the norms and, thus, allows for a conceptualisation of a subject whose formation reaches beyond the discourse that produces her, beyond those structural spheres that embed the subject. It has been suggested that Bakhtin "in a quite remarkable fashion…anticipated a number of later developments within poststructuralist and postmodernist theory" (Gardiner & Mayerfeld Bell, 1998, p. 4) by offering "an alternative

conception of the constitution of the subject to the prevailing one that is anchored in the theoretic and produces the familiar dyad of subject and object" (Godzich, 1991, p. 10). In this section, I look at Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic self and its uniqueness, as well as at how he theorises the self's capacities and authenticity within dialogue. I point to the many parallels between Butler and Bakhtin and acknowledge several dissimilarities, as I justify Bakhtin's role in the broader discussions of parental cultural heritage, identification, and agency in this thesis.

Both Bakhtin and Butler see the self as unique and singular, while also bound to the other in an act of co-being. For neither, the self merges with the other, in a way that Hegelian dialectical synthesis could suggest (Butler, 2005; Holloway & Kneale, 2000). According to Michael Holquist (2002, p. 27, my emphasis),

> the Bakhtinian just-so story of subjectivity is the tale of how I get myself from the other: it is only the other's categories that will let me be an object for my own perception. I see my self as I conceive others might see it. In order to forge a self, I must do so from outside. In other words, *I author myself*…

Bakhtin's self does not independently constitute itself, but it does author itself through relationality. The formulation of selfhood, according to Bakhtin (1986, 1990), happens on the "boundary" between the self and the other in a process of transgrediance of identity and in response to ongoing dialogue, rather than within the self itself (de Peuter, 1998). This is not entirely different to Butler's (2005, p. 34) take on the self's dependence on the other:

> The uniqueness of the other is exposed to me, but mine is also exposed to her. This does not mean we are the same, but only that we are bound to one another by what differentiates us, namely, our singularity.

For both, "being is unique and unified, different and simultaneous" (Holloway & Kneale, 2000, p. 74), which I want to highlight in particular in the context of this thesis's broader engagement with the relationship between parental cultural heritage and collective identity that will be explored in more detail in Chapter 7. The possibility for simultaneity, dialogic co-production, and perhaps even synchronicity, between the self and the other, that both Butler

and Bakhtin acknowledge, is "what marks the subject as agent rather than just the subject as position produced through relations of power" (Tate, 2005, p. 40). Further, to advance the current discussion, I would like to point to Bakhtin's assertion that the subject can "author" herself, which I see as different to Butler's subject's ability to give an account of oneself, an account that can never be full. As I proceed through this section, I will consider Butler and Bakhtin's views on experiencing responsibility and agency through relations and dialogue, and then move to exploring their thinking on the subject's narrative capacity and authenticity to continue the discussion of the self's potential capability to author herself.

Butler's and Bakhtin's theories of selfhood have a lot in common. They both consider the model of the self-contained individual as flawed and decontextualised, at the same time, they do not see the human being as simply a product of discourse and social structures. As Bakhtin (1986, p. 95, original emphasis) conceptualises the self through the other, he emphasises the relationship, the dialogue, the space in between the two; "[a]n essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity*". An addressee can be, according to Bakhtin (1986, p. 95, original emphasis),

> an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth. And it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized *other*.

It is through this addressivity that actors in dialogue can be repositioned within earlier accomplished discourses (Tate, 2005). While, in *Giving an Account of Oneself,* Butler (2005) puts forward a view of agency that manifests through and within relations and is a product of the sense of responsibility and responsiveness, the other in her work is more abstract than in Bakhtin's. In Bakhtin's theorisation, the other is specific and replaceable and the self is constituted through specific unique acts within specific scenes of answerability. His concept of the answerable act recognises the self's embeddedness within a prosaic life and a physical body as well as its cognitive freedom and situates one's ethical responsibility in dialogue within the two: the repeated routines within reproduced social conditions and the degree of uniqueness and open-endedness present in the specific social event. Bakhtin's way of locating

responsibility within the act and in dialogue with the other opens new analytical avenues for my study of immigrant-background individuals' relationships with parental cultural heritage. This is not to say that dialogue is absent from Butler's writing. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler (2004, p. 173, my emphasis) argues:

> If saying is a form of doing, and part of what is getting done is the self, then conversation is a mode of doing something together and becoming otherwise; something will be accomplished in the course of this exchange, but *no one will know what or who is being made until it is done*.

What differentiates Butler's dialogue from that conceptualised by Bakhtin, I argue, is this unchosenness of the outcome. Bakhtin's theory is less concerned with challenging the social order and agency that produces specific outcomes, and more with the acts themselves and their constitution at an interplay of different dialogues where the self is a dialogic partner that affects and has agency over "what or who is being made".

By virtue of shared existence, individuals are in constant dialogue with other human beings and with the natural and cultural conditions of the world they occupy. Bakhtin even argues that individuals have no choice but to be involved in these dialogic relations (Holquist, 2002). Human existence manifests through answerability, he suggests, through the responses that the individual produces as she is addressed in an answerable act. The uniqueness of one's place in existence with its specific configuration of dialogues, according to Bakhtin, is also where the responsibility to be answerable originates (Holquist, 2002). Being the only one occupying this specific unique place means being the only one who can produce a response that encapsulates the dialogic conditions of that place. Bakhtin conceptualises the ethical moment as ongoing and situates the unique self and its sense of ethical responsibility in participatory thinking (Bakhtin, 1993). In his theory, the responsibility of the self is generated in shared lived experiences. Bakhtin's dialogic perspective of responsibility portrays it as more fluid and situational; different, in this way, to Butler's (2005) concept of responsibility grounded in one's unchosen conditions of emergence. Bakhtin's emphasis on the role of otherness—this is, the other, other values, communities—does not exclude the possibility, or inclination, to define oneself against the otherness in contrast, or at least in dialogue, to what has been 'given' (Holquist, 2002). The dialogic character of existence and relationality is

precisely where agency and the agentic self can be established. The response in an answerable act is

> never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable…But something created is always created out of something given…What is given is completely transformed in what is created. (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 119–120)

An individual's self, responsibility, and agency are created and keep creating at the same time in this simultaneous act of addressivity and answerability. As the narrative excerpts presented in the next section, as well as other researchers (e.g., Tate, 2007a), suggest, individuals can and do navigate an array of possible answers and, while acting in response to what is 'given', they can claim authorship of their selves and exercise agency over the understanding of their unique locations within the world with its social structures and membership categories. Bakhtin's dialogic perspective aids the analysis of ethical and agentic actions through the lens of what makes them contingent, singular, and creative, instead of focusing on what is repeated and reproduced under the guise of institutionalised structures (Bender, 1998). At the same time, what must be noted is that Bakhtin does not romanticise agency as a privilege that the self is awarded, instead, he emphasises one's responsibility to engage in dialogues and to remain answerable as long as one lives, and views it as much as an opportunity as a duty-bound destiny (Holquist, 2002). This corresponds with Butler's (2005, pp. 87-88, original emphasis) subject's "susceptibility to others that is unwilled, unchosen, that is a condition of [her] responsiveness to others, even a condition of [her] responsibility *for* them".

Finally, what differentiates Bakhtin from Butler is his view of authenticity within one's narrative accounting for oneself. While, as Butler does, Bakhtin acknowledges one's inability to give a full account of oneself, he, at the same time, recognises a value in formulating stories about the self that have a—even if only seeming—beginning and an end. Bakhtin stresses narrativity, with its incoherences and messy nature, as an agentic response to this inability to fully account for oneself:

> Within my own consciousness my 'I' has no beginning and no end...In order to remain a constantly potential site of being, my self must be able to conduct its work as sheer capability, a flux of sheer becoming. If this energy is to be given specific contours, it must be shaped not only in values, but in story. Stories are the means by which values are made coherent in particular situations. (Holquist, 2002, pp. 35–36)

Bakhtin sees the dialogically navigated and communicated life and self as authentic. He describes the open-ended dialogue as "the single adequate form for *verbally expressing* authentic human life" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 292, original emphasis). While Butler (2005) steers away from theorising about the true or authentic self, Bakhtin, through his dialogic lens, defines authenticity as the ability of individuals to articulate their particular specificity (Sampson, 1993). Bakhtin's authenticity is situational and embedded in the centrifugal forces of contradiction, as it remains in dialogue with the centripetal voices of the self (de Peuter, 1998). Authenticity, therefore, does not have to come together with the ability to account for oneself on the terms set out by the other, but it allows subjects to 'author' themselves and establish the contours of their stories. This accounting for authenticity in Bakhtin's theorisation is not, however, synonymous with a claim of intelligible and coherent selfhood (de Peuter, 1998). Bakhtin's stories, dialogues, relations, and selves are messy and incoherent, and this is where their authenticity lies. Dialogism emphasises the boundary, the in-between, conceptualising the centripetal ordering tendencies in dialogue with the centrifugal incoherences and fragmentation, without privileging one or the other. While in the previous chapter—drawing on Butler—I concentrated more on the outcomes of the intersubjective existence, here—supported by Bakhtin's more nuanced conceptualisation of the other and dialogism's theoretical focus on dialogue 'in process' through time and space—I explore the messy nature of multiple 'co-beings' and their contributions to the self's dialogue with parental cultural heritage and forms of self-identification.

6.2. Participants' narratives and dialogic relations

Shirley Anne Tate (2007a, p. 16) suggests that the conceptualisation of "the self as agentic and dialogical means that we have to look for the readings and translations of discursive positioning made by speakers and the production of alternative self-positionings in talk".

According to her, within the framework of dialogism, “there is always a possibility for challenge”. In this chapter, two research participants, Sierra and Lee, and I challenge these discursive positionings and pre-determined definitions through talk, reflection, and dialogic relations, to unpack some of the ways in which immigrant-background individuals might be able to (co-)negotiate parental cultural heritage agentically and dialogically. Following a short introduction of Sierra and Lee, constructed using—as closely as possible—the self-identifications and vocabulary they shared in the research process, I will proceed to analyse their accounts of, respectively, parenting and self-defining. The analysis will adopt Bakhtin’s dialogic perspective and deploy analytical tools and modes of presentation inspired by narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Sierra’s and Lee’s narratives were selected as they both speak about finding peace, or a level of content, with how they navigate and embrace parental cultural heritage and identity. What makes it particularly interesting to read their stories alongside each other are the different dialogic roles of their parents as presented through their accounting. Sierra shapes her relationship with cultural heritage through ‘real’ conversations that she has with her mother over the course of the research project. Lee, on the other hand, does so through his self-reflection. He incorporates the parents in his narrative as dialogic actors transcending his past, present, and future, but not as much as conversationalists, as is in Sierra’s case, more as influential, yet not deterministic figures in the background.

Sierra is a British-born Chinese undergraduate student in her late teens. She currently lives in a city in southern England where she attends a Russell Group university. She moved there from Essex where she grew up with her parents and siblings. Her mum migrated to the UK from Hong Kong and her dad arrived here from Vietnam. Sierra’s dad is of mainland Chinese heritage. They worked most of their lives in Chinese takeaways and haven’t had the opportunity to work white-collar jobs (except for the time when her mum worked at a call centre). Her parents communicated with each other in Cantonese, which Sierra understands and speaks, too. In her narrative shared with me in this project, Sierra discussed, among other topics, her experiences of racism, especially in schools, her struggles with reconciling how she was parented, as well as her appreciation for the connections that she created with her POC friends.

Lee is in his late twenties and is a postdoctoral researcher at a prestigious university in southern England. He was born in the UK, describes his nationality as British, and considers himself ethnically Chinese. Before settling where he currently lives, he lived in two other cities in England and spend a few months as a child in one of China's special administrative regions. Lee can understand and speak Mandarin Chinese, his parents' first language, relatively well. His dad is an academic professor and his mum is retired (before she worked in teaching and social care). The topics that Lee reflected on in our discussions included his views on the tradition of filial piety, his relationship with his white partner, the obstacles to feeling a sense of belonging when travelling to China, and his experiences and perceptions of racism in the UK.

Sierra's dialogic account of parenting

This section begins with a substantial excerpt from Sierra's journal entries followed by a discussion of the interplay of different dialogues and actors that partake in Sierra's experiencing and constitution of parenting. The analysis will be informed by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and supported by further elements from Sierra's narrative as shared during the interview and the co-analysis meeting. While I will focus on two specific vantage points, i.e., 'dialogue with time' and 'dialogue with parents', these will be used as gateways to unpack the complexities and multivocalities of dialogic accounting. In the concluding paragraphs, I will locate agency and the process of parental cultural heritage (co-)navigating within this context of a thousand of inescapable and simultaneous "living dialogic threads" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276).

> Journal entry 1 - Belonging and culture:
>
> (…) The culture of my home life is Chinese (specifically Hong Kong Chinese). We eat rice for dinner at least three times a week (it used to be more often, but my mum became busier), we speak Cantonese and English at home and the parenting is as strict as expected. They wanted us to study hard and do reasonably well at school so that we wouldn't have to do the jobs that they did, we couldn't go out and have fun with our friends often because it would inconvenience our working parents and whatever your parents say goes; if you chatted back or attempted to rebel, there would be punishment.

The latter was particularly hard to deal with as a teenager; I wanted to go to all of the parties or events I was invited to, but most of the time I had to decline as my parents couldn't take me there…If as punishment my parents decided to not let me go to something that they originally said I could go to, it was humiliating having to explain to friends why because…I knew they didn't and couldn't understand why my supposed 'bad behaviour' would warrant such an exaggerated punishment, as they were not of a harsh-parenting culture. I barely understood it then. [My parents'] parenting style is unfair; it reflects their own childhood experiences and I think Chinese parenting as well as parenting from other Asian cultures (from what I've gathered from discussions with friends) causes and will continue to cause generational trauma, as our parents will treat us in the same harsh way their parents treated them, and so on, because they haven't fully confronted their pain and they have too much pride to explain the reasons for their actions. (…)

Journal entry 2 - Language and family relations:

(…) As for home life, I talked quite a bit about this in the culture prompt but in a rather negative light. Yes, the harsh parenting was and is a big part of my world, but they really do sacrifice everything for your comfort and happiness. They probably won't tell you their reasons for their actions but when it all comes out, you'll be blown away by how much they love you unconditionally, though they aren't fans of open affection so you just have to trust them and what they do for you. This kind of familial relationship is really common in Asian families, the whole 'I won't tell you that I love you, but it is the driving force of my life and I'll do everything in my power to protect you' thing. I think the feeling of appreciation for your immigrant parents is a thing that comes to you as you grow older and actually experience the hardships of adulthood, whilst keeping in mind that they did all of this in a country that wasn't their own and they may not have come to grips with the language yet, so it was even harder for them. I just wish they explained themselves as I was growing up so that I could appreciate their actions sooner.

Journal entry 3 - Adulthood:

My adulthood thus far has consisted of me facing a different set of problems than my parents when they were my age. I had my university application process, the personal statement to write, attending interviews, saying goodbye to my friends at college (although us, 18-year-olds, did have the added stress of a pandemic to deal with this year) etc. Very academically based and pretty standard for a teenager in the UK, no matter their ethnicity. My parents, however, were working full-time at my age, as they did not attend/complete college and therefore did not go through the uni process. They worked in Chinese takeaways and haven't worked white-collar jobs (except for this one time my mum worked in a call centre), which is a future that they do not want for their children. They don't want us to suffer as they did, they would prefer it if we didn't have to work 'kitchen jobs', as they call it, and so they don't tolerate laziness; if we're lazy, we won't get good grades and we won't get into uni and we'll be stuck working at uncomfortable occupations for the rest of our lives. They don't want our adulthood to be like theirs. (…)

A. Sierra in dialogue with and through time

Bakhtin (1981, p. 84) states that "time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movement of time, plot and history". And, while his discussion in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) focuses on the significance of this statement in literary analysis, Sierra's account, in a similar way to what Bakhtin describes, reveals the complex timescape that she navigates as she attempts to make sense of parenting. Sierra sees her parents' parenting as constituted in dialogue or as a response to their experiences in the past ("it reflects their own childhood experiences"), as well as to a broader history established within specific cultural, ecological, and social relations ("it reflects…Chinese parenting as well as parenting from other Asian cultures"). Importantly, she cannot remove her experiences from the context and space that she inhabits where the majority of her peers' relations with parents are built along dialogic lines that she might (at least in her first journal entry) see as absent from her relationship with her parents (e.g., fairness, open affection). Her perceptions of parenting practices and their unfair nature,

therefore, are not just a product of the interpersonal relation and communication between Sierra and her parents but are constituted in dialogue with ideas and the passage of time, spatialities that she occupies, and other real (e.g., peers) and imagined (e.g., earlier generations) relationships that are further charged with expectations of answerability in dialogue. Sierra also acknowledges that parenting choices are not simply rooted in citationality of parenting practices. She narrates her parents' intentions to break up with the past and establish a better future for their children as they engage in dialogue with the changing landscapes of availability of opportunities, be it educational or economic ones, and their location within the class system in the UK ("they wanted us to study hard and do reasonably well at school so that we wouldn't have to do the jobs that they did").

This interplay of dialogues in Sierra's account is complicated, and, as she dialogically (through giving an account of it in this research) unpacks her experiences and "trauma", she also acknowledges the difficulties and pain her parents have faced ("they haven't fully confronted their pain"). Her account suggests that these unhealed wounds from her parents' past (which potentially transcend into their present and future) have continued to also dialogically affect her and, as she reflected in the interview, might be something that she will struggle to stop citationally reproduce as she becomes a parent herself:

> Interviewer: You mentioned this kind of generational trauma that comes with this parenting. Do you think that it is something that you are carrying into adulthood?
>
> Sierra: yeah, um, (hesitant here because it's a personal question, I had to think about what I want to say, having wondered about this question before)[36] I think I'm more aware of it than my previous generations (more aware of the pain I could cause than my parents were). But then, I also think, isn't that what every generation thinks? That they're more aware of all the things than their parents or their grandparents? (e.g., the trauma you've experienced and not wanting to repeat your parents' mistakes and inflicting the same trauma on your children, but as you're focusing on avoiding making the same mistakes, you inevitably make your own. It's hard for the parents as they may

[36] Green font will be used throughout the chapter to present comments that participants added to their narrative in the process of co-analysis.

> believe that they have tried their hardest in shielding you from all the harms in the world because they're trying not to repeat their parents' errors, but when they hurt their children in other ways, it is dismissed because it is 'not as bad' as what the parents experienced, so it is difficult for the children too.) I guess I just feel that if I were to become a parent in the future there would be some unknown thing, some ways, I would hurt my children that would be caused by what I'd experienced as a child (accepting that some things might never change unless you potentially get help), and, I guess, it links back to values as well, for example, I'd say, loyalty is quite important to me, and so that could cause problems in my adult life, if it doesn't align with the values of other people, but, for now, I'd say I'm okay.

Sierra's reflections on being implicated in this cycle of trauma reproduction and her role within the cycle point to her awareness of human life being an open-ended dialogue, as conceptualised by Bakhtin. She recognises the dialogic character of the world and her responsibility within it. I am referring, here, to the kind of responsibility towards the other that I discussed in Chapter 5; a sense of responsibility that comes from the ethical demands of the social world on an individual (a subject), a kind of responsibility that one might feel—based on her social positioning—that she has no choice but to accept even though she expects she might feel guilty for how she navigates this responsibility. In response to the pain Sierra experienced, in an act of answerability, she had considered her potential approach to parenting in the future even before being asked about it during the interview ("I had to think about what I want to say, having wondered about this question before"). Here, Sierra displays agency through her engagement with self-reflective unaccountability, as Butler would likely acknowledge, as she notes that certain change might be beyond her control. Interestingly, however, Sierra also clearly states the role of the other in the process of becoming an agentic self. She admits to "accepting that some things might never change unless you potentially get help", suggesting, in a Bakhtinian fashion, that agency is not an individual act, but is achieved through engaging in dialogue with others, whether real or imagined, human or non-human, named or generalised.

Even in face of this increased awareness of trauma and pain that she cannot be sure she will ever rid of, as she "grow[s] older and actually experience[s] the hardships of adulthood", she

finds “appreciation for [her] immigrant parents”. She just “wish[es] they explained themselves as [she] was growing up so that [she] could appreciate their actions sooner”. Sierra recognises the role that time and transitioning between life stages play in her perception of her parents’ parenting practices. I would not say that she suggests that time heals wounds, but I would argue that time and experience that comes alongside it are essential in gaining the self-reflexive perspective that allows Sierra to dialogically situate these wounds and pain that she has suffered. Perhaps, contextualise them as co-experienced, not just something that is happening to her, that she needs to resist, but something that happens at an interplay of multivocal relations, some outside of her accountability, and many outside of her parents’. Sierra shared in the interview:

> I guess, as I've grown up and as more situations have been explained or I've gained enough maturity to look back on it, I guess, I can see it from their viewpoint. It's just increased as the years go on, cause…more and more things come out.

Nonetheless, while aware that her parents “aren’t fans of open affection” and able to understand this is the context of what she knows about other Asian families (“this kind of familial relationship is really common in Asian families”, “from what I’ve gathered from discussions with friends”), she wishes they offered more communication in the past to help her contextualise their actions sooner. In her reflections on parenting recorded in her journal entries, over time, Sierra moves away from a painful account of trauma towards a narrative of regret for the lack of dialogue (or, as I will argue below, the presence of dialogic communication through silence in place of verbal dialogue). In the next few paragraphs, I will focus on Sierra’s dialogic relation with her parents and consider these within the broader network of dialogic threads.

B. Sierra in dialogue with parents

“[W]hatever your parents say goes; if you chatted back or attempted to rebel, there would be punishment”; this is how Sierra summarises the consequences of trying to engage in dialogue with her parents. Her narrative agency is threatened within this relationship as the “forces of domination silence [her as] one…of the dialogical partners”, (de Peuter, 1998, p. 10), however, while unable to engage in verbal communication with her parents, Sierra

partakes in a multitude of peripheral dialogues. She is in dialogue with the power and rules embedded in the "harsh-parenting culture" that she is experiencing, knowing that there is a broader historical context to the silencing that she is met with. As discussed earlier, she remains in dialogue with time aware of how events from the past affect her actions in the present and potential consequences in the future. She is also likely, although she does not report it in the journal entries, in dialogue with the self, perhaps wondering: Do I risk punishment to try to have my say? Should I give up even though I know it is unfair? Why am I treated differently from my peers? All these dialogues form a context in which Sierra utters, "whatever your parents say goes", but they also play a role in challenging and dialogically reframing the deeper relational meaning behind this statement.

In Bakhtin's (1981, pp. 293 & 276) view,

> language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's…it is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape.

Expanding on this view, I propose that, in the same way as words and language are relational and subjective elements of verbal communication, silence, too, is a form of dialogic expression that is "half someone else's" and subject to interpretation within interaction. Sierra's initial reflections suggest that she feels silenced and cut off from dialogue with her parents as she fears punishment, her narrative shifts, however, in the second journal entry to one that indicates feelings of inclusion and care:

> They probably won't tell you their reasons for their actions but when it all comes out, you'll be blown away by how much they love you unconditionally, though they aren't fans of open affection so you just have to trust them and what they do for you.

Sierra reinterprets silence within her dialogic relationship with her parents as a sign of care and good intentions, as opposed to a restrictive practice. She perhaps even begins to see it as an element of familial co-experiencing and co-being. To understand Sierra's accounting of her experiences of parenting, I have been suggesting here going beyond situating her and her

cultural heritage with the sociocultural conditions and social norms that she was born into. Affection, love, and trust are elements of specific, named relations with very specific others (here, Sierra's parents), that, while constituted within a larger social context which inevitably affects them, can have a different, perhaps more personalised, effect on an individual. Even though often expressed silently, affection, love, and trust can be powerful dialogical partners, as they also affect the perceiving of other relations (e.g., with time; maybe I am willing to wait for longer, perhaps infinitely, because I love and I trust). I suggest here, therefore, that different dialogic relations will produce different responses to injustice. An agentic response to being marginalised through discourse and social norms (as shown in Chapter 5) requires a different form of agency than that developed within more intimate relations with named others (as argued below).

As powerful and meaningful as silent dialoguing could prove to be, Sierra revealed later in our interview that her appreciation for what remains unsaid was facilitated through verbal dialogue with her mum. Asked about the interesting shift in her journal entries between describing the trauma inflicted by the parenting (journal entry 1) and expressing appreciation and understanding of her parents (journal entry 2), Sierra said:

> (feeling some very intense emotions) Actually, there was a bit of a break between my two final entries and the first one, and, in that break, something happened. I got more clarity from a situation in the past from my parents, and, I guess, at the height of my emotions at that point, it brought me a lot of appreciation for them, because it was a calm situation and they explained—I say 'they', it was my mum—she explained the reasons for why she did something that she did. I just wish they'd tell us in the moment (instead of just overreacting and shouting, but pride is a big thing in Asian cultures), cause then it would just resolve a lot more things. But it's not in their personality to do that, and it's not in the culture of Hong Kong people to do that. You're meant to respect your elders, you're meant to just blindly follow whatever they tell you, and so they don't feel like they owe you an explanation.

Sierra did, however, ask for an explanation. This conversation that she had with her mum, as she later explained in the co-analysis meeting, was partly initiated in response to the writing of the journal entries in this research project:

> I was writing it and then, I was telling [my mum] what I was writing about and then she explained it, so, I think the research project acted as a kind of catalyst for it, but if the project wasn't there, the information probably would have come out at a later time…I guess this was kind of an excuse for me to bring up conversations like this.

Sierra's agency, here, is twofold; when seen in the context of Bakhtin's answerability, it manifests both as she is called to answer, through the nature of her participation in this research project, and as she makes the other, her mum, answerable. She recognises her responsibility in dialogue with the research process and constructs an agentic response by deciding to further her understanding of her parents' choices through dialogue in order to author her story:

> I'm usually quite conscious of how my life is different to other people's, but [the process of writing journal entries] made me think deeper about it so that I could describe it in more detail. It was good and it brought out a lot of emotions as well (some were negative, looking back on my upbringing was at times good, at times painful, and also rewarding as I understood it better and found peace with it).

"I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another, through another, and with the help of another" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 287). Sierra's exploration of her experiences of parenting and her parental cultural heritage more broadly is a process in which she dialogically authors her conscious self. Her agency shows through how she navigates this task of co-constructing and co-experiencing. It manifests as she acknowledges that she might need the help of the other to overcome generational trauma, as she reconfigures her understanding of "silent dialogue" and interprets it through the new layer of dialogue that she manages to establish with her mum, and as she finds peace with the story of her upbringing that she authors in dialogue with strong emotions which she embraces.

Lee's dialogic account of self-defining and being defined

Using a similar approach to that presented above, in this section, I will focus on the narrative shared with me by Lee and the dialogic threads that emerge as relevant to his accounting of his sense of self, responsibility, and agency. In the excerpts that I chose, Lee discusses how he

navigates the task of formulating identity and self-definition within the specific sociospatial and cognitive landscapes that he accesses. The analysis proposed here uses the ideas of 'dialogue with privilege' and 'dialogue with human others' as points of departure and, subsequently, develops to acknowledge the multiplicity of other dialogues operating simultaneously. As was in the case of Sierra's narrative, towards the end of the section, I will use these dialogic perspectives to offer a more specific discussion of how agency manifests in the processes of constituting and experiencing parental cultural heritage.

Journal entry 1 – Introduction:

(…) As is the case for many, my time at university (2011 onwards, [name of the university redacted]) significantly changed my values and perception of things, and I started taking more of an active role in shaping my own ideas…These incredibly fortunate changes arose from new friendships (and to my surprise almost all white British, and very few Chinese) at [the university] and the only friend I kept in close contact with at school. Of those at [the university]– to this day, these are my closest friends and include my partner of eight years. Within their company, my thought processes appeared relatively inflexible, dogmatic, uncreative and uncontrolled…Fortunately, my friends showed me how to manage perfectionism, adapt my judgements and become more inquisitive for value in those things I had previously disrespected…Thanks to them, [the university] was for me the best experience of my life, and all aspects of my being improved in ways school-Lee would never have imagined. Now, I am a scientist studying chemical, molecular and synthetic biology with strong extra-academic interests in education and philosophy. (…)

Interview excerpt:

(…) I think I'm lucky insofar as I have been told to think about stuff all throughout my life. And the lifestyle that I have had is conducive towards that. So, for example, ethnicity differences are one of these things you notice. You can't help but notice that your skin (slightly poetic choice of word, 'appearance' would have been more accurate, but I presume the conversation is loaded towards 'culture', 'ethnicity' etc. in my brain) looks different to most of the people at school when you're young, and you probably don't

care back then, I didn't anyway. And then, slowly as you think more about your own existence, you make friends with people who share similar feelings…and, with curiosity, you always come along to these kinds of ideas (recognising differences in thoughts as originating from different areas of the world). Lots of my thinking has developed in these quite informal ways. And then, more recently, because I've been spending a lot of time talking to one of my very good friends, I've had a chance to–I'm going to use inverted commas here because I haven't done anything properly–'formalise' it. It's nice to compare some of these ideas that I'm learning from some enthusiastic philosophy (taught by the friend, who is a literature student) to what I thought about before. (…)

Co-analysis meeting excerpt**:**

(…) The idea is that he [the friend] can teach me all these theories, for example, 'deconstruction', 'leaps of faiths' etc. and main philosophers, like Derrida. And, as I'm learning this stuff from him in a very informal way, I subconsciously reflect on anything that I thought before to see how the ideas that I would have had before regarding belonging, culture, or language etc. would then fit in with these new things which I decided are good…after learning the theory I can then look back at those uncontrolled or subconscious thoughts I had before and think 'oh, that's why I thought that even though back then I didn't understand why'. (…)

Journal entry 2 – Belonging:

My current understanding of 'belonging' derives from the consideration of shared identity; that is to say, one 'belongs' or feels they belong when they acknowledge an aspect of their identity they share with others. Additionally, I also believe that 'belonging' is facilitated by identifying contrasts and differences with other groups with which one doesn't belong…Nowadays, I do not strongly feel I belong to any of my obvious cultures/races (British or Chinese) – rather I identify myself amongst my closest friends and by what I do (i.e., scientist, climber, musician etc.). To my mind, this is the better way to establish one's identity. Nonetheless, I'm sure there are leftover identity traits; these influences are probably inescapable–a lot of my values and thoughts will still find roots in these two cultures…In England, I felt distinctly Chinese for most of my

> childhood, and in China, felt very English. The dysphoria was for me more pronounced in the latter; I would consider myself outwardly more English than Chinese, if I were forced to pick. Approaching my identity in this direction certainly facilitated making friends and generally living comfortably in the UK. I was also fortunate to live in a time when the East Asian ethnicity did/does not, to my experiences and opinions, experience as severe effects from structural/individual racism in the UK…I was fortunate to become more confident in my identity as I became older, especially at [the university], and as I mentioned above the importance of belonging to a pre-defined culture holds very little sway to me. Thus, I now contentedly embrace the path of lesser resistance and do not feel the need to hide my 'Westernness' so much. (…)

A. Lee in dialogue with human others and cultures

The awareness of the role of the human other in Lee's account is prominent. He considers his sense of belonging and attempts to define his identity in dialogue with "groups" as he compares and contrasts his experiences and characteristics with those of other people. He also formulates his identity among named human partners. The dialogic reading of Lee's narrative allows for this analytical distinguishment between the types of human others that contribute to Lee's (self-)defining: (1) faceless but named collectives (e.g., the British, scientists), (2) specific and named other (e.g., friends, partner), and, as the excerpt below will demonstrate, (3) specific but nameless other (e.g., racist strangers). Lee states that "belonging to a pre-defined culture holds very little sway to [him]" and that he prefers to "identify [himself] amongst [his] closest friends and by what [he does]". He does acknowledge, however, that certain aspects of his identity are surely rooted in the "probably inescapable" influences of the British and Chinese cultures. I will regard 'cultures' in Lee's narrative—whether represented by collectives of people, values, beliefs, or practices—as dialogic partners too and consider their role as part of the answerable act. Lee, through his account, provides examples of his agentic dialoguing with cultures, whether that is when he began to self-identify as more British and started to feel more comfortable living in the UK, or when he came to terms with his "Westernness".

The dialogues that Lee develops with other human actors encourage revisiting, or further co-dialoguing, of his relationship to broadly defined cultures. Lee describes how considering himself "outwardly more English than Chinese...facilitated making friends", in return, these friendships affected his thinking processes and contributed to shaping a more open-ended approach to self-defining that acknowledges "differences in thoughts as originating from different areas of the world". Lee also starts to pay more attention to the consequences and symbolic implications of embodying certain features and being perceived as belonging to specific collectivities ("ethnicity differences are one of these things you notice...when you're young, and you probably don't care back then, I didn't anyway... then, slowly... you think more about your own existence"). He recognises his dialogic responsibility—an invitation to respond with the expectation to respond *well*—and agency in these relations which he pursues by exploring his identity through philosophy and openness to being influenced intellectually by others, at the same time, holding onto a level of autonomy in determining his self-identifications ("I identify myself amongst my closest friends and by what I do"). He co-navigates his existence and selfhood, as well as other dialogic relations (e.g., dialogue with life stage transitions, dialogue with the university with its specific cultures and spatialities), in partnership with other human actors, the most prominent of which is his dialogic partnership with his friends. In those interactions with the specific and named other, Lee's views are challenged ("my friends showed me how to...adapt my judgements and become more inquisitive for value in those things I had previously disrespected"), but still within a relation that he—I would suggest—feels rather comfortable navigating. It is the specific but nameless other, however, that "disquiets" him, as he shared in our interview, and makes him rethink his self-definition against the other's presumed expectations:

> Once you think about identity and what identity means and, to my mind, a lot of it is, not meaningless, but it can be, so to speak, deconstructed into all sorts of things, then picking something that is something I enjoy, I find easier to associate myself with, then you can get rid of these feelings of ennui or sort of absurdism when you feel like you're going into different places which don't fit (the person)…When people ask you 'Who are you? What do you think of yourself?' I just think, 'Well, I guess I'm Chinese, I guess I'm English, probably I'm more English than Chinese, I'm not hundred per cent sure'. But then when people say, 'What do you do?' It's much easier, 'I'm a scientist, I live in [city

> redacted], I enjoy this, I enjoy that'…I think the only thing that disquiets me is when people sometimes remark on how good my English is or how nice my British accent is. These days that throws me off a little bit because it means a lot of things which are vaguely more complicated than this interaction may otherwise have been [laughs]…I feel like on some level I'm meant to be annoyed but I can't quite bring myself to be really annoyed, so I have this weird sense of disquiet when I just think, 'Oh, that's a sort of indication that they were expecting something of me and they made a judgment based on my appearance, and now they're doing this sort of soft—I'm not going to call...I could call it—racism' (it seems too prudish to not call it racism, given I've already preluded it as being 'soft')…They expected me to have some other sort of accent or be some sort of other person by the way I look. That's how human brains work, on the one hand, and then on the other, yes, maybe there's some systemic racism here, but I guess it doesn't trouble me so much.

Bakhtin (1990) distinguishes between the 'I-for-myself', which conceptually encapsulates the subject's experiences of becoming who it is in the fabric of the world ('the spirit') and the 'I-for-others', which, as opposed to the I-for-myself that is in constant flux, is more anchored (still very lightly and momentarily) in its self-definitions as they are established through its relations with others. In Bakhtin's view, the other, by virtue of its 'outsidedness', can give the subject an 'excess of seeing' that was inaccessible to the I-for-myself. It is in dialogue with this outsidedness that the subject finds 'rhythm' to her existence and a vision of herself, it is through this dialogue that the I-for-myself can look from the outside and see itself reflected at the I-for-others (de Peuter, 1998). Lee narrates above the process of identifying the racialised version of his I-for-others through his dialogic relations with strangers who compliment his ability to speak English well. He does not accept, however, this reflection as constitutive of his I-for-myself. In his internal dialogue, he acknowledges the racist connotations of received comments, evaluates them in the contexts of other dialogues (as will be explored in the second half of this section), and minimises them in his accounting ("That's how human brains work"). Over the course of the project, initially, Lee would only hint at having experienced racism, and it was not until later in the process that he revealed more details of blatantly racist attacks that he had experienced. He does not allow the response of the other to dominate his narrative of selfhood, and, at least in his reporting of

it, upon consideration, turns this feeling of disquiet into understanding for the other. I am aware that in some cases (as I showed in Chapter 5 based on Alea's discussion of her complaints about racist behaviour being disregarded in school) minimising and justifying racism can be a symptom of being embedded in a system and institutions that negate the voices and interpretations of marginalised groups in favour of perpetuating historical dominance of 'the majority' (Johnson et al., 2021). I cannot, however, speak to the extent of the influence such narratives might have had on Lee's life and self-defining. As I continue to explore, Lee's agentic capacity in formulating and pursuing his self-identifications, I will suggest that this capacity should also be positioned in dialogue with spaces of privilege accessible to him.

B. Lee in dialogue with privilege

Lee says he feels "lucky [that he's] been told to think about stuff all throughout [his] life", suggesting that he was brought up in an environment where thinking, and perhaps intelligence and knowledge, were valued and encouraged. Such conditions, combined with his parents' financial capital, and education and credentials received at a private school, as he acknowledges below, have likely afforded him easier access to the university and the experiences within that sociospatial context that he found so influential for his thinking processes and identity formation. Lee seems to have found himself in a space conducive to critical self-defining. Not only the space and the culture of the university that he was invited to be a member of are set up to facilitate academic discourse and exchange of ideas, but also the majority of people who he met there came from privileged backgrounds too—be it financially, socially, or symbolically. Lee's access to ideas and knowledge, as well as to peers who share his interest in discussions of identity and self-criticality, was unparalleled in the narratives shared with me by the other participants in this research project, suggesting a unique character of the specific interplay of space, time, and actors that dialogically build Lee's reality. A unique setting that perhaps promotes agreeable and agentic co-navigating of one's identity and heritage. A setting that perhaps even shields one from losing confidence in his I-for-myself when in dialogue with less agreeable others:

Interviewer: It's interesting how you're, maybe not putting yourself in the shoes of these other people, but you're trying to understand that maybe they just don't realise.

Lee: Absolutely, people would say that this is not ideal and they should improve themselves etc. (1) I feel obliged to criticise this kind of interaction at least a bit, 2) I'm thinking specifically of the 'go educate yourself' movement, which I acknowledge but don't really find aesthetically pleasing), to which I say, 'sure', but at the same time, I guess, in some ways, I have an expectation that people are not too sort of (I don't want to make out I think other people are 'stupid'/'less educated' etc.), they haven't thought about stuff as much as I have because, for whatever reason (i.e., I'm lucky, and they're not, if they don't think as much as you or I, or they think about other things which I have not), and that's fine, it's not ideal in many ways but it's fine. It's easy for me to say because I've been, I'm still relatively privileged, right? I have had lots of benefits and things which helped me in my life, so it's easier for me to say this compared to somebody who's struggling. So, I think that's something worth bearing in mind from my point of view (recognising that privilege gives me the ability to shrug off racist experiences a bit more easily)…It helps that my parents are now actually quite wealthy indeed (I did not consider myself privileged during my young childhood; my parents were frugal and saved a lot! My Dad was the sole source of income as a university lecturer, so it was enough for a family of four, but most friends seemed to have more toys etc. His current job pays a lot more; higher than most professorships in the UK.) even though I was a bit surprised when that actually happened. But even back then, we always had enough to eat, and I was lucky enough to go to a private school (through scholarships). There are many who are less lucky, and I think they will feel the bite more, right? If there are many things which are making your life difficult then adding more and more of these things it's not going to be good…at the end of the day, I don't really want to think about differences, but it is an easy way to remind myself what I am basically (These reflections lead ultimately towards issues I perceive in feminist, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ movements – these movements are necessary to allow individuals to self-identify with pride, but in doing so you must create barriers through differences. It's a very disconcerting paradox for me.). And I know I've written a lot about how I would like to disconnect all of identity, but I think I'm still trying to work out if it's technically impossible or technically possible

> but very difficult. So, for me, definitely, I'm not somebody who can say I have no identity, and so, given that I have an identity, I think this is the way that I am sort of making it.

Lee constructs his narrative with a high level of awareness of his privilege and its emancipatory character ("privilege gives me an ability to shrug off racist experiences a bit more easily"). He understands the uniqueness of his position among a network of dialogic others (including, "privilege" as the other) and considers these dialogic partners' influence on his self-defining. This analysis, thanks to the Bakhtinian dialogic perspective, is neither a consideration of the subject through the lenses of class positioning and access to knowledge and, therefore, power, nor is it a deliberation of the intersections of social categories that research could group Lee into. If it was, my discussion of Lee's agency would probably need to end with an acknowledgement that it originates from his privileged positions within the social structures. Instead, I suggest that, while helpful, Lee's privileged position only explains his agency among the social structures and norms. Perhaps that kind of agency through opposition that I discussed in Chapter 5. But, drawing on Bakhtin, Lee's existence can be seen as composed of multivocal dialogues and numerous invitations to be answerable and to respond; multiple locations in which one chooses one's response. Whether it is through being open to the specific friendships that challenge Lee's thinking and engage him in meaningful conversations, or through telling his story with some—even if never exactly the same—beginning and an end, Lee does exert a certain level of control over his narrative and identity. And he does it in a way that is unique to his situation and his dialogically constructed cognitive and sociocultural context for self-defining. Finally, Lee seems to be acknowledging his life and the act of self-defining as unique and at the same time shared, to use Bakhtin's phrase, as a "unique and unified event of being" (Holloway & Kneale, 2000, p. 74). His self-identifications are reported in his account alongside ideas of "'belonging' [that] derives from consideration of shared identity" and "'belonging' [as] facilitated by identifying contrasts and differences with other groups". He also considers the role of social movements ("feminist, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ movements")—often formed around 'membership' to a social group—advocating for people who might otherwise be excluded. Some of his deliberations on this topic were reflected in other participants' narratives and will be shared in the next chapter, as I discuss the role of parental cultural heritage in formulating self-identifications and finding belonging and non-belonging in collective identities.

6.3. Conclusion

Through the lens of Bakhtin's dialogism applied to a detailed analysis of two narrative accounts, this chapter unpacks further complexity within the task of navigating parental cultural heritage and draws attention to the unique positioning—in time, space, and in social relations—of each individual. A closer look at Sierra's and Lee's accounts of, respectively, parenting and self-defining, reveals the multiple overlapping 'others' whose dialogic presence will influence—though not dictate or determine—the availability and the kind of agentic response that one can access within a specific relation. Bakhtin's concept of multivocality of dialogic partners and the incorporation of a specified—often named—other in his theory, takes this analysis beyond considerations of agency as an act of opposing social norms and discourse that one feels oppressed by, and—in this respect in a similar way to Butler—facilitates locating agency within intersubjectivity. Though, Bakhtin's relationships between the self and the other, which he conceptualises as dialogues consisting of utterances, responses, and relations, are more contextualised than Butler's. Further, Bakhtin's subject's narrative capacity allows her to author herself. While Butler's (2005, p. 42) intersubjective agency originates from the "willingness to acknowledge the limits of acknowledgement itself" and the subject's inability to give a full account of oneself, for Bakhtin, through relation, the subject gains an 'excess of seeing', is able to see herself from the outside, and continues to shape and reshape her authentic expression of her life as she builds a story about herself with a beginning and an end. Lee's and Sierra's narrative accounts show examples of the possible ways in which young adults with migratory backgrounds can build stories of themselves that account for and are influenced by parental cultural heritage. Sierra finds peace with her upbringing as she engages in a discussion with her mother and gains more understanding for her parents' choices. Interestingly, she also notices "that some things might never change unless you potentially get help", pointing to the value she sees in reconciling cultural heritage in conversation with the human other. Lee's navigating of parental cultural heritage and his identity—from what is suggested in his account—is more reliant on his independent, though prompted by the other, reflections. He shapes his story and self-identification in conversation with ideas, ideologies, and theories, trying to make sense of his behaviours, responses, and thoughts, and of how he perceives himself through the lens of broader dialogues that occur within the social contexts that he occupies (i.e., conversations surrounding racism, social

movements, philosophical ideas). It seems like—and I will not argue otherwise—it is within that internal dialogue that he can "contentedly embrace the path of lesser resistance and do[es] not feel the need to hide" what he considers his cultural self-identification.

In Chapter 5 and the current chapter, I have discussed the subject's constitution in relation with the other and the space for agency within this relational being, 'co-being'. I have specifically looked at parental cultural heritage as formed and negotiated within intersubjectivity and, in some instances, sociality, and have started to consider what role parental cultural heritage might have in the process of self-identification. In the next chapter, this exploration will be extended through the application of Homi Bhabha's notion of cultural hybridity to consider the construction of collective identity—and the assumptions and expectations associated with it—within and between the processes of self-identifying and navigating cultural heritage. Butler (2005) asserts that any effort to identify fully with a collective 'we' would necessarily end in failure. Bakhtin (1993), sees using a voice or authority of someone else other than ourselves as an act that downplays an individual's unique position, agency, as well as the sense of responsibility. Nonetheless, the narratives shared in this research, as the next chapter will show, suggest an important role of the collective 'we'—'real' and imagined—in how these young adults shape their stories, realities, and identities. While they question their assignment within discourse to specific collective 'we's', "there is no wishing away [their] fundamental sociality" (Butler, 2005, p. 33). They continue to look for understanding and belonging and for a social context that recognises and validates their uniqueness.

CHAPTER 7: HYBRIDISING PARENTAL CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTITY THROUGH THE LENS OF BHABHA'S CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

So far, in this thesis, I have located the study participants' negotiations of parental cultural heritage within the chain of citational social norms and structures (Chapter 5) and within dialogic relations that are unique to each individual (Chapter 6). I have argued that identity and authenticity are situational and subject to self-change, rather than pre-determined and essential. My conceptualisation of agentic reformulations of cultural heritage and identity by immigrant-background young adults will be extended, in this chapter, through the analysis of specific discourses, contexts, and concepts that the participants interact with and against. I will position their realities within the "semantic structures and narrative modes of intelligibility"—which can be both freeing and limiting—that they have at their disposal as they "frame, direct, absorb and recast [their] desires and interpretations and encode [their] expectations and explanations" (de Peuter, 1998, p. 6). The dialogic perspective applied in the previous chapter helped identify more nuanced instances of agent acting within specific human and non-human relations, however, it did not interrogate the hierarchal and hegemonic relations that constitute what is dialogically possible. "Bakhtin operates in abstraction from the institutional sites in which the complex relations of discourse and power are negotiated" (Tate, 2005, p. 23). Finding my point of departure in Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity and the critical readings of it by his commentators, I situate the cultural within the historical and political by exploring the participants' self-identifications and contextualising them, in turn, within discourses of race and collectivity. By looking at specific discursively-shaped spheres of the participants' realities, I intend to "attend to the forms of othering and incommensurability that are prominent facets of experience for those constructed as minorities" (Anthias, 2001, p. 637) and conceptualise agentic cultural hybridising within the uneven power relations dictating what is considered as minorities' cultures and what as universally accepted norms (G. K. Bhambra, 2006).

Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity originates from a notion of culture that is perpetually in motion; not fixed in time and space (Bhabha, 1994). His hybridity is, then, a site of change and transformation where essentialised identities are challenged within the 'third space'.

Bhabha (1990, p. 211) claims that "the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather, hybridity to [him] is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge". Building on Renée Green's metaphor, Bhabha (1994, p. 4) imagines this space as a stairwell:

> The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.

In Bhabha's framework, the meaning of culture is situated in the in-between spaces, rather than in articulations of diversity or binary oppositions. He moves away from ideas of hybridity that are "founded on the metaphor of purity" and conceived as a mix of elements that are essential in their nature (Friedman, 2015, pp. 82–83; Young, 1995). Cultural hybridity, in his view, is the effect of practices of differentiation and social marginalisation, and not a result of pre-established hegemonic systems (G. K. Bhambra, 2006). Nonetheless, while conceptually appealing and refreshingly optimistic, Bhabha's 'third space' that is free from "assumed and imposed hierarchy", as the accounts presented in this chapter will show, is not accessible to all to the same degree (Anthias, 2001; Rose, 1995). Identifications and self-identifications are based on what society hails as one's "original moment" and the access to this possibility to "entertain difference" is not independent of what one and society perceive as one's starting point in this process of navigating the stairwell (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4).

In this chapter, I contextualise the study participants' experiences of parental cultural heritage within the conditions of power, privilege, discrimination, and expectations that they navigate as they struggle over their positions within discourse. The next section presents the multiple ways in which participants describe their cultural identity and discusses these in critical dialogue with Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity. In the section that follows, I take a closer look at Bhabha's theory of agency to consider how parental cultural heritage and identity are formulated, experienced, and hybridised through and against discourses of race

and collectivity. Aware that "the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211), I explore the participants' accounts across their entire involvement in this research project, paying particular attention to how they negotiate and translate they experiences. This chapter reports on the analysis of the narratively shared (and inquired) accounts through the lens of grounded theory. It extends the discussion of agentic reformulations of parental cultural heritage by shedding light on the discursive barriers and imbalances that are strongly embedded in immigrant-background individuals' realities and relations. I argue that if, as Anthias (2001, p. 630) suggests,

> the acid test of hybridity lies in the response of culturally dominant groups, not only in terms of incorporating (or coopting) cultural products of marginal or subordinate groups, but in being open to transforming and abandoning some of their own central cultural symbols and practices of hegemony,

then, claims of hybridity in the modern society are premature. The narratives presented below demonstrate the perpetual disadvantage that those of immigrant background may face within the prevailing social conditions as they explore the cultural and collective identities available to them.

7.1. Self-identifications and cultural hybridity

On the one hand, Bhabha asserts that "the question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a *self*-fulfilling prophecy—it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming the image" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45, original emphasis). Identity comes to *be*—not to *become* and *persist*—within specific historical and cultural repertoires of ideas, inheritance, temporalities, and material forces, and as such, is inherently hybrid and contingent. On the other hand, while he does not see importance in tracing two original moments from which the third emerges, his 'third space' within which hybridity is created is conceptualised as "the liminal space between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized", migrants and hosts, implying a somewhat static originary character of culture (Kuortti & Nyman, 2007, p. 8). Anthias (2001, pp. 621–622), as well as

other critics of Bhabha's theory (Maitland, 2019; Rose, 1995; Young, 1995), comments on this paradox of anti-essentialism:

> The argument about multiple belongings in the modern state rests largely on the dismantling of the notion of a unitary identity, partly through a critique of unitary notions of the self and partly through a critique of unitary notions of cultural identity. However, ironically, hybridity arguments need to stress the retention of part of a cultural heritage (that is, the continuities involved), if they are able to identify the cultural identity which is then merged with other aspects to form an organic whole.

This paradox constitutes a hurdle not only in theorisations of identity and culture but also in how immigrant-background individuals develop and define their self-identifications, where they, on the one hand, recognise the agency of the self and fluidity of identity, and on the other, feel rooted and committed to certain cultural pasts, presents, and futures.

Bhabha, regardless of his belief in the emancipatory and transgressive nature of hybridity, recognises the potential risks of navigating this new, hybrid subjectivity (Kuortti & Nyman, 2007). The 'third space' is characterised by distance, progress, and opportunity to exceed boundaries. It is a space where "elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity" are located and where "objectified others may be turned into subjects of their own history and experience" (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 1, 178). However, the results of occupying this liminal space are unknown and unrepresentable. Bhabha (1994, p. 9) suggests that the process of constructing hybrid identities involves an "estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world—the unhomeliness—that is the condition of extraterritorial and cross-cultural initiations". The opportunity and the risk come together in the process of cultural translation that "opens up a 'space-inbetween'…both the return to an originary 'essentialist' self-consciousness as well as a release into an endlessly fragmented subject in 'process'" (Bhabha, 1996b, p. 204). This, as Tate (2005) reads it, delineates the boundaries of the subject and suggests that some attachment to essentialised positionings remains in this process of remaking. As I proceed to present the accounts of self-identification shared with me by the participants, I intend to emphasise how this challenge in interpreting cultural identity and difference in postmodern times is not just a theoretical one, but is a lived,

ongoing, and difficult-to-articulate experience shaping individuals' relations with human and non-human actors within discourse. Rose (1995, p. 366) asserts that,

> Narratives of origin, journey, and destination can no longer be heroic myths of conquest; traditions can no longer be understood as articulating the essence of pure identity; cultural difference can no longer be seen as a panorama of multicultural diversity; class and gender can no longer be used as singular categories. Origin, authenticity, and essence are for Bhabha all dead tropes.

The participants' narratives suggest that the departure from pre-established cultural boundaries can be both liberating and confusing, and can lead to agency, but also, in some other cases or at some other times, to identity crisis.

Fia, of Kosovar heritage, and Helen, of Hong Kongese heritage, spoke to me about trying to balance the different identities and about their struggle to 'hybridise'. They do not see—and this perception is also influenced by external gazes—their identity as either fully rooted in their cultural heritage or fully aligned with what is celebrated as 'British culture'. Helen notices how her attempts to embrace her hybrid identity make her seemingly unsuitable for the social contexts that she wants to occupy. She struggles with "being in the middle of two cultures" and finds more comfort in imagining her self as formed of "two versions":

> I'm quite a stable person, but in the past, I have felt really emotional and quite upset about being in the middle of two cultures and I struggled mentally about that for a little while…I've learnt to accept being stuck in the middle of being British vs. Chinese. If I'm 'too British' to be hundred per cent Chinese, and 'too Chinese' to be hundred per cent British–why not just be both?…[S]ince second year [of university], I haven't really tried being more British or Chinese around certain friends, but it is quite a natural thing that I have two versions of myself.

Helen speaks about navigating the 'third space', this unique in-betweenness that is her reality, by representing different aspects of her cultural background when engaging in different dialogic relations. She acknowledges how these versions of herself are shaped by what is expected of her within specific sociocultural realms that presume her to be representative of

defined ‘originary moments’ that take on certain discursively established forms. Fia also has struggled to feel like her unique identity is recognised:

> I’ve never really felt entirely English or entirely Kosovar, but as I’m older I definitely feel more English than I do Kosovar...That’s where I’ve ended up, and I’m not happy about being there…[long exhale] I’ve always felt I didn’t belong to either.

For both Fia and Helen, as it was for Sara Ahmed (1997), the hybrid positioning invites feelings of being inadequate to any available cultural identity. Both of them have found it difficult to construct hybrid identities in ways that challenge the static and essentialists notions of culture and diaspora. Even though they show high capability for reflection and narrative reformulation in other parts of their engagement in the project, here, they describe themselves in line with the old logic of identity; with reference to the idea of continuity of collective social identities that they seem to feel the expectation to fit into. Stuart Hall (1991, p. 45) asserts that “these collective social identities were formed in, and stabilized by, the huge, long-range historical processes…They were staged and stabilized by…the dominance of the nation-state, and by the identification between Westernization and the notion of modernity itself”. This dominant position of the Western notions and repertoires of culture are influential to how the participants in this research account for their cultural belonging.

Bhabha’s concept of cultural hybridity, while embedded in postcolonial thought, has been criticised for depoliticising culture and neglecting the imbalances in the power relations that it references (Anthias, 2001; Bahn & Tepe, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the “new structures of authority” that Bhabha claims can be constituted within the ‘third space’ might be considered “new”, as they are non-static in nature and, indeed, subject to change, however, they might continue to closely replicate the deeply rooted discourse of dominance and the privilege of the coloniser over the colonised, and the host over the immigrant. My analysis takes Bhabha’s concept beyond its original purpose of describing colonial and racial relations, to highlight the unequal access to modes of emancipation created within the ‘third space’ and situates them within structures of racial privilege. By contrasting Fia’s and Helen’s attempts at self-identifications with those shared by Adam and András (below), both of European white

heritage,[37] I will argue that a voluntary departure from what society might see as one's cultural attachment is a privileged position. Adam, similarly to Fia and Helen, in his narrative, considered his position between and within the British culture and his parental cultural background. However, his account also extends to include his view of his position within the world:

> I would say that I still feel more German, but I'm starting to see that my Germanness and Britishness are not mutually exclusive. I can be both fully German and fully British and they don't take away from each other…On a national scale, I don't feel like I belong in one country or another. I think I'd be comfortable living anywhere, as long as I have people that I love around me. I see myself more as a citizen of the world, rather than belonging to a certain country.

András, while positioning himself differently in this process of negotiating the cultural in-between, also shares Adam's worldly aspirations:

> I did not think much about belonging growing up - but it came always naturally to me that we were simply Hungarians, living in a different country…What I believed quite strongly for a long period of time was that I was Hungarian through and through. I thought that I rejected British culture, that it didn't play any role in my life, and in a way, I shouldn't actually be in the UK…Now I would say I identify as Hungarian whilst fully embracing growing up in the UK. I think holding both passports is a good reflection of that…I received a grounding in both cultures simultaneously but adopted neither fully. This places me at the intersection between the two… Looking forward, I hope to draw upon everything that was great about my multicultural upbringing and apply it to my own adult life…I hope I will become a 'world citizen', with no 'hometown' but instead many places that are important to me.

[37] Fia, who also self-identifies as white and of European (Kosovar) heritage, has had different experiences of being 'white' in the UK to those shared by Adam and András. She spoke to me about racist incidents that "made [her] feel like [she] wasn't white, [she] was completely different", and mentioned that others have openly questioned her 'whiteness' and that she has been told she would not be considered white because of her skin tone.

Adam and András share a sense of ease and comfort in their ambivalent positions. While Fia and Helen felt like they had to adapt and lose something in order to become something new (being one *or* the other), Adam and András suggest they can expand on their cultural repertoires without compromising or sacrificing any parts of their identity (being one *and* the other). Upon noticing that "in Bhabha's work, there is a movement towards a radical cosmopolitanism", Hall (1997, p. 35) asks,

> 'Who has the power to become cosmopolitan?' and 'What kind of cosmopolitanism is this?' Is the cosmopolitanism of the Humanities Institute at Chicago University the same as the cosmopolitanism of the Pakistani taxi driver in New York who goes back to Pakistan to look after his wife and family every year? These differences have not been inscribed in the idea. That's one difference of emphasis between [Bhabha and I].

The 'cosmopolitanisms' and 'hybrid positions' available to my research project participants are not the same. While my data is limited in this respect, there have been larger studies offering that in the UK those of most other (non-British) white backgrounds (EU, North American or Antipodean), compared to other 'ethnic groups' show "greater independence from commitment to ethnic or national identity offered by the greater flexibility and transnational opportunities" (Nandi & Platt, 2015, p. 2626). This suggests the existence of power differentials and the potential role of racial privilege in access to cosmopolitanism and to emancipation within the 'third space', as Hall and I have speculated.[38] I still would like to argue that, in all four cases (Fia, Helen, Adam, András), participants' identities are developed through cultural hybridisation is the liminal space that allows for the emergence of new cultural meanings and narrative spaces (Bhabha, 1994). Nonetheless, this space is not free of cultural hierarchies and hegemonic practices. And the comparison of these four accounts of self-identification can empirically support Young's (1995, p. 4) claim that "[t]oday's self-proclaimed mobile and multiple identities may be a marker not of contemporary social fluidity and dispossession but of a new stability, self-assurance and quietism". Who feels reassured

[38] While examples from Adam's and András's narratives presented in this section might suggest my focus on racial privilege, I also recognise that access to the deconstruction and destabilisation of unitary collective identities and categories can be facilitated through other discursively privileged positions, such as class (see my discussion of Lee's self-identification in Chapter 6).

and recognised in their identity is not a matter of theoretical emancipation from 'old identities', but more so, of a societal and discursive shift that is yet to come.

The next couple of participants are perhaps even more in agreement with what Bhabha (1994) conceives as hybridity, as they transgress national and ethnic boundaries to identify their voices as coming from two places at once, while they inhibit neither (Anthias, 2001). Raya, who did not disclose to me in more detail what she would consider her "ethnic side", explains:

> The way I view myself, having been born in the UK, is in line with what it means to be 'British'…I feel as though I connect more with my British side than I do with my ethnic side…I don't necessarily however 'belong' to either group, I imagine myself as a hybrid sometimes, a unique mixture of both not really belonging neither here nor there.

Raya's account resembles what Fia said about not belonging entirely to either the Kosovar or British ways of being. However, Raya, here, instead of oscillating between different identities, positions herself in this space in between as "a unique mixture". Bhabha (1994, p. 39) could perhaps suggest that through this production of a counter-narrative of hybridity, she "elude[s] the politics of polarity and emerges as" an other of herself. He emphasises the discontinuity and incompleteness of identity, and how the hybrid develops not through a process of accretion, but through mixing that creates something new and renders the ingredient parts obsolete. Tommy, who self-identifies as "British-born Chinese", also steered away from constructing his account with reference to culturally pre-determined collective identities, and instead, acknowledged the ruptures and incoherences that the hybridisation of identity inevitably involves:

> I went on two free summer camps for foreign-born Chinese kids run by the Chinese government when I was 18 and 20…I was able to meet many other kids who were in similar positions to me as foreign-born Chinese…[This] helped cultivate part of my identity as a 'British-born Chinese', as opposed to strictly British or strictly Chinese…[It's] not both…it takes away from both (perhaps a sense of wishing that it was in some ways both, but also this is something I accept).

Something that one short quotation is unable to portray is how Tommy, perhaps most prominently out of all the participants, established a way of self-identifying that "breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside" through interrogating the interstices and interacting with what is hybrid too (Bhabha, 1994, p. 116). Throughout his engagement in this project, he continued to account for his experiences as British-born Chinese, rather than trying to differentiate between disparate parts or layers of his identity. He did not try to imagine what it would be like to be more British or more Chinese, or to forego certain cultural attachments. He said that attempting to do that would be "untruthful" towards himself:

> It's something that I don't necessarily want to think about. This is who I am, so to think about what it would be like if you were different would be almost a case of wishing that you were different (i.e., not respecting yourself). But this is something that I can never change. It's kind of being untruthful to yourself in some sense, a lack of respect for yourself, to wonder what it would be like if I was born to, say, white British parents and I grew up in here, or if I was born in China or something like that. I'm in a very unique position, with these precise circumstances in which I've grown up, which I wouldn't change because that's who I am.

Tommy's confidence in this condition of cultural hybridity and in self-identification as "British-born Chinese" was likely bolstered through his relations with others (summer camp friends) in a similar position and through his finding of a hybrid collective identity that encompasses his unique position more accurately than essentialist notions of national and ethnic belonging.

Hybridity, according to Bhabha (1990, p. 211) is

> not so much identity as identification…a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification—the subject—is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of the otherness.

The participants in this research have all faced a seemingly similar task of navigating parental (migratory) cultural heritage while growing up and living in the UK, however, their self-identifications, their versions of hybridity, are different. This, I argued, is a result of the

asymmetry of the social relations that shape their contexts for self-identification. Tate (2005, p. 66) describes it as an interaction between the "narratives of 'where you're from' [and] narratives of 'where you're at'…of origin and location" that happens within the 'third space', in order for new identifications to emerge. Through my exploration of storied hybridity, I examined the different constellations of self-identification, and began to recognise the different positionalities that immigrant-background individuals might occupy as they navigate their identity through conditions of discursive advantage and disadvantage. I am aware, however, that both my analysis and the participants' words that attempt to describe the processes of identification within discourse are also communicated through the language of discourse. The discussion of the usefulness of Bhabha's concept of hybridity for understanding how immigrant-background young adults might establish their cultural self-identifications in relation to cultural heritage, inevitably, cannot extend beyond the communication repertoires available and limited through discourse. In the next section, I will contextualise Bhabha's notion of agency within the 'third space' by interrogating how it is exercised within the systems of social constraint linked to participants' positionalities, 'origins', and 'locations' (Anthias, 2001). If the process of hybrid redefinition is not indifferent to discourse and practices of exclusion, and Bhabha's agency arises from hybridity, can immigrant-background individuals find agency in and through their unique positionings in the ways that Bhabha describes as possible?

7.2. Cultural hybridity, agency, and discourse

For Bhabha (1994, p. 193), hybridity is a site of emancipation, "a contesting, antagonistic agency functioning in the…space in-between the rules of engagement". He believes in "a subaltern or minority agency [that] may attempt to interrogate and rearticulate the 'inter-est' of society that marginalizes its interests" and disturb the processes of domination and authority through an "attempt to renegotiate the third locus, the intersubjective realm" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 191). Bhabha's postcolonial theorising understands the belief in distinct cultural identities of the coloniser and colonised as productive of colonial oppression. This, in return, according to Bhabha, creates space for the colonised to assert hybrid identities and liberate themselves from the imposed identity hierarchisation by claiming commonality with the coloniser (Bahn & Tepe, 2016). If, as Bhabha (1994, pp. 114, 178) suggests, "[h]ybridity

intervenes in the exercise of authority not merely to indicate the impossibility of its identity but to represent the unpredictability of its presence", it, indeed, might be possible for the disenfranchised to subvert "the rationale of the hegemonic moment" by redirecting the process of enunciation into "alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation". It is this ambivalence resulting from the enunciative present that Bhabha (1994, p. 257) sees as a location for "new forms of identification that may confuse the continuity of historical temporalities, confound the ordering of cultural symbols, traumatize tradition". It has been argued, nonetheless, that Bhabha's way of conceptualising emancipation is not clear on how agency can emerge within the limits of hybridity and the persisting structures of exclusion. As he tries to locate agency outside of oppositional relations between the coloniser and the colonised, the powerful and the marginalised, Vivienne Jabri (2014) suggests, Bhabha might be losing sight of the conflictual relation that defines the colonial project and its influence on postcolonial presence. Colonialism, as Rose (1995, p. 371) reminds, "is also, in some ways, immensely stable, persistent, and powerful" and thrives of contradictions, making the emergence of hybridity, as imagined by Bhabha, a difficult undertaking. Anthias (2001) also notices that Bhabha's focus on the transgressive aspects of hybridity means that not enough attention is paid to alienation, violence, and fundamentalism which also play important roles in cultural encounters.

Criticisms aside, Bhabha provides a useful concept for postcolonial agency that is available to "an always already constituted subject…through the trope of hybrid discursive formations" (Jabri, 2014, p. 377). A kind of agency that is established within the ambiguity and incommensurability of the 'third space' and is discursively limited at the same time. Bhabha's 'agency' is located within and articulated by a subjectivated subject whose formation cannot be separated from discourse and power (Kapoor, 2003). He believes that the terms of discourse can be reworked, discontinued, and established beyond what is already determined:

> My contention…is that this liminal moment of identification—eluding resemblance—produces a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that…requires movement and manoeuvre, but it does not require a temporality of continuity or accumulation; it

> requires direction and contingent closure but no teleology and holism. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 185)

And, while Bhabha's theorisation perhaps lacks emphasis on the hurtful colonial legacies that continue to affect the lives of immigrants and the colonised, it is certainly helpful in recognising the heterogeneity within the composition of not only the self and society but also discourse. As he draws on Hortense Spillers' reconstitution of the narrative of slavery, he suggests that cultural syntheses of identity, ethnicity, and race were "never homogenous in [their] practices and conceptions, nor unitary in the faces [they have] yielded" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 178). His recognition of culture as an enunciatory site, and not an epistemological object, resonates with how the participants in this study approach the task of positioning themselves with respect to their parental cultural heritage and the cultural sites they interact with. As this section of the chapter continues to unfold, I set out to discuss how these positionings are narrated through discourses of race and collectivity and suggest how immigrant-background individuals develop and utilise their agentic repertoires as they navigate hybridity.

Identification in context: race

Race is produced and performed through changing and complicated interactions, in dialogue between social actors, power, and structures of domination (Dein, 2006). "[T]here is no such thing as race" understood as an object, or biological inheritance (Nayak, 2006, p. 411). What there is, however, are the tangible and lived consequences of racialisation and discourses of race. Paul Gilroy (1998, pp. 843–844) wonders whether there could be a sense of scale that replaced the estranged anatomical scale to "counterweigh…the appeal of absolute particularity celebrated under the sign of 'race'. Can a sense of the arbitrariness of scale help to answer the seductions of self and kind projected on to the surface of the body but stubbornly repudiated inside it by the proliferation of invisible differences that produce catastrophic consequences where people are not what they seem to be?" However, this academic shift towards destabilising race and conceptualising it as a social and discursive construction has not yet resulted in destabilisation of hierarchies of power that benefit from insisting on race as an essential aspect of identity (Chadderton, 2018; Mason, 2000). Racial identities remain "both fluid and transiently essentialised" and "part of the interplay of

disparate elements in a 'process of hybridity' (Bhabha 1990 p. 211) through which culture and identity are continually reworked and re-created" (Alexander, 1996, p. 192). My analysis of the participants' hybrid self-identifications will focus, first, on their interactions with the ideas of race as "transiently essentialised" and how the discourses of race as transmitted to them by their peers and the general public affect their dialogic abilities to define themselves on their own terms. Then, I will consider instances in which the participants narrate race as 'fluid' and suggest that they occupy an unstable position in the liminal terrain between white and non-white. Bhabha's conceptualisations of cultural hybridity and agency will be referred to throughout with the aim to understand the role of the stabilities and destabilisations of racial discourses within the 'third space'.

In the quote below, one of the participants, Cam, illustrates "the demand of identification"—the demand "to be *for* an Other"—and the resulting self-questioning of her identity in the face of this racialised demand (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45, original emphasis):

> Especially when I'd get strange members of the public come up to me and try and strike a conversation when I'm at work and start asking me 'How are you? Where are you from? Where are you really from? Where are your parents from? Where's Vietnam?' It just makes me feel uncomfortable because it tells me that they don't see me as British, when I feel like I am British. But when this situation happens, it just reminds me that people will not see it as such and there will always be people who will question my nationality because I'm not white, and because I'm not white, I must not be British, so I must be foreign…I guess I find it irritating because it feels like an interrogation. It just feels like me constantly having to defend the idea that I am a British citizen and it makes me question my sense of belonging in terms of my nationality and me as a British citizen, because if other British people don't see me as such then why should I?

Cam narrates, here, how her sense of confidence in her position as a British citizen is called into doubt in interactions with strangers who through their "demand of identification" communicate their perception of her "in the differentiating order of otherness" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 45). While they do not utter "[you're] not white, so [you] must not be British, so [you] must be foreign", their racist assumptions and expectations are clear to Cam, who elsewhere in this research project shared with me how she was aware that this kind of interrogation and

implicit questioning of one's right to call themselves 'British' is not something that her white-bodied peers experience and can relate to. Cam affirms that she "feel[s] like [she is] British", however, the continued responsibility to defend her position as British leads her to wondering whether she should give in and adopt the gaze of the other ("if [they] don't see me as such then why should I?"). Another participant, Tommy, whose self-identification as British-born Chinese has been discussed earlier, has dealt with similar reflections in his late teens. He arrived at a conclusion, "no matter what I do or who I am, some people will always view me as an outsider in the UK".[39] Below, he explains how an essentialist school nickname made him feel labelled and misunderstood among his close friends:

> Some of my school friends who are POC seemed to be able to enjoy racist jokes at their own expense and take them in their stride, but I have always been uncomfortable when someone makes fun of me in general, especially when it is about race. Even in my group of close friends in [city], I was sometimes nicknamed 'Chinese Tom', which to this day I don't understand why…it's a strange one, because they were my friends, and it was in a group of, say, ten people and then a couple of them would call me that a lot and others would copy. Probably to them, it wasn't the most natural way of calling me, but then if other people were doing that maybe that would become normalised…This is a strange one, because it definitely makes you feel different and it reminds you of that (and that other people think of this too when they think of you)…I don't see particularly why you would want… I didn't particularly enjoy it in any sense, for sure (felt the need to justify myself, like it was my fault almost). It's this sense of being different, a sense of not fitting in, it's also just like putting you into a box, because I guess, to call me 'Chinese Tom' would be denying the other aspects of my identity that are important to me as well. It's a bit dismissive. It's like labelling somebody with a label that doesn't, well, I guess, there's no point why, it doesn't feel necessary…And it's someone who you're close friends with, so it's different to someone who is just trying to be mean for the sake of being mean. It feels like your relationship is based on you being just this other.

[39] This became apparent to Tommy a few years after the experiences narrated and analysed in this section, nonetheless, in his journal entry, he suggested the cumulative nature of this conclusion.

Both Cam and Tommy describe repeated instances of their interactants struggling to recognise their identities outside of the racial frame, which to Tommy feels like being "den[ied] the other aspects of [his] identity". Some could note that the label used to address Tommy was an essentialised expression based on his parents' national background or his assumed ethnicity, however, as he suggests, it was most likely established and repeatedly used with racial connotations. Before recounting this story, he also shared, "the racial factor…I don't think it can be detached for someone like me or someone whose parents are clearly different ethnicity to English people, the white British people". Another participant, Sarah, whose parents migrated to the UK from Pakistan, also spoke to me about her friends incorrectly assuming her religious identity based on her skin colour which reinforced her sense of being different to her peers:

> Whenever I couldn't go out, [my peers] would be like, 'Oh just go', and whenever I couldn't do something, they'd just say, 'Oh just do it' and 'Why aren't you doing this and why aren't you doing that?' They never quite understood, and then whenever I wouldn't be able to do something because of my personal choices, they'd be like 'Is it because you're Muslim?' 'No, I'm not Muslim, why are making this assumption?' They'd just assume it. They had no idea because they'd never really interacted with anyone that wasn't white, so they had to like learn, as well as me.

These narratives show how "despite the pedagogies of human history, the performative discourse of the liberal West, its quotidian conversation and comments, reveal the cultural supremacy and racial typology upon which the universalism of Man is founded"[40] (Bhabha, 1994, p. 237). Whether inflicted by strangers or close friends, the type of discursively constructed essentialism and racism that Cam, Tommy, and Sarah continue to experience through everyday, pernicious acts factors into their access to agentic and hybrid positioning and self-identifications within social spaces that they occupy and discourses operating within these spaces.[41]

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[40] Here, Bhabha refers to Franz Fanon's (1986) observations in 'The Fact of Blackness'.

[41] My analysis also suggests that those living in white bodies might have limited access to hybrid identifications due to being essentialised, too. In these cases, however, the imposition of the British identity seems more common. Adam, once after claiming he was German, was told by his housemates, "No, you're English, you're from [city in the UK]". Danuta's account also reflected her ability to come across as British: "When people find out that I'm Polish, they ask, 'How Polish do you feel? Where do your allegiances lie?'" In this line of questioning,

Some participants also shared with me how they try to counteract these manifestations of harmful discourses, perhaps hoping that they could minimise their impact on their self-identifications. Cam, for example, tries not to lean into racist conversations by deflecting leading questions:

> When I started this new job, one of the guys asked, 'Oh, so where are you from?' and I had to just say, 'Well, why are you asking me? Are you asking me what I look like? Where was I born? Where do I live now?' It's always that they need to expand on the questioning.

Sabina, of Sri Lankan heritage, does the opposite. She finds it easier to adapt her answer, or the version of identification that she shares, to what she believes is expected by her interactants, and in relation to the sociospatial context that she finds herself in. This points to a situational nature of self-identification, although does not go as far as to suggest that identities can be used "strategically and deliberately by youth to achieve particular goals in specific situations" (cf. Ajrouch, 2000; Platt, 2014; Sundar, 2008, p. 255):

> When someone asked me about culture and they didn't know me, they would assume that whatever I will initially talk about would be ethnic-related, racially-related, but also culture has so many meanings [offers alternative examples]…It depends on who I'm talking to, depends on what conversation I'm in. At my staff social meeting, we're talking about TV, that's 'culture', I'm not saying, 'Oh, I went to the temple and we have these traditions'. But if I'm talking to a stranger and they ask me about 'culture'—that's going to be my bias—they're asking me about cultural differences and similarities, and that sort of thing…So, if in Cornwall, where it's very white, someone asked me about culture, I know they're probably not asking me how many pints I'll have in the pub.

Perhaps there is some 'subaltern' agency in her approach, as she takes her turn at treating people based on just assumptions and responds to bias with bias. But, maybe more importantly, she does not seem to let the racist gaze and behaviour affect her confidence in

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unlike in Cam's case, while allowing space for Danuta's partial self-identification as Polish, her Britishness is not questioned by her interactants.

her self-identification as 'Sri-Lankan-British' and in the breadth of meaning that 'culture' can convey. She flips the script and says that it is the British identity that she would be more likely to shed than the parts of her identity related to heritage:

> I think of myself as a Sri Lankan-British person, but more and more I wonder whether the British part is an identity I want to carry. It's weird because the thing that people usually question you about when it comes to belonging is the heritage part, but that's fine, I'm golden with that, it's more about the place where I am, is it going the way that I want to be part of?

Similarly to Sabina and unlike Cam, Sarah's way of dealing with essentialist labels is indirect:

> I had to learn how people react when they haven't interacted with anyone 'different' before. I had to learn the difference between malice and inexperience.

She reframes racist behaviours as resulting from a lack of exposure and experience, rather than an intention to harm (in a way that resembles Lee's approach to racism in Chapter 6). All three of these ways of dealing could be described as relationally and dialogically agent, however, I would not locate these agencies within the 'third space' and conceptualise them as facilitated through hybridity. I will argue that, when it comes to agency in the face of racialisation, Bhabha's theorisation's value is not so much in how it helps this analysis make sense of the negotiating tactics that the participants have at their disposal when responding to racist discourse, it is in how they make use of the ruptures and discontinuities within discourses of race to establish their positions as hybrid and more complex than just essentially non-white.

"[R]ace is a fiction only ever given substance to through the illusion of performance, action and utterance, where repetition makes it appear as-if-real" (Nayak, 2006, p. 416). Establishing culturally hybrid identities, therefore, happens not only in the space in-between discursively-constructed social positionings but also within the recognition of the heterogeneity of race and discursive practices, and the destabilisation—through interaction and repetition—of the assumptions of the unitary nature of racial identities produced in the West. Some of the participants in this research suggested their understanding of race as a social relationship, as

opposed to a pre-determined category based on biologically determined characteristics. Their narratives transcend categorisations to reveal a possibility of hybridity in experiencing race and in racial self-identification. Similarly to Alea, of Pakistani heritage, redefining notions of 'Britishness' and 'Scottishness', as I discussed in Chapter 5, some of the participants took part in reclaiming pejorative racist terminology. In the late nineties, Paul Gilroy (1998, p. 841) described "'coconut', 'choc-ice' or 'oreo-cookie' ontologies" as symptomatic of "strict and pernicious divisions between 'inside' and 'outside'". This view has been later shared is research that has acknowledged the pejorative use of these terms, often within ethnic communities, to talk about someone whose behaviour, values, and beliefs align more with what would be perceived as 'white'[42] and not what is seen as characteristic of being a member of the given 'community' (Kebede, 2017; Vadher & Barrett, 2009). However, when mentioned in the narratives shared in this project these terms, rather than being associated with othering and exclusion, were seen by the participants as reflective of how they perceive themselves. Cam, for example, especially when surrounded by her cousins who share similar experiences of hybridity, self-identifies as a 'banana':

> When I go to [British city], my [same British city] cousins talk a lot more about it, they'd go, 'Oh, she's an egg or she's a banana'. If you're an egg, you are white on the outside, but yellow on the inside…So I'm a banana, yellow on the outside, white on the inside…We talked about it a lot more in [same British city] because I think that conversation is more apparent, but I wouldn't ever talk about stuff like that with my friends because they just wouldn't get it.

In a similar fashion, Sabina says:

> We joke that I am a coconut, brown on the outside, but white on the inside. And it's kind of true. The reality is that apart from my skin colour, I'm very white-passing, and that affords me a lot of privilege…So, if you didn't see my name and you didn't see me, and just heard me on the phone, you'd think I was white…In [city], it's very white, but I sort of still could fit in, because I sound relatively posh, and [city] is actually very poor (scoff - sounding posh has meant that I have been spared racist confrontations). So, there's

[42] A broader discussion of the heterogeneity encapsulated within the category of 'whiteness' is beyond the scope of this chapter but could be pursued in Nayak (2003a).

> different trade-offs. I'm a person of colour but I sound wealthy even though I'm not. There's certain buy-in we get for our features.

Cam and Sabina do not describe their race as an integral unbroken part of their selves and identities (cf. Tate, 2005). Instead, they acknowledge their skin colour as their embodied feature, while also—through their experiences and circumstance—identifying with both whiteness and non-whiteness. This access to identification as 'white' is likely helped, here, by relations and interactions with others who also have to navigate this in-betweenness, in Cam's case, and in Sabina's case, potentially by her accent and the effect that her perceived class positioning has on how she is seen by the other ("sounding posh has meant I have been spared racist confrontations"). During our co-analysis meeting, Sabina also mentioned that her "posh accent validates [her] position as British". Their narratives suggest that they have access to the 'third space' where they navigate the malleabilities of discourse in ways that lead to hybrid racial positioning; ones that they acknowledge as more representative of who they are compared to essentialist skin-colour-based labels. Nonetheless, these agentic reformulations of racial identity do not happen outside of the conditions of discourse and the rules of the social context. Outside of the favourable conditions, immigrant-background young adults' attempts to agentically reformulate and hybridise racial identities could reiterate "the otherness of the self" and the feelings "of misrecognition where each point of identification is always [considered] partial" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 97).

Under different conditions, one can be denied such hybrid racial identifications. Sabina and Sarah spoke to me about instances when they would be essentialised as 'white' and have their ethnic heritages disregarded. For example, Sabina's white-bodied partner's grandad shared with her how he is inclined to include her as 'white' because she is one of "the okay one[s]":

> My partner's family—and he was born in [British city]—they think I look white. And his grandad… my partner warned me before, 'Grandad is a little racist'. And [grandad] didn't say anything to me, but it was very much, 'I don't like all those Indians, but Raj in the corner shop is fine, because Raj, he's a good person, he's a good Indian'. And my partner said, 'Grandad loves you, but that's considered you're white', meaning, 'you're the okay one'.

Following this utterance, Sabina also mentioned that, in her view, “the good ones” are representative of the community, and that she wished people like her partner’s grandad could be more exposed to different cultures to be able to appreciate them. She seemed disappointed in the fact that in order to be accepted within her partner’s family, she needs to be seen as ‘white’, and could not be afforded recognition based on her hybrid racial identification. Sarah has also been denied her “coloured” status, however, in her case the imposition of the identity as ‘white’ came from other people of colour:

> I went to white schools. At home, my parents always spoke English because my dad needed to make his English better. They spoke Urdu to each other when they were trying to keep secrets and hide it from us, so we never picked up on their language. We wouldn't listen to Pakistani songs. My mum never really cooked at home, so we never really ate the food. And all my friends were white. So, everyone just thinks that we are very very whitewashed. And then the fact that, apparently, we don’t look that Pakistani either, everyone just thinks that… Even when people see me, and I mean, coloured people, they’ll say, ‘I don’t count you as coloured’, I’m just like, ‘F**k, okay’, and they say, ‘I just count you as white’, and I’m like, ‘okay, lovely’ [sarcastic tone]. (I feel like these comments are unfair as I’m just as ‘coloured’ as everyone else who has come from Pakistan. Just because I happen to not look or act a certain way that fits a stereotype doesn’t mean I shouldn’t be regarded as being from a certain race.)

Bhabha’s assertion that the identities of the ‘subaltern’ can be agentically repositioned in the in-between is challenged in this juxtaposition of theory and participants’ narratives. Lived experiences continue to be shaped by, and in the context of, essentialist and racist discursive practices and everyday talk (e.g., being considered “the okay one” or “whitewashed”). Where hybridity is not recognised within the social space, those who position themselves in the liminal space between racial identifications might find themselves in interactions where social actors will only acknowledge one of their racial identities at the cost of denying other ones. Sabina is afforded recognition as ‘white’, but that is given she is unlike “all those Indians”. Sarah feels excluded from the diasporic, brown-bodied community, as it has been implied to her that she adopted certain characteristics and practices that are considered ‘white’, and hence, is no longer “count[ed]…as coloured”. There is still, however, space for hybridity within Sabina’s and Sarah’s self-identifications and they do utilise this space. In particular, Sabina

spoke a lot throughout her engagement in this project about her understanding of racial categories (especially 'white') as homogenised and simplified through discourse and, while narrating her positioning in relation to race and racism, steered away from attempting to define or label her racial identity. The participants in this research are not blinded by discourse or restricted to framing their identities through the lenses imposed by the dominant other; their narratives show frustration and awareness of the unfair nature of the social realm that they are attempting to navigate in agentic ways. So, in this sense, I agree with Bhabha that hybridity can open up space where the 'subaltern' can formulate oppositional views and identities to the dominant discourse, however, I question the outcomes of this process. It has been pointed out to me by the participants that feeling understood, recognised, and having their identity and cultural heritage validated are prerequisites to the feeling of belonging. Bhabha's 'third space' creates a context for agency to arise and for hybrid self-identifications to be formed, but, I propose, it does not necessarily facilitate feelings of being agent. The kind of agency that Bhabha offers is, indeed, available and utilised—within limits—by the participants and likely, more broadly, other immigrant-background individuals. However, the narratives shared in this project suggest that this agency exercised through self-defining and questioning of categorisations, racism, and essentialism can feel like an isolated, unrewarding act when it does not lead to feelings of belonging, inclusion, validation, and recognition. The search for understanding and community with others navigating the sometimes lonely 'third space' of hybridity will be explored further in the next subsection.

The participants' interactions with discourses of race show how race is both a social relation that can be negotiated and hybridised, and a form of embodied heritage understood by many as essentially stable. The racist other feels entitled to her ignorant gaze and her imposition of racial categorisation on those whose racial identifications might be more complex. Aware of the structures of privilege and processes of discrimination operating to stabilise discourse, immigrant-background young adults in this research seem to turn to hybridity and construct unique racial identities that oppose pre-defined cultural and racial categories. Nonetheless, while able to exercise some dialogic agency to reformulate and perform their complex identities in different relational contexts, they seem to struggle to initiate lasting change within the powerful discourses that subjectivate them, in a way Bhabha would perhaps suggest was accessible to them. Racialised immigrant-background individuals and their racial

identities, Nayak suggests (2006, p. 417), "cannot be understood outside of the specific historical and geographical processes…and the symbolic regimes of language" that shape the relations they emerge into. While, as Bhabha and some of the participants suggested, under favourable conditions, there is some space for heterogeneity and malleability within discourse, the lack of recognised vocabulary to describe hybridity of identity persists. Racial categories and terminology deeply rooted in colonialism and stabilised through language are difficult to be disturbed through notions of in-betweenness, fluidity, and resistance to being defined, especially as these come in a form of 'subaltern' agency.

Identification in context: collectivity

"The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new era of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). It opens up space for agentic identity reformulation, but also, destabilises the sense of collectivity and collective identity. According to Bhabha (1994, p. 231):

> For what is at issue in the discourse of minorities is the creation of agency through incommensurable (not simply multiple) positions. Is there a poetics of the 'interstitial' community? How does it name itself, author its agency?

There is a fine line between critiquing essentialist and exclusionary identity labels and the dismissal of the importance of communities and social movements due to their heterogeneity and indefinability (Giroux, 2000). Judith Butler (2008, p. 194) recognises the purpose of the collective 'we', at the same time, she warns of its inability to be fully inclusive:

> The feminist 'we' is always and only a phantasmatic construction, one that has its purposes, but which denies the complexity and indeterminacy of the term and constitutes itself only through the exclusion of some part of the constituency that it simultaneously seeks to represent.

The culturally hybrid collective 'we', since it is often associated with embodied features, I would argue, is even more complex and undetermined than Butler's feminist 'we'. Nonetheless, as the study participants suggest, the longing for this kind of collectivity persists in society that, while providing "increasing chances and resources for an autonomous

definition", still pressures "to conform to systemic regulations" (Melucci, 2015, p. 58). My discussion of cultural hybridity in the context of establishing collectivities will begin with examples of the struggle to fit into predetermined collective identities or communities. I will, then, move on to consider alternative collectivities that the participants managed to either join or form to try and satisfy their desire for the collective 'we'.

Below, Helen reflects on struggling to find her community of friends at university, as she felt she neither fit in with her "Chinese" or "East-Asian friends", nor with the "white British" ones:

> I've loved my time at [university name] but moving here and starting my uni life triggered an extensive identity crisis…Suddenly, for the first time ever, I was surrounded by not only white British people but also an enormous group of international students from Hong Kong. Naturally, I was drawn to them—my parents are from Hong Kong, I've been to Hong Kong many times to visit family, but I never had the chance to make many Chinese friends. But this only led to a big problem that I had never even considered—I was too westernised for them. Our upbringing was so different, we just didn't click as much as I had thought we would. On the other hand, I felt like I was 'too Chinese' for my white friends. I felt lost and it bothered me so much at the time that I found myself trying to be 'more Chinese' when I was with my East-Asian friends, and 'more British' when I was around my group of white British friends.

Elsewhere during this research engagement, Helen revealed that growing up she experienced racism and feelings of exclusion when interacting with her white peers in the UK. This might partly explain her excitement and interest in meeting international students from Hong Kong at university. The reality that she faced as she tried to socialise with them leads her a realisation that the community that she imagined she would resonate with does not provide the sense of belonging that she hoped for either. Helen "felt lost" and unable to be accepted in either of these communities. Her hybridity was not recognised and she felt that her only means to belonging and validation were by adapting her identity to fit what is recognised and dominant. Lee also sought to develop new relationships at university with people who had a level of connection with China, his parents' country of origin—whether by birth or heritage:

> I joined this association of British-born Chinese people, which was also opened to British people who are interested in China and also international Chinese people who wanted to join, and this society was really not that great, I have to say (I'm still a little bit unimpressed by [the association], but for sure I made a very fast and decisive judgement, which I probably would not today. Nonetheless, these experiences repeated enough and ultimately did estrange me from the Society.). At the second social we went to, people got raging drunk and said ridiculous things and it was just crazy, and so I was really freaked out and it was the first time I felt really estranged from the ingroup that I've been very used to when I was growing up.

Lee notices here the heterogeneity of what he refers to as an "ingroup". He realises that the community of friends—who shared a connection to China—that he knew from childhood is not representative of the diversity of broadly understood "Chinese people". This sense of estrangement from this group, he suggests, was one of the reasons why he established a more international and intercultural group of friends at university and quite radically reframed his view of identification and attachment to ethnic and national groupings (as has been discussed in Chapter 6). Lee's and Helen's narratives reflect the destabilisation of the "narratives of originary and initial subjectivities", that Bhabha (1994, p. 1) offers, and point to perceiving identification and commonality through the lens of "those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural difference". Bhabha (1994, p. 2) sees these in-between spaces as a terrain "for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular and communal" and "sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself". Nonetheless, as agent, aware, and reflective Helen and Lee showed to be throughout the duration of the project they both were initially drawn to the idea of a community that shares cultural heritage and they seemed to define that collectivity through discursive lenses that impose essentialist and homogeneous views of cultures, rather than in those more agentic ways that Bhabha proposes (i.e., through collaboration, contestation, and self-defining). While I do not categorically disagree with Bhabha's vision of agentic self-identifying and community building, I see it as difficult to access by those who operate within discourse that does not offer recognition or a name to 'interstitial' communities. How can the 'subaltern' "confuse the continuity of historical temporalities, confound the ordering of cultural symbols, [and] traumatize tradition" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 257) when her current way of

self-identifying seems too individual and open-ended to be encompassed by any collective identity available within the scene of articulation in discourse? 'The in-between', or 'hybridity', can work as sites for agentic reformulations of identity but it is too broad to effectively provide a name and community to those who feel marginalised due to persisting discourse of national and ethnical homogeneity.[43]

As argued in Chapter 5, most of the young adults that took part in this project are aware of their inability to give a full account of themselves and they find agency in realising and accepting the fact that they do not fit the categories, stereotypes, and expectations that the society assumes as fundamental to their stories and realities. These realisations, however, in many cases, are not reflected in their social surroundings, leaving the participants lost with the difficult task of finding a collective 'we' while aware that there are no unified subjects. Against the dominant discourse that associates "the problematic of culture [with] that of collective identity", some of the participants manage to form groupings and reiterate identities through the "use of narratives of belongingness [that] do not depend solely on cultural practices and beliefs", but, instead, highlight the experiences and contestations related to hybridisation (Anthias, 2001, p. 622). This resonates with Bhabha's (1994, p. 241, original emphasis) view of the foundations of communality:

> It is to establish a *sign of the present*, of modernity, that is not that 'now' of transparent immediacy, and to found a form of social individuation where communality is *not predicated on a transcended becoming*.

Cultural identity and its articulation are always incomplete and transgressive. As much as I emphasise the difficulty in accessing this space, I agree with Bhabha (1994) that within hybridity there is space for new individual and communal identifications that renegotiate supremacy and authority through disparate ways of living, speaking, and acting (Maitland, 2019). While perhaps still unable to disturb the unifying discourse in a Bhabhian fashion, the

[43] Some of the research participants (e.g., András, Sabina) expressed happiness and pride at being—what they described as—different. These sentiments, however, were associated with the opportunity to speak about certain traditions, foods, dress, or draw on broader linguistic capitals, and always shared with receptive audiences. In this way, they show a level of identification with the communities/collectivities whose heritage they transmit. Overall, however, their narratives suggest that they find it difficult to find communities of shared values, beliefs, experiences, and meanings.

study participants challenge it as they adapt and extend their ideas of collectivity and find community beyond national and ethnic boundaries. Sierra, of Hong Kongese heritage, for example, shared:

> Now that I think back on it, I must have been in limbo until Year 10 of secondary school as that was when I began to feel happiest and most like I belonged, as I began to form strong friendships with other POC. They understood the feeling of belonging in the UK whilst also having a different culture at home. They balanced the different aspects of themselves throughout their whole lives just as I had and they had shared microaggression experiences, e.g., being mistaken for another POC student by teachers, or staff not being able to pronounce our names when they do the register. We bonded over having strict parents and the differences between us and the white British culture that surrounds us. In some way, our supposed differences in belonging compared to our white counterparts actually reinforced our own multifaceted version of belonging in this country.

Sierra highlights, here, the importance of shared experiences of differentiation that helped her bond with her POC peers in a way that earlier in her childhood she had not realised was possible. Similarly, Cam spoke to me about the support that she can count on from her cousins who are also "second-generation Vietnamese". She emphasised the shared understanding they all had of "strict Asian" parenting and navigating their lives in the UK:

> Having grown up with [my cousins] when I was young and them also being second-generation Vietnamese, they understood more of what I had to say than my white friends could ever even try to. I had relatives in Canada, [US state] and [British city] and when we all got together it was just normal and so easy to talk and be with each other because we just knew we were family and everyone would always have each other's backs. When I was growing up, trying to navigate through society and life with strict Asian parents, my older cousins were the ones who tried to talk to my mum to go easy on me. They would be the ones who would take me shopping to get a dress that I needed for my school play. They were the ones who I could talk to if I was angry with the way my mum was treating me and they would understand and be on my side.

Finally, András bonded with his fellow immigrant-background friend by sharing reflections on transitioning from a very strong sense of connection to his parents' country of origin to acknowledging the impact that growing up in the UK has had on him. They found consolation in realising together that their lack of rootedness in a specific country does not mean that they cannot belong anywhere. I suggest that they perhaps even found a sense of belonging in and through their relation:

> This way of thought began to change in my teenage years when I started to realise that I wasn't as Hungarian as I thought I was, and that it was undeniable that British culture and values had had a major impact on me growing up. I went through many periods of thought and reflection, which I joked about often with a schoolmate in a similar position…She was quite vocal in her identity crises and whatever she was going through…It was just jokes about how we don't belong anywhere, we're kind of citizens of the world, we don't really have a certain place we call home as such (She often felt similar regarding her home country as I felt towards Hungary so we would joke about this.). The reason I say 'jokes' is because obviously it's not as simple as that. I think belonging can mean a lot of things and just because there isn't one single place that you really strongly connect to, it doesn't mean that you don't belong anywhere.

Sierra, Cam, and András emphasise the value and meaning of relationships developed based on shared experiences, views, and reflections, as opposed to specific cultural practices, beliefs, or characteristics. They achieve a sense of belonging and community by creating bonds with others who for one reason or another also find themselves in the liminal space of hybridity—be it due to the symbolism of their skin colour in the UK context, generational differences between them and their parents, or the sense of uprootedness arising from having grown up in a different country than that of their parents' origin. Interestingly, all three accounts quoted above also speak to the temporal and transitional aspects of these realisations about community; Sierra and András narrate the transition from feeling isolated in their positioning to finding others who shared their experiences of hybridity, Cam—as I can acknowledge based on the broader account she shared—looks nostalgically at the relationships she had before moving between two British cities and losing regular contact with some of her extended family. This transitionality was characteristic of all of the participants in this research who all acknowledged moments in their lives when they felt a

sense of community and some other moments when they did not. It is astonishing how for many of them being able to finally feel like they belong regardless—or perhaps very much in celebration of—their hybridity was a matter of being lucky in finding relations that understand and validate in-betweenness. What the narrative extract quoted above cannot express are the sociotemporal contexts within which the participants arrived at their realisations of value in finding collectivity around hybridity. Sierra and Cam grew up being reminded through everyday acts of racism—as they shared in this project—that they are perceived by many through the lens of what is assumed as their 'originary moment', through essentialist categorisations that do not leave space for in-betweenness. András, although he claimed that, "in the day-to-day, there wasn't anything that would set [him] apart and [that]…there was no discrimination or bullying or anything", he also noted how his Hungarian name "caused a lot of problems throughout" as it would be confusing to English speakers who would then misspell and mispronounce it. He also spoke about feeling like he was "sticking out like a sore thumb again" when he would travel to Hungary and try to socialise with others his age and he would be reminded that he "lived in England all [his] life". "Again", here, might also be indicative of similar feelings of not fitting in in the UK in some situations, although these, apart from the conversation we had about his name, were not discussed. The narratives shared here, once contextualised, suggest that the emergence of the "sign of the present" that Bhabha sees as helpful, if not necessary, for the establishment of new forms of communal identification can be hindered by historically rooted practices of categorisation and othering.[44]

Sierra's, Cam's, and András's accounts are good examples of the different aspects of one's identity, upbringing, and reality that immigrant-background young adults might create connections around, however, these aspects emerged under specific circumstances unique to each individual, and it would be incorrect to suggest their universal applicability to other

[44] The participants also suggested that the search for collectivity extends beyond the formation of friendship groups to broader concepts of shared or collective identity. Laura, for example, upon reflecting on her ability to understand but not speak Luganda, felt the urge to investigate whether there were others in a similar position and was relieved when she learned about receptive bilingualism and that it was common among those from immigrant backgrounds. Similarly, Sierra was interested to hear that there was research on hybridity and multiplicity of identities and she appreciated knowing that there were others who were framing their identifications in similar ways.

cases of community and collective identity formation. Sabina discusses how even within a grouping where she hoped for her positioning within the 'third space' to be recognised, she felt foreign and unrepresentative:

> I recently joined the BAME[45] staff network at my university, which technically I've been eligible for throughout my entire time at [university name], so, for five years, I could have joined them. But, it is this weird validation thing, when you go to a meeting and you think, 'Who is like me here? Is it actually BAME or is it a particular group or subset of BAME?' Even though on paper it is meant for me, I've gone to a meeting where I'm the only Asian person, and everyone else there is black, and then I think, 'We are BAME, but is this now a black identity conversation?' We divided into small groups yesterday, it was actually really interesting, we were talking about hair, and I was like, 'I can't relate to you at all'. I am a part of this network, but they were talking about all the processes, and I'm quite lucky, cause my hair is easy to get products for, pretty easy to handle, and I was thinking, 'I'm part of this network, but I don't feel like part of this at all'…There was a point when I considered, 'I might go for a position on the committee', but then I asked myself, 'Am I actually representative of the people we have here?' And I'm probably not.

Sabina's reflection highlights the difficulty of scaling up and naming the collectivities formed through shared experiences of differentiation, othering, and hybridity. What may work at a level of a friendship group, once named and expanded may struggle to remain representative of and relevant to every individual's interests. I echo Bhabha (1994, p. 231) and wonder once again whether there is "a poetics of the 'interstitial' community" and how could "it name itself [and] author its agency". As discussed before, what remains unnamed is challenging to find and identify, however, there is also a risk in naming and stabilising something that is unstable in nature (St Louis, 2009). Sabina might be dealing here with the "paradox between the human tendency (perhaps even need!), through inscription, fabrication and abstraction, to stabilise particular expressions of difference, but, on the other hand, the knowledge that such categories have little meaning at the level of individual human engagement" (Singh, 2018, p. 559). She admits she is a part of the BAME network, at the same time, she points to her unique experiences that are not reflected by others in the group and cannot be

[45] BAME stands for 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic'.

encompassed by a single acronym. How can, then, the 'interstitial' community name itself? While Derrida (1981, p. 43) suggests avoiding binary categorisations "*without ever* constituting a third term", I worry, that without this 'third term', the formation of hybrid communities and the emergence of collective agency powerful enough to hybridise discourse and disturb the structures of power is limited; it is kept at bay. Identities, while never essential, are necessary "as a political and psychic resource", a social position that individuals can adopt (Hall, 1991; Singh, 2018, p. 559). Therefore, although some would like to see the acronym 'BAME' dropped arguing that it does not encompass the "significant differences in outcomes between ethnic groups" (HMG, 2021, p. 33), the question that needs to follow is "[W]hat does one replace it with?[46] And perhaps, even more critically, what will be the consequences for the anti-racist struggle where there is no conceptual basis for collectivising the experiences of non-white populations?" (DaCosta et al., 2021, pp. 6–7).

Any collective 'we' will be incomplete and at risk of being subject to essentialism. As I discussed in this subsection, this indeterminacy of communities that develop, grow, and operate amid homogenising discourses makes it difficult for immigrant-background young adults to identify and form or join collectivities that reflect their unique positionings. What emerges from the participants' views is that the task of finding community and collective identity in the UK is embedded in the deeply rooted practices of hierarchisation, othering, and differentiation which try to group those considered—from the British discourse perspective—'subaltern', 'other', or 'different' in categorised, pre-determined collectivities usually established based on the flawed concept of ethnic, racial, and national homogeneity. The participants in this research shared their experiences of not fitting within such collectivities and of attempting to form alternative communities that are more accepting of hybridity and, most importantly, are established in appreciation of common experiences and values, and not assumptions about the 'originary moments'. Bhabha's 'third space', indeed, provides a terrain for collaboration, contestation, and self-defining where strategies of selfhood can be elaborated. However, I questioned how realistic, in the British context, the formulation of collective agency amongst immigrant-background young adults who share

[46] DaCosta et al. (2021) offer a discussion of potential alternative terms such as 'racially minoritised', 'global majority', 'people of colour', and 'ethnic minority'.

experiences of marginalisation and racism but struggle to find each other is. Their realisation of their unique, hybrid, in-between positions seems to be followed by a sense of confusion and exclusion. They drop the prospect of being part of a community that corresponds with their ethnicity or their parents' nationality and feel left to search for the imperceivable, unnamed collectivities.

7.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, building on the understanding of identity and agency as developed with and through the other, I continued my exploration of the processes of navigating cultural heritage and self-identification, this time, through a lens that explicitly engages with cultural difference and the subject's positioning vis-à-vis culture(s). Drawing on Bhabha's concepts of cultural hybridity and agency within the ambiguities and discontinuities characteristic of the 'third space', I have discussed how young adults from immigrant backgrounds might transgress cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries—or 'originary moments'—and establish themselves as hybrid, complex, and unique in a social landscape that they recognise as heterogeneous. Bhabha's theorising on the liminal space and the potential for a new and different identification to arise from within this in-betweenness resonates with the accounts of self-defining that the young adults involved in this project trusted me with. Nonetheless, what also emerged from their stories and goes beyond what Bhabha has considered are the disparities in (1) access to seeing oneself through the lens of hybridity and (2) access to being recognised through that lens. I argue that those whose communicative repertoires included identity descriptors expressing a level of hybridity (e.g., 'citizen of the world', 'British-born Chinese') were less likely to try and establish an identification relating to an orignary moment and less likely to be left with a feeling that they were not adequate for any of those cultural positioning essentialised through discourse. On a perhaps even more important note, this chapter showed how exercising agency and establishing hybrid identifications through questioning categorisations and self-defining might not lead to the kind of emancipation that "traumatize[s] tradition" and "confuse[s] the continuity of historical temporalities" that Bhabha (1994, p. 257) imagined as possible. Colonialism and the language of the coloniser thrive on stability. It is not only that in order to disturb prevailing discourse one may have to operate within the Western notions of culture and attempt to communicate hybridity through

linguistic means that are considered legitimate within discourse. It is also that by putting a name on a hybrid identity, by expressing it in language, one risks stabilising it and exposing it to alterations, misinterpretations, or even erasure within discourse. The participants in this research recognised the value of forming communities of people sharing similar experiences of navigating hybridity. The most successful ones, according to the participants, did not centre around pre-defined cultural descriptors but were developed organically, by chance, through interaction, relation, ambiguity, and openness. While the previous chapters, pointed to the ways in which the participants can agentically reshape and re-narrate cultural heritages and the implications these have for their identifications, this chapter also challenged the sometimes-assumed-to-be-stable relationship between cultural heritage and collective identity and shed light on the complexities and discontinuities embedded in the process of finding belonging, recognition, and community. Further links and contrasts between Chapters 5-7 will be discussed in my next and final chapter, Chapter 8.

PART III

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

> The 'I' finds that, in the presence of an other, it is breaking down. It does not know itself; perhaps it never will. But is that the task, to know oneself? Is the final aim to achieve an adequate narrative account of a life? And should it be? Is the task to cover over through a narrative means the breakage, the rupture, that is constitutive of the 'I', which quite forcefully binds the elements together as if it were perfectly possible, as if the break could be mended and defensive mastery restored? (Butler, 2005, p. 69)

This thesis, drawing on the narratives shared by young adults from immigrant backgrounds, has explored this inability of the 'I' to know itself. It investigated the struggles, ruptures, and discontinuities that such unchosen and unknown existence entails, and uncovered how cultural heritage and self-identification can be navigated by embracing ambiguity instead of attempting to mend the breakage. Indeed, throughout the thesis, as I looked at the participants' accounts through different theoretical lenses, I maintained an emphasis on the role of 'in-betweenness' in the process of constituting identity and accounting for it alongside cultural heritage, pointing to the participants' agency and creativity in avoiding identifying by "forcefully bind[ing] the elements" of the self and its story together. In order to contextualise the participants' narratives and their day-to-day struggles for their uniqueness to be understood and validated, I considered the role of social norms, privilege, discourse, and dialogic relations in creating social worlds in which immigrant-background young adults might feel like their in-between, hybrid positing is something that needs to be mended, where they might feel defenceless unless they can manage to formulate the accounts of their lives in ways that are perceived as intelligible by the dominant society.

The thesis adopted an original methodological approach that invited the participants to re-narrate their account and re-articulate their identities and relations with culture, in this way exploring identification as a process and a lived experience, as opposed to something that can be named and stabilised (Chapters 2 and 4). This aligned with my work's theoretical orientation on the 'I' in the process of constitution, rather than 'constituted' or 'complete'

(Chapter 3). I began my engagement with the young adults' narratives by situating them alongside Judith Butler's theory of responsibility and agency and investigating the roots of the sense of responsibility for parental cultural heritage, as well as the potential for agentic reformulation of this relationship with culture(s) through opposing social norms and through intersubjectivity (Chapter 5). Then, drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, I unpacked the highly nuanced and complex nature of the web of relations and dialogues—unique to each individual—which participate in the processes of navigating cultural heritage and identification (Chapter 6). Bakhtin's focus on the 'in-betweenness'—the relation between the self and the other and the relation between the utterance and the response—was influential in Bhabha's work and his conceptualisations of cultural hybridity and subaltern agency. It is, therefore, through the lens of hybridity that I considered the in-between and the ambiguous as constitutive of the 'I', as a site of narrative reformulation and agentic self-identification (Chapter 7). Still, however, locating the hybrid self and its agency in a social context governed by norms and expectations around cultural heritage and identification.

In this concluding chapter, as I consider the central theme of the thesis outlined in its title, "Immigrant-background young adults giving accounts of themselves: agentic and dialogic reframing of parental cultural heritage", I will highlight how this work—through its thematic focus, theoretical orientation, and methodological approach—contributes to the broader body of literature on navigating parental cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity. In this discussion, I will also return to the research questions set out at the beginning of this manuscript to reiterate how the chapters in this thesis fit together and form a cohesive narrative of an agentic and intersubjective exploration of cultural heritages and identification. While producing direct recommendations for policy and practice was beyond the scope of this exploratory study, this chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of possible avenues for future research that could build on my research findings.

8.1. Substantive contributions: studying immigrant-background young adults

"Race, ethnicity and how we learn to live with difference are amongst the most important issues facing future generations growing up in a rapidly globalizing world" (Nayak, 2016, p. 58). It is also with reference to these "entirely arbitrary mode[s] of human classification" that

the dynamics of sameness and difference and the relations of power and privilege in society are normalised and stabilised (Nayak, 2016, p. 58). This thesis contributes to scholarship that considers 'ethnicity', 'identity', 'cultural heritage', and 'collectivity' as contingent, power-laden, and context-dependent—both as concepts and terms used within discourse (Anthias, 2000; Hall 1996a; Solomos, 2022). While, over the past few decades, research has increasingly engaged with new expressions and understandings of identity and situated them in the context of globalisation and growing diversity (Modood et al., 1994; Morley & Robins, 2001), relatively little has been done to explore how the processes of navigating cultural heritage and cultural identity play out in the lives of young adults from immigrant backgrounds (exceptions include, e.g., Alexander, 1996; Harries, 2017; Nayak, 2003b). Even less research attention has been dedicated to studying these processes among young adults who were born in the UK to immigrant parents. In England and Wales, in the last few years, nearly one third of children were born to non-UK-born mothers (ONS, 2022b). They are part of the "future generations", that Nayak talks about, that will be "growing up in a rapidly globalizing world" and having to navigate complex identities within a sociopolitical context that might continue to essentialise and devalue their cultural heritage and discriminate against them, as has been the case for many of the current young adults who contributed their narratives to my research project.

This thesis recognises the period of young adulthood as likely distinct in the process of identity formulation (Arnett, 2014) and responds to the call for more research into young adults' cultural identifications during that period (Landberg et al., 2018). In this exploration, through the analysis of the participants' narratives, I uncovered 'identity' as storied, dialogic, and indeterminate. I presented accounts of identity construction that transcend spatial and temporal boundaries and challenge assumptions of a straightforward connection between one's heritage and self-identification. Unlike most researchers studying immigrant-background young adults, I eschewed concentrating on individuals who self-identify—or are assumed to identify with—any specific ethnic, racial, religious, or linguistic background. Thanks to this approach, I avoided suggesting to the participants that any specific lines of identification would be more welcome or considered more legitimate in this research than others, inviting them, in this way, to engage with a more open and dynamic view of identity and culture. This approach also, while allowing social positionings to play a role in the

participants' narratives, did not use these as determinants of the participant's realities, but rather considered those when relevant to their stories (e.g., race was considered in Fia's account in relation to the story she shared about her peers not seeing her as 'white', or class was discussed when looking at Sabina's narrative of how her accent is perceived by others and what this means in terms of a positioning she is afforded). In this way, the social locations of the participants were acknowledged, but only as they emerged in the narrative, and not born of assumptions of who should be considered marginalised and who considered dominant. This thesis studied unique individuals and how they make sense of their lives through narration and re-narration. It recognised their storied lives and identities as situated within discourse and the narrative and linguistic repertoires available to them. Through focusing, in this thesis, on young adults in the UK from broadly understood immigrant backgrounds, I contributed to the growing, yet still limited, body of literature on cultural identity formation in young adulthood, as well as showed how, while very unique to each individual, the processes of navigating and narrating one's identification and heritage might be experienced in somewhat similar ways by those who experience 'in-betweenness', or cultural hybridity, regardless of (or in ways not straightforwardly connected to) their specific backgrounds.

8.2. Theoretical contributions: agentic and dialogic reframing of parental cultural heritage

My review of literature on cultural identification, especially when concerning individuals in their young adulthood, showed that, while research interested in cultural identity often sees it as connected to cultural heritage, the link between the two is rarely discussed or challenged. This has led some researchers to associate evidence of engagement with certain practices, traditions, and beliefs as indicative of specific cultural or ethnic identification. In my work, I explored, first and foremost, the young adults' relationships with parental cultural heritages and classed my interest in self-identification as secondary and consequential. Working with conceptualisations of 'culture', 'identity', and 'heritage' that focus on these terms' open-ended and changeable characters, I recognised the potential for an inquiry into immigrant-background young adults' cultural realities that, instead of asking for their self-definitions and declarations of allegiance, is more concerned with heritage and identification as lived, storied,

and co-constructed in dialogue. I showed that, whilst still very complex and dynamic, the relationships with parental cultural heritage, can be an easier-to-articulate and re-articulate—or find agency over—process than the process of identity formulation. As one of the participants, Lee, said in our interview,

> When people ask you 'Who are you? What do you think of yourself?' I just think, 'Well, I guess I'm Chinese, I guess I'm English, probably I'm more English than Chinese, I'm not hundred per cent sure'. But then when people say, 'What do you do?' It's much easier, 'I'm a scientist, I live in [city redacted], I enjoy this, I enjoy that'…

Lee, like most of the young adults who participated in this project, was able to engage with the storied and experienced nature of cultural heritage, talk me through how his opinions regarding certain traditions have changed, and how he has navigated the different cultural influences in his life. What he did not want to do, however, was stabilise these experiences and reflections in a form of an 'identity label'. This project, through its engagement with multiple theoretical stances on identification, culture, and collectivity, led to the development of a nuanced and complex—yet, inevitably, incomplete—perspective on how immigrant-background young adults may negotiate their parental cultural heritage and what—sometimes unobvious and ambiguous—implications it may have on their sense of self and community.

The theoretical framework that I proposed in this thesis to support my critical exploration of culture, identification, and collectivity brought together the works of Stuart Hall, Judith Butler, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Homi Bhabha and positioned the young adults' experiences of parental cultural heritage and its reformulation within the discursive, normative, and dialogic structures shaping their social worlds. I set out to explore how parental cultural heritage is constituted, experienced, and negotiated in immigrant-background young adults' lives (Research Question 1) and proceeded to discuss these processes through the lenses of Butler's theory of responsibility, Bakhtin's dialogism, and Bhabha's hybridity. The intersubjective and dialogic nature of parental cultural heritage came across strongly through the participants' narratives, for example, when accounting for the shame associated with the discontinuation of certain aspects of heritage (Chapter 5), when discussing in detail the complicated relationship with parents (Chapter 6), or when trying to make sense of the role

of embodied heritage in how society perceives them and how that affects their perceptions of themselves (Chapter 7). The participants in this research showed a deep sense of awareness of the multiplicity of dialogic threads operating simultaneously to construct the contexts within which their cultural heritage might be put under scrutiny, where they might be called to *assume identification*, or invited to *self-identify*. This research investigated these relationships between the dynamic cultural heritage, the way it is received and re-articulated within interaction, and the effect it can have on self-identification (Research Question 2). In the final analytical chapter (Chapter 7), I brought to the forefront the participants' struggle to find concise descriptors of their self-identifications and emphasised the complex, narrative, and hybrid nature of identification that, for many of the young adults involved in the study, transcends the linguistic repertoires available to them within discourse. This complexity of identification that arises from the unique in-between realities these individuals are experiencing was also revealed to affect how they approach—and struggle with—finding a sense of belonging and validation and how they shape understandings of collective identity and community.

Finally, my research also considered how immigrant-background young adults can exercise agency in navigating parental cultural heritage, self-identifications, and collective identities (Research Question 3). The discussion of the participants' agency was threaded throughout the three analytical chapters (Chapters 5-7) and approached through several theoretical lenses to unpack the rich, though limited, repertoire of agentic reformulations of cultural heritage that some young adults can access. I presented, here, examples of showing agency through opposing social norms, naming oppression, and calling out the oppressor (Chapter 5), through understanding the intersubjective nature of the self and the limits of one's self-knowledge (Chapter 5), through engaging in relations and gaining perspective in dialogue (Chapter 6), and through confidently occupying and communicating one's hybrid, in-between position in the cultural world and resisting being defined by what society perceives as one's 'originary moments' (Chapter 7). The participants' agentic capacity was considered, in this thesis, within the broader sociopolitical and discursive context into which they emerge and which constitutes them. However, the admiration of their agency amid the dominant forces operating to marginalise, racialise, and other them is not intentioned, to suggest immigrant-background individuals' indefinite capacity to deal with the consequences and conditions of

these everyday cultural heritage negotiations. Instead, while acknowledging the participants' efforts, I highlighted, throughout the thesis, the structures of injustice and hegemonic power that are responsible for the devaluation of migratory heritages, as well as for the barriers that individuals may face when navigating these heritages and formulating their self-identifications.

This thesis looked critically at the relationship between parental cultural heritage, self-identification, and collective identity. The narratives studied here showed how, while influential in formulating self-identification, the level of the maintenance of cultural heritage or the engagement with cultural practice is not easily translatable into assuming certain identification. Instead, a complex relationship between cultural heritage and identification was revealed with some participants, for example, wondering whether they deserve to identify with a specific 'culture' if they have not mastered all of its aspects (Fia: "I haven't practised the language enough to be able to be Kosovar"), some others considering the assumptions made about their identity when faced with essentialist and racist gazes (Lee: "When people sometimes remark on how good my English…I have this weird sense of disquiet when I just think, 'Oh that's a sort of indication that they were expecting something of me and they made a judgment based on my appearance'"), and yet others feeling like their knowledge of cultural heritage or participation in cultural practices is never enough to find belonging within a pre-defined cultural grouping (Helen: "I was too westernised for [my East-Asian friends]…On the other hand, I felt like I was 'too Chinese' for my white friends"). The participants' accounts shed light on the feelings of longing for understanding, connection, and community that some immigrant-background individuals may be experiencing as they navigate the different contexts of social interaction. At the same time, they also emphasised the inadequacy of the aspects of 'commonality' often used to define collective identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, nationality). The collectivities the participants suggested as most inclusive were those build not around pre-determined 'cultures', shared heritage, or the 'originary moments', but around common feelings and experiences related to navigating hybridity and ambiguity in the processes of self-defining and negotiating cultural heritage. This thesis, through its application of poststructural and postcolonial theoretical thinking to immigrant-background young adults' narratives, explored the dynamics of self-identification, cultural

heritage navigation, and collective identity and investigated how they can be articulated and agentically re-articulated within relations under the conditions of discourse.

8.3. Methodological contributions: giving and receiving narrative accounts

The innovative methodological approach designed to account for the re-narration of the relationship with parental cultural and the re-articulation of cultural identity is one of this thesis's key original contributions. The research design that I proposed here engaged with narrative inquiry and grounded theory and combined several methods of data collection and analysis. By starting the inquiry with open-ended questions (journal prompts) and allowing the participants to answer these in their own time without the presence of the research, I created an opportunity for the young adults to establish the terms—both, in the sense of vocabulary and conditions—of their contribution. The focus on extending the individual narratives in the consecutive research activities (i.e., interview, co-analysis), as opposed to seeking answers to pre-determined questions, was key to inviting participants' unprompted self-identifications. The incorporation of co-analysis into the research design led to impressive findings, in particular. As exampled in Chapters 5-7, many of the participants approached the process very reflectively and some were able to engage in dialogue with their 'interview self' and clarify certain details, add to their narratives, or even reveal information that they were suppressing or disagree with the previously given account (e.g., Alea's recounting of a racist incident: p. 115, Lee's reflections on privilege and collective identity: p. 152, Tommy's accounting for his emotional responses: p. 170). The participant's engagement in re-narrating of their account at different moments in time and through different modes of expression suggests that immigrant-background young adults' stories of cultural heritage, identification, finding belonging, and dealing with oppression are complex and multi-layered. Many of the participants spoke about feeling othered and essentialised in day-to-day interactions with individuals who seem to only ask questions to hear an answer they assume to be true (e.g., when asked 'Where are you from?'). Some also spoke about having almost rehearsed answers to questions about culture and identity that they would offer to their interactants depending on the level of familiarity and the context. A few admitted that there were stories they shared with me in this project that they have never spoken to anyone else about. As I discussed before, based on my analysis of Alea's experiences with reporting racist behaviour in her

school (Chapter 5) and Lee's accounting of his experiences of racism (Chapter 6), some immigrant-background individuals may resort to minimising and justifying oppressive behaviour owing to their previous experiences of having their interests negated or marginalised (Johnson et al., 2021). The process of revising interview transcripts through the engagement in co-analysis allowed the participants to explore the often unarticulated and tacit understandings and approach identification and heritage positioning as storied and incomplete processes. It also added richness to their accounts that would have not been accessed if this project relied on a singular data collection activity (e.g., only in-depth interviews) with less time for reflection and developing rapport.

"Narratives of location/dislocation (and translocation) are produced in interplay with the available narratives that characterize the cultural milieu both in terms of local contexts and the larger epistemological and ontological contexts of a particular Weltanschauung" (Anthias, 2001, p. 633). In this thesis, I interrogated not only the contexts within which cultural heritage is experienced and identity formed but also the contexts within which these processes are talked about and re-articulated through narratives. The thesis pointed, on the one hand, to the freedom and agency arising from in-betweenness and ambiguity; one's realisation of her limited self-knowledge and inability to know her 'originary moments' opens up space for self-identification that transcends pre-defined categories and for hybridisation of cultural heritage. On the other hand, it noted the struggle of being unable to give a name to one's position and the social spaces or groupings one feels belonging to. Through the research design proposed in this project, I aimed to address this added level of ambiguity of one's identity by inviting the participants to express their identities and heritage positionings through stories and experiences, reassuring them of the validity of their account of identity as incomplete and hybrid. It is inevitable, however, that "[t]o tell the truth about oneself involves us in quarrels about the formation of the self and the social status of truth" (Butler, 2005, p. 132). Even the most open, detailed, and reflective of accounts came to be through the language available within discourse and through interactions and the process of knowledge co-production reliant on co-understanding of 'truth'. This research saw the participants agentically reclaiming and redefining descriptors, reflecting oppressive language to the oppressor, and distancing themselves from essentialist or unrelatable terms used to describe them. These impressively reflective and agentically reformulated accounts need to

still be contextualised within the linguistic repertoires available to the young adults and me, as the researcher; repertoires dictated by the normative structures and relations of power that this research challenges.

8.4. Conclusion and implications

This thesis contributes to the literature on cultural heritage and cultural identity in the migration context by applying innovative theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of British-born children of immigrants in their young adulthood in the UK. It offers a new theoretical perspective on how immigrant-background young adults may perceive and navigate cultural heritages, how they formulate their relationships with culture and identity within social interactions, and how they agentically re-articulate their truths, realities, and self-identifications in dialogue across different social, temporal, and spatial contexts, positionings, and relations. By adopting and combining methods of data collection and analysis used in grounded theory and narrative inquiry as well as introducing 'co-analysis', this project effectively studied the multi-layered and fluid nature of storied identification and invited the research participants to engage with their narratives reflectively and critically and embrace their stories' incompleteness and ambiguity instead of pursuing clearly defined answers. Apart from its relevance in developing useful theoretical and methodological frameworks for future research on migration and beyond, this contribution is also a response to a relative dearth of research outputs exploring young adults' cultural identifications, especially when considered alongside their complex relationships with cultural heritages and their potential self-identifications transcending pre-defined collectivities.

The exploratory, narrative-led character of this inquiry meant that developing specific recommendations for practice or policy was beyond its scope. This thesis suggests, however, some of the impacts that institutions (such as educational institutions, industry, law enforcement, religion) can have on immigrant-background young adults' self-identifications and perceptions of cultural heritage. Further narrative research into the role of institutions in the formulation of cultural positionings in British-born young adults' lives is recommended to gain a better understanding of the diversity of immigrant-background individuals' experiences and their individual stories and develop more inclusive policies and systems of

support that are responsive to their needs. This thesis, while highlighting young adults' agency, points to their struggles with reconciling cultural heritage, finding understanding and validation amongst white British peers, and navigating social contexts when they are othered and discriminated against. In the UK, where in recent years the growth in the population's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity was paralleled with an increase in religious and racial hate crime reports,[47] the value of inclusive policies and practices delivered across the different areas of young adults' lives—education, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, family etc.—cannot be overemphasized. This thesis marks an important step towards recognising the dynamic ways in which immigrant-background young adults can self-identify and interact with cultural heritages.

[47] See footnotes 1 and 2 (p. 7) for figures and references.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Recruitment posters

APPENDIX 2: Information sheet

Project title: Feelings and understandings of belonging amongst immigrant-background young adults in relation to parental heritage

Researcher:
Anna Gruszczyńska
School of Education
[contact details redacted]

Supervisor:
Dr Oakleigh Welply
School of Education
[contact details redacted]

You are invited to take part in a study that I am conducting as part of my PhD studies at Durham University. This research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Before you decide whether to agree to take part it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what is involved as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. Please get in contact if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?
The aim of this study is to explore everyday experiences of belonging amongst young adults of immigrant background. This research project aims to paint a broader picture of how heritage, identity, and education intersect in the migration context in order to inform further research on more specific recommendations, practices, and policies that would support immigrant-background children and adults, their parents, immigrant communities in the development of their educational offer, and mainstream schools.

Why have I been invited to take part?
You have been invited because you currently live in the UK and, within the scope of this research, you are considered a young adult of immigrant background (i.e., you are 18 to 29 years old and were born in the UK to parents who were born and grew up in a different country).

Do I have to take part?
Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to agree to take part. If you do agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Please refer to the accompanying Privacy Notice for more information on the process of withdrawing any data that you may no longer want to contribute to this research.

What will happen if I take part?
If you agree to take part in this stage of the study, you will be asked to participate in three research activities:

1) **Writing (by hand or typing) or audio recording 5-7 journal entries on assigned prompts.** The length and format of these entries will be up to you and you will have up to three weeks to complete this activity at your own time. More information about this research activity can be found in the accompanying document "Journaling Instructions for Participants".
2) **Participating in an interview conducted by the researcher.** I will read/listen to your journal entries and prepare interview questions based on your entries and the aims of my research. The interview will take on the form of a discussion and should not feel scripted. You will be able to omit any questions that you do not wish to answer. It will take about 40-60 minutes and can take place in any location convenient to you (or we could arrange a video call). I will aim to arrange a time for an interview with you within about two weeks of receiving your journal entries.

3) **Co-analysing your interview transcript.** A few weeks after the interview you will be asked to look back at the interview transcript provided by the researcher. I will offer you some guidelines explaining the different lenses that you may want to apply when analysing this text. It will be up to you to decide how detailed you want to be in this process. Once you completed this process, I will invite you to meet with me again to discuss and compare our analyses. This meeting will take about 40-60 minutes and can take place in any location convenient to you (or we could arrange a video call).

Interested participants will be invited to take part in the second stage of this research project. I will explain this to you during one of our meetings.

While I am unable to offer you payment for your participation, I will be happy to cover any travel costs you might incur participating in this project. I would be also glad to arrange our interviews and meetings over a meal or a cup of tea or coffee and cover the costs of that.

Will my data be kept confidential?
All information obtained during the study will be kept confidential. If the data is published it will be entirely anonymous and will not be identifiable as yours. Any direct quotes from your journal entries and interviews, if included in any publications, will be anonymised, too, to protect your confidentiality and that of people you wrote and spoke about. Full details are included in the accompanying Privacy Notice.

What will happen to the results of the project?
The results of this project will be published in my PhD thesis which is currently scheduled to be submitted no later than June 2023. In addition, these results will likely be used in other research outputs (e.g., academic journal articles and conference papers) before and/or after the submission of my thesis.

No personal data will be shared, however, anonymised (i.e., not identifiable) data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes at the end of this project. All research data and records needed to validate the research findings will be stored for 10 years after my PhD thesis submission. Durham University is committed to sharing the results of its world-class research for public benefit. As part of this commitment, the University has established an online repository for all Durham University Higher Degree theses which provides access to the full text of freely available theses. The study in which you are invited to participate will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published open access.

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?
If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me ([contact details redacted]) or my supervisor ([contact details redacted]). If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please submit a complaint via the University's Complaints Process.

Thank you for reading this information and considering taking part in this study.

APPENDIX 3: Journaling instructions

Thank you for volunteering to participate in my research project. I very appreciate your support and I am looking forward to learning about your experiences. I realise that some of the activities that I ask you to take part in might seem time-consuming, however, I hope that you will soon notice that they are tools that help you reflect and share your reflections and that you'll find yourself enjoying the process! Please try and give it a shot and if at any point you start feeling overwhelmed with this project, please let me know and I'm sure we'll be able to find a solution. I also decided to commit to writing my journal entries on the topics that I assigned to you to better understand the task that I put in front of you.

Before you start journaling, please make sure that you have:

a. read the information sheet and the privacy notice;
b. asked and received satisfying answers to any questions (if you had any);
c. signed and returned to me the consent form.

If this is done, you're ready to go!

Your task will be to "produce" several journal entries on assigned topics.

"Produce"?
You can decide on the format of your entries. They can be hand-written, typed on your computer, or audio recorded. You could also switch between the different formats within or between your consecutive entries.

What should I write/say?
You can decide whether you'd like your entries to follow a certain structure or be more free flowing. Repetitions, incomplete sentences, margin notes are all welcome. So are any forms of drawings, diagrams, mind maps, tables, just to name a few. Even if you decide to audio record your journal you could always attach some visual media to your recording (for example, if you decided to draw a mind map to collect your thoughts before you hit "record"). Also, remember that it's okay to go back to your entries and add or change things. It's normal to forget things or feel that maybe you didn't make your points as clear as you'd like to.
If you feel stuck and don't know where to start, perhaps imagine that you are planning to talk to a friend about these topics and jot down some bullet points that you'd like to mention during this conversation. You could also note some questions that you'd expect them to ask you as a follow-up to your bullet points. Then, you could take your list of bullet points and questions and expand on them in your journal entry. This is just one way to go about this.

What are the assigned prompts?
There are 5 topics that I'd like you to journal about: (1) **belonging**, (2) **culture**, (3) **language**, (4) **family relations**, (5) **adulthood**. I'd like to ask you to write your first entry about "belonging" and the last one about "adulthood", the three themes in-between (culture, language, family relations) can be used in any order you like. You don't have to explain the order you choose, but if you'd like to, please feel free to do so in your journal. With prompts (1)-(4) I'd like you to focus and reflect on your experiences growing up and now and try to answer a question: what have my experiences of (1)-(4) been? This can be your starting point, but you should always feel free to digress from the question as long as you feel that you're still writing on the assigned topic. When writing your entry about adulthood you can think and reflect on your past, present, and future experiences.

“Experiences”?
These could be told through a story or your reflections on a period in your life, or you could tell me about the different stages/changes in perception you went through in relation to experiencing belonging, culture etc.

How many entries am I supposed to produce?
While there are 5 assigned prompts, this does not mean that you have to limit yourself to only producing 5 entries. If you’d like to you could add an introductory entry, you could also add another one at the end, perhaps to explain whether you see any links between the different experiences you talked about in your previous entries. It could also be a case that to you 2 or 3 prompts feel very interlinked and you’d like to write a single entry in which you talk about more than one of the assigned topics. It also might be a case that you’d like to write several entries on one topic. Perhaps, after producing an entry about culture and language you’d like to revisit the topic of belonging and add a few thoughts or stories that you didn’t think to include before.

How long should each entry be?
This is entirely up to you. Please feel free to include as much detail as you want. Based on your journal entries, I’ll prepare some discussion questions to reflect a bit more on your experiences, and then we will analyse your entries and the interview transcript together. So, the more you include, the more information we will have to draw our conclusions from.

How much time do I have for this task?
You can do it whenever it is convenient for you, however, it would be best for the research process if you could produce all the entries within a maximum of 3 weeks.

What should I do when I finish?
Please contact me and we will decide on the best way in which you could share the entries with me. This will depend on the format you chose. I’ll do my best to make it convenient for you.

Who will read my entries?
I will be the only person who will have full access to your journal entries. In the process of analysis, I might share certain excerpts of your entries with my supervisors (Dr Oakleigh Welply and Prof Mike Crang), however, this will only be done after your text is anonymised. Also, I might include direct quotes from your entries in my PhD thesis and future publications. Again, by this point, your entries will be anonymised (i.e., any identified data will be removed or pseudonymised).

What happens next?
I will read/listen to your journal entries and prepare interview questions based on your entries and the aims of my research, then I will invite you to take part in an interview which will take about 40-60 minutes and we could arrange it at any location that is convenient to you (or it could be a videocall). We will hopefully be able to organise this interview within two weeks of you sending me your journal entries. After the interview, I will invite you to co-analyse your journal entries and the interview transcript with me.

Will it cost me anything?
A bit of time, yes, but I’ll do my best to make sure that it doesn’t cost you any money. I’d be happy to reimburse you for the cost of stationery that you might need to work on your journal, and should you incur any travel expenses, I’ll cover these too.

What if I have more questions?
You can contact me at any point using my email address ([redacted]) or phone number ([redacted]) which also works for WhatsApp.

APPENDIX 4: Consent form

I volunteer to participate in the doctoral research project on immigrant-background emerging adults and parental heritage conducted by Anna Gruszczyńska, a PhD candidate at School of Education, Durham University.

I confirm that:
(please initial each box to indicate your agreement)

ALL of the following statements are true for me: (1) I am between 18 and 29 years old; (2) I was born in the UK; (3) I currently live in the UK; (4) my parents were born AND grew up outside of the UK (OR I was raised by a single parent who was born and grew up outside of the UK); (5) my parents' first language is not English and both of my parents share the same first language (OR I was raised by a single parent whose first language is not English).	
I have read and understood the information sheet and the privacy notice, had an opportunity to ask questions, and received satisfying answers.	
I am aware that as a part of this project I will be asked to produce journal entries on assigned prompts, participate in an interview, and take part in the process of co-analysis of my interview transcript.	
I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time (between now and the time of thesis submission) without giving a reason and I will not be penalised for my decision. I know that I can refuse to answer questions posed by the researcher and to participate in further interviews without stating any reason.	
I understand that I will not be paid for my participation.	
I understand that the interview(s) will be audio-recorded and fully transcribed. I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in her doctoral thesis or any further publications. I understand that my words (used in my journal entries, during the interview, and in the process of co-analysis) may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs. The agreed level of confidentiality will be maintained. Unless I request otherwise, I give the researcher my permission to correct any grammar and language mistakes when quoting my words.	
I understand that anonymised versions of my data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes.	
I understand that as part of this research project I might be asked to reflect on my experiences related to my ethnic origin and/or religious beliefs.	

Participant's name (in block letters): _____

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Please feel free to contact the researcher, Anna Gruszczynska ([email address redacted]), or her supervisor, Dr Oakleigh Welply ([email address redacted]) should you require further information.

APPENDIX 5: Privacy notice

Privacy Notice

PART 1 – GENERIC PRIVACY NOTICE

Durham University has a responsibility under data protection legislation to provide individuals with information about how we process their personal data. We do this in a number of ways, one of which is the publication of privacy notices.

Our privacy notices comprise two parts – a generic part (i.e., common to all of our privacy notices) that you can access here and a part tailored to the specific processing activity being undertaken which in this case is a PhD research project conducted by Anna Gruszczyńska.

PART 2 – TAILORED PRIVACY NOTICE

This section of the Privacy Notice provides you with the privacy information that you need to know before you provide personal data to the University for the particular purpose(s) stated below.

Project Title:
Feelings and understandings of belonging amongst immigrant-background young adults in relation to parental heritage

Type(s) of personal data collected and held by the researcher and method of collection:
Personal data will be collected through audio-recorded interviews and written or audio recorded journal entries. Participants may also choose to include some personal data in the process of co-analysis in which case this data would be recorded in the form of field notes produced by the researcher or the participant. The personal data collected in this research will include the participant's full name, age, gender, ethnic origin, nationality, occupational status, educational background, language proficiency, and may include participant's religion. During the interviews and in the process of journal writing the participants will be asked to reflect on their everyday experiences of belonging which may include discussions of cultural heritage and values, family relations, peer interactions, adulthood, and identity.

Lawful Basis:
Collection and use of personal data is carried out under the University's public task, which includes teaching, learning and research.

How personal data is stored:
All personal data will be held securely and strictly confidential to the researcher (Anna Gruszczyńska) and her supervisors (Dr Oakleigh Welply and Professor Mike Crang). Every participant will be allocated a pseudonym for data collection right at the beginning of the research process. Information that identifies the participant (i.e., links the pseudonym with the participant's personal data) will be kept separate from the anonymised data. Signed consent forms will be stored separately to project data. All personal data in electronic form (audio recordings, interview transcripts, fieldnotes, scanned journal entries etc.) will be anonymised and stored in a secure password-protected data storage unit managed by the University, and any hard copies will be kept in locked storage. Data will not be available to anyone outside the research team.

How personal data is processed:
The kind of personal data listed above is collected in order to enable the analysis of similarities and differences in young adults' experiences of belonging and ensure diversity within the sample. The data will be analysed using qualitative research methods. The participant's name will be replaced with a pseudonym at every stage of the research process. Any other identifiable data (e.g., home address), if mentioned in collected data, will be excluded. The researcher will store the participant's name and contact details in a separate file in a secure storage unit until the publication of the PhD thesis. This will be done in case the researcher needs to contact the participant/co-analyst at the later stages of the research process to further discuss or clarify the findings.

Withdrawal of data:
You can request withdrawal of your data at any point before the publication of the results.

Who the researcher shares personal data with:
Identifiable data will not be available to anyone outside the research team. Anonymised versions of the participant's data may be archived and shared with others for legitimate research purposes. The data in an unidentifiable form, as well as direct quotations of the participant's words, may be used in publications, reports, and other research outputs.

How long personal data is held by the researcher:
All research data and records needed to validate the research findings will be stored for 10 years after my PhD thesis submission.

How to object to the processing of your personal data for this project:
If you have any concerns regarding the processing of your personal data, or you wish to withdraw your data from the project, contact the researcher, Anna Gruszczyńska ([email address redacted]), or her supervisor, Dr Oakleigh Welply ([email address redacted]). We can also be contacted, should you require any further information about this research project.

APPENDIX 6: Questionnaire

Hi [participant's name],

I would very appreciate your help with this last task. It will probably take you about 10-15 minutes to fill in this questionnaire and will mean a lot to me.

I purposefully left the answer fields blank and did not suggest any options to give you more flexibility in how you want to answer them.

If any of the questions seem problematic, please feel free to explain in the answer field or leave it blank.

You can share as much information here as you want. In my thesis, I will avoid quoting any information that would make it easy to identify you.

Age	
Gender	
Race/ethnicity	
Religion	
Nationality	
Citizenship	
Education level	
Occupation	
Current city/ location	
Other places where you live/ lived	
Pseudonym	*In order to protect your anonymity, I will use a pseudonym instead of your real name in my thesis and any future publications. Would you like to choose one for yourself?*
Your parents' country of origin	
Your parents' first language	
Your parents' occupations	*(This is a very imperfect proxy for economic background. You can skip this question if you'd prefer to.)*
Siblings (age, gender) *(e.g., 26, F)*	

APPENDIX 7: Co-analysis guidelines

(posted within a shared OneNote file)

Please complete **Task 1** and **Task 2** on the page titled "[participant's name]", just in the tab on the left. You will find the transcript of our conversation there, too.

You could either do **Task 1** and then **Task 2** or do them at the same time. I usually listen to a segment of the recording and do Task 1 as I listen, and then reread the transcript of that segment and analyse it in line with what Task 2 asks me to do. Feel free to experiment though and find what works best for you!

TASK 1:

Read the transcript and listen to the recording of the interview at the same time. I would like to ask you to pay attention to **what is not in the text**. Please note any elements of speech that you think might have meaning (e.g., pauses, silence, tone, pitch, hesitation, emphasis, interruptions). What meaning do they have? Please note these elements and their meaning in the interview transcript using purple font. Feel free to also reflect and comment on anything that you or I said or did not say.

EXAMPLE (interview excerpt from Thornberg et al., 2013; purple comments are a work of Ania's imagination, not present in the original analysis, for the sake of this task please imagine that Eric wrote the comments in purple):

Processes	Interview data
	Eric: I started to feel very insecure. In other words, I started to doubt myself more and more. I lost my self-confidence. I thought there has to be something wrong with me (shaking voice – I say it in my head all the time, but it seems more real when I say it aloud), because otherwise they wouldn't have picked me as a victim. I believe all the stupid things they said about me (louder, slightly angry – I think I am angry with myself that I let other people affect me so much, I know better than this). So, I really got very bad self-confidence from all the bullying. I really didn't dare to do things I wanted to do when other people were nearby. (pause, I think I was just about to talk about that one time when I pretended I had a tummy ache because I didn't want to play football with my classmates, they'd always find a way to bully me during the game, when the teacher was not watching... I don't even know if I was pretending or all that stress made me feel actual pain... I didn't share this story during the interview because you prompted me with a different question) Interviewer: The bullying gave you bad self-confidence? (I hoped you'd encourage me to keep talking about the things I didn't dare to do. I wanted to talk more about the impact the bullying had on my day-to-day activities) Eric: Yes, and it made me believe there was something wrong with me, that I was stupid. I felt worthless, that no one would like to be with me.

TASK 2:

Read the interview transcript and identify and name **"processes", i.e., what is happening** (e.g., feeling safe, showing understanding of my peers' position, becoming more independent, appreciating..., hoping..., ignoring..., regretting...). In some cases, these processes will be quite obvious (e.g., you might read in your transcript "it was quite embarrassing when I...", and write in the "processes" column, "feeling embarrassed"), but

sometimes you may need to try and identify the underlying meaning/emotion behind what you were saying. Please feel invited to also identify processes in my (Ania'a) part of the interview. You can also identify processes in the purple text you've just added.

EXAMPLE of identifying and naming "processes" in an interview transcript (from Thornberg et al., 2013):

Processes	Interview data	
	Interviewer:	How did the bullying affect you during this period?
Becoming insecure; self-doubting; loss of self-confidence; thinking bullying depends on wrongness with self; believing bullies' negative image of you; getting bad self-confidence from being bullied; becoming passive out of social fear	Eric:	I started to feel very insecure. In other words, I started to doubt myself more and more. I lost my self-confidence. I thought there has to be something wrong with me, because otherwise they wouldn't have picked me as a victim. I believed all the stupid things they said about me. So, I really got very bad self-confidence from all the bullying. I really didn't dare to do things I wanted to do when other people were nearby.
	Interviewer:	The bullying gave you bad self-confidence?
Believing of the wrongness with self as a result of being bullied; feeling self-worthlessness; being globally disliked	Eric:	Yes, and it made me believe there was something wrong with me, that I was stupid. I felt worthless, that no one would like to be with me.
	Interviewer:	You said before that you thought they bullied you because there was something wrong with you. Can you tell me more about that?
Being bullied because of being different	Eric:	Because I was a different or a bit odd, I wasn't like them.
	Interviewer:	You became bullied because you were different?
The constant message of being nerdish;	Eric:	Yeah, that was what I was told all the time, that I was a

The analytical comments in the examples above are quite detailed and dense to better illustrate what I'm asking you to do. Yours don't have to be so detailed.

TASK 3:

Please answer three short questions in the **"Reflections"** tab on the left.

d. You've just listened back to our interview. Is this how you would usually speak to a friend/parent/teacher/stranger/...? Did this conversation feel natural to you? What made it feel natural or unnatural?
e. Is there anything that perhaps you did not get a chance to say or you were reminded of in the process of analysis of the interview transcript? Do you feel that what you shared represents your experiences well?
f. What did you expect coming into this research project? How did these expectations affect your participation?

APPENDIX 8: Fieldnote template

Participant no.		**Interview date**	**Fieldnotes date**	**Updates**
FIRST THOUGHTS/IMPRESSIONS				
SETTING	*Notes*		*Reflections/analytical notes*	
Type of setting and its effect on the interview				
Interruptions?				
PARTICIPANT	*Notes*		*Reflections/analytical notes*	
Appearance				
Nonverbal behaviours (e.g., lack of eye contact, hand wringing)				
Perceived mood				
INTERVIEW	*Notes*		*Reflections/analytical notes*	
Impression of participants involvement/performance as a whole				
Depth of response				
Flow of the conversations (e.g., need for follow-up questions)				
Silences, hesitations, interruptions				
INTERVIEWER	*Notes*		*Reflections/analytical notes*	
Appearance				
Nonverbal behaviours (e.g., lack of eye contact, hand wringing)				
How did I perform? Why?				

Did I have to adapt the questions a lot? Why?		
How much of my experience and feelings did I share? Why?		
Silences, hesitations, interruptions		

Reflections/analytical notes:

- Should you consider any changes/modifications before your future interviews?
- Can you recognise any tentative codes or links to theoretical concepts?
- Are there any follow-up questions that you should raise during the co-analysis meeting?
- What assumptions/tacit knowledge have you brought to this conversation and/or your field notes?
- Have you prioritised certain details? According to what criteria?

Highlight the thoughts/reflections/ideas that emerged during the conversation as opposed to during the write-up of the notes

Notes on the content of the conversation:

APPENDIX 9: Reflection prompts

- What assumptions/worldviews are you bringing into this process?
- How might your language affect the process? Will the language others use affect how you see them?
- What unearned or taken-for-granted privileges might you be bringing into the process? What roles and positions do you occupy (in the process and in general)? How will they affect how you act and how the participants approach you?
- Reflect of relations of power, identity, and subjectivity. In what ways might they manifest? How might they affect the process?
- How do you find participants and in what settings do you conduct your research?
- What is your role in the interview process? What have your experiences of interviewing been in the past?
- How can your account for your hopes, desires, moral dispositions (regarding the project and more generally)?
- What cultural, social, institutional, linguistic, disciplinary narratives are you a part of? How do these affect your research?
- What is your relationship with this project? Where does your interest come from?

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