

# **The importance of ethnic identity and well-being in the lives of third-generation British Bangladeshi People**

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November 2019

Submitted to the University of Hertfordshire in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree  
of Doctor of Clinical Psychology

## Abstract

**Rationale and Aims:** Ethnic Identity (EI) refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with their cultural group (Phinney, 2000) and has been widely documented as being beneficial for well-being (Smith and Silva, 2011; Umaña-Taylor, 2011). EI can be especially beneficial for ethnic minority populations, such as British Bangladeshis, who are at risk of a complex, largely undocumented negotiation of identities and stressors related to cultural adjustment in Britain (Eade, 1994). However, some research suggests the opposite effect: namely, that high levels of EI may actually increase vulnerability to distress when faced with discrimination, especially when considering populations that face intersectional disadvantages.

A systematic review of the literature regarding British Bangladeshi identity and well-being revealed that there are currently no documented experiences of third-generation British Bangladeshi adults. Furthermore, no peer reviewed qualitative research has explicitly considered EI and well-being in the British Bangladeshi population. Hence the aim of this study was to understand the importance of EI and well-being in third-generation British Bangladeshi adults.

**Methods/Analysis:** A qualitative design was employed where semi-structured interviews were conducted on 15 third-generation British Bangladeshi participants. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), within a Critical Realist epistemology.

**Findings:** Three main themes were identified: Theme 1 – “Oh my God, I’m different” being “made to feel” like an outsider in Britain. Theme 2 – “You’re a coconut” being “made to feel” like an outsider within the British Bangladeshi community. Theme 3 – “A proper sense of belonging”.

Participants discussed their experiences of feeling like an outsider, due to a multitude of factors e.g. race, religion, cultural practices and gender norms. At times their strategy for survival involved trying to behave in ways that they perceived as synonymous with being ‘White British’ in professional and public spaces. Multiple challenges also appear to be faced whilst trying to engage with their own community. Despite these challenges, participants talked through connecting with elements of their Bangladeshi and Islamic heritage that has enabled a sense of belonging at a number of different stages within varying contexts and moments in their lives.

**Implications:** Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and theoretical models. Implications for clinical psychological research and practice, methodological considerations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

## Acknowledgements

Alhamdulillah, all praises to Allah for the strengths and His blessing in completing this thesis.

I would like to give a huge and heartfelt 'thank you' to the individuals who participated in this research. Thank you for your time, openness and for sharing your experiences so generously. I feel very honoured and grateful that you have trusted me with your stories and I dedicate this research to you and our community.

To my research supervisors Dr Jacqueline Gratton and Mr Tahmidur Rahman, thanks for your patience, support and guidance throughout this process and beyond. I also wish to acknowledge Dr Lizette Nolte, thank you so much for your continued support and encouragement. I will hold onto all that I have learned from each of you.

Sayeeda, Nina, Hannah, Olu, Devinia, Angela, Ansar Sasa and the rest of my friends, you are all so wonderful! This would have been impossible without you.

To my Nanazi and Nanizi, Bibizi and late Dadazi, thank you for your dua's and for forgiving me for not giving you the time that I should have. Insha'Allah, I can make up for some of that lost time now.

To my beloved parents, Abba, Amma, Baba and Ma, thank you for your endless dua's, patience, guidance and care. To my siblings, Sorwar, Sufi, Taher, Rumi and the rest of our family, thank you for keeping me going. I am so blessed to have you all. To my loving husband Azim, I would not have survived this without you. Thank you, you can have your wife back!

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Chapter overview**

This study is a qualitative investigation of the importance of Ethnic Identity (EI) and well-being in the lives of third-generation British Bangladeshis. This chapter will begin with reasons why this project was of importance to me. I will then outline my epistemological position before introducing some of the key terms that will be discussed. Following this, there is a discussion about the difficulties encountered by ethnic minority populations in Britain. There is also a broad overview of the existing models of how EI may be formed, and some of the literature which supports the positive impact this may have on general well-being and self-esteem. Throughout the introduction, I will make references to how the constructs explored relate to the British Bangladeshi population, before moving onto a review of the literature that focuses on identity and mental health for this group.

#### **1.2 Positioning myself as a researcher**

Growing up, I valued the rich stories of heritage which were passed down the generations of my family, and being able to visit Bangladesh, where I could explore my origins and history, allowed me to feel connected to the community and culture. I also connected to many aspects of British culture and my identity as a British Bangladeshi. I valued and felt a part of the rich multi-cultural community in London. At the same time, I became more and more aware of growing narratives of Islamophobia and racism following events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks. It began to feel more difficult to be British and Muslim and to be accepted in British society. Having to hide or minimise my identity depending on the context felt like an emotional burden. Despite this, I was able

to maintain a strong connection to my heritage through my family, particularly through my father, a community worker who was committed to the British Bangladeshi community.

On reflection, I feel this led me to become involved in heritage work in my community as an adult, and join my father on his journey of supporting the British Bangladeshi community to explore their heritage through research. I noticed the powerful impact of this on myself and others in my community. This has felt increasingly important to me and my community due to our experiences of a growth in far-right nationalism. Doing and publishing research on heritage work with my father felt like an act of resistance against far-right narratives, and a powerful way for us to claim back our heritage.

After feeling the benefit for my well-being of being able to connect with and explore my heritage, and the ways in which it strengthened my identity as a person, I wanted to explore how heritage affects the well-being of other British Bangladeshi people. Throughout this research, I will consider that understanding and maintaining our heritage may be important for our well-being as British Bangladeshis within the current political context of rising far-right nationalism, and colonial influences on how we are viewed in, or excluded from, British history. At the same time, I remain open to differing perspectives and experiences of this; and use reflexivity as a tool to help me do this.

### 1.3 Epistemology

An epistemological position describes the researcher's assumptions about the knowledge that can be discovered through the research, and its relationship to reality. The epistemological position adopted for this research is critical realism, which accepts there is an external reality while acknowledging that this reality will be influenced and interpreted differently for individuals (Joffe, 2012). The choice of epistemological position was influenced by the intended audience for the research: clinicians and policymakers in the UK, who tend to be more familiar with and place more value on realist epistemologies. I aimed to create useful research that would highlight key issues which could be used to inform clinicians' work with clients from the British Bangladeshi community who have poor experiences of mental health services (Rathod, Kingdon, Smith & Turkington, 2005).

In addition, when dealing with issues of identity and racism, it is important to consider the current political context of rising far-right nationalism and colonial influences. The rise of Islamophobia has been reported as operating in multiple contexts and has had a significant influence on the sense of self of individuals who identify as Muslim (Dadabhoy, n.d.). In this context, I believe there is an ethical obligation when researching experiences of identity and oppression to assume a position that recognises that our data can tell us about reality that 'exists independently' of the researcher's mind and that there is an 'external reality' (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013), while also accepting that 'we certainly have no privileged

access or magic key to unlock the “true” perceptions and emotions of those we study’ (Van Mannen, 2010, p.227).

#### **1.4 Discussion of key concepts** (Please see Appendix S for a Glossary of terms)

##### **1.4.1 Well-being**

Well-being has been conceptualised in many different ways (Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012). The World Health Organisation (WHO) definition, which was developed to apply to all populations, describes well-being as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948). This definition of well-being will be used in this study.

##### **1.4.2 Self-esteem**

In this study, the focus will be on general well-being, which includes self-esteem alongside other collective forms of well-being. Self-esteem has been defined as an evaluative self-concept which includes thoughts, behaviours and feelings, including a person's sense of self, their value or their worth, and the degree to which a person approves or appreciates themselves (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991). In the field of psychology, self-esteem has been connected to various clinical concepts, such as anxiety and depression (Adler and Stewart, 2004). It has been viewed as a protective factor (Dumont and Provost, 1999) and is sometimes treated as an outcome of therapy (Klein, 1976). Although deconstructing the concept of self-esteem is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that some researchers have made criticisms of this concept. For example, Eromo & Levy (2017) discuss how the importance placed on self-esteem can be seen as linked to western individualistic ideologies.

### **1.4.3 Identity**

Identity has been considered from many different perspectives; a review of these is beyond the scope of this study. However, for the purpose of this research, the following working definition will be used: Identity can be defined as 'people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others' (Abram's and Hogg 1988, p.2). It has been assumed that a person's identity can have two components, personal identity and social identity, centred on group membership (Tajfel, 1981).

### **1.4.4 Ethnic Identity (EI)**

The definition of EI has similarly been debated over a number of years; again, this is beyond the scope of this study. Within this research, EI refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with a cultural group (Phinney, 2000): incorporating race, histories of migration and cultural practices. The term 'ethnic' has evolved from purely biological and genetic characteristics to more socially constructed meanings (Helms and Talleyrand, 1997), which include aspects such as shared language, national origin and heritage. This may include a sense of belonging (Singh, 1977; Ting-Toomey, 1981; Tzuriel and Klein, 1977), pride or affirmation, among other community-related sentiments. This range of influences and formative factors underscores the idea that EI should be modelled upon a continuum (Phinney 1992); it is a personal and relational experience that can grow and fluctuate in response to several different contextual factors.

### **1.4.5 British Bangladeshi**

I use the term 'British Bangladeshi' to talk about those who have migrated to Britain from Bangladesh and their descendants. In my experience, this has become a multi-generational term; despite being born in Britain, many of those whose parents or grandparents migrated from Bangladesh are also identified and self-identify as British Bangladeshi. Around 95% of the British Bangladeshi population originate from a region in the north-east of what is now Bangladesh, called Sylhet (Ullah and Eversley 2010). There are approximately 451,529 UK British Bangladeshis, of which 50% are documented to be living in London (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The vast majority identify as Muslim, although there are Christian and Hindu and atheist Bangladeshis too.

## **1.5 Overview of the empirical and theoretical literature**

This chapter begins by examining the experiences of ethnic minorities in the UK in 2019. Following this, I will consider their experiences of NHS services. I will introduce the concept of acculturation and associated stressors experienced by ethnic minorities such as the British Bangladeshi population. This leads on to a discussion regarding experiences of discrimination and the impact this may have on their well-being, with a particular focus on the British Bangladeshi population. Finally, there is a discussion of EI, with an overview of the general theories, models and evidence for its relationship to well-being.

## **1.6 Ethnic minority well-being in the UK**

The number of ethnic minority people in the UK more than doubled between the 1991 Census and the most recent one in 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Developing ethnic minority populations, such as British Bangladeshis, are at risk from a complex, largely undocumented negotiation of identities and stressors related to cultural adjustment in Britain, which can lead to mental health issues for new immigrants and later generations (Lee, 2007; Ying and Han, 2007; Kulis, Marsiglia, Sicotte & Nieri, 2007).

The Bangladeshi population in the UK face several issues. First, they encounter challenges related to EI, namely, acculturation and belonging (Eade, 1994). Second, many Muslims in Britain are regularly aware of discrimination, which can have an impact on their psychological well-being (Jasperse, Ward & Jose, 2012) self-esteem (Every and Perry, 2014) and increased vigilance (Rippy and Newman, 2006). Third, despite experiencing mental health difficulties, this population are not reported to have their needs met by services (Bhui et al., 2003), as discussed further below.

## **1.7 Experiences of care for ethnic minorities**

The foundation of the National Health Service (NHS) is free healthcare for all (Rivett, 1998). However, the needs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) service users are not being met in mental health (MH) services (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2002; National Institute of Mental Health, 2013, Cooper, et al., 2013, Beck & Naz, 2019) and this affects health outcomes in all ethnic minority communities (Wilkinson, 1996). BAME service users have reported negative experiences of services,

e.g., lower levels of satisfaction and poor treatment outcomes compared to white counterparts (Raleigh et al., 2007).

More recent data specific to the British Bangladeshi population did not appear to be available. When looking at the South Asian population,<sup>1</sup> a systematic review of quantitative studies found that South Asians often presented symptoms to their GP without being referred on to further services (Bhui et al, 2003). South Asian women have also been dismissed as somatising their mental health difficulties (Khan, 2018). South Asian service users have reported reluctance to disclose their faith or religious practices due to fears that these would be misunderstood by clinicians as being related to their mental illness (Islam, Rabiee & Singh, 2015). Poor understandings of cultural norms were reported in Bowl (2007): for example, a patient revealed that their choice to pray at a specific hour was interpreted as a symptom of mental illness.

### **1.8 Acculturative stressors**

A major challenge associated with immigration is acculturating to a host country (Berry, 1997). Acculturation is the process of being folded (whether by choice or forcibly) into the dominant culture, resulting in a socio-cultural change within both; however changes occur more for the immigrants as they attempt to adjust to the values of the host culture (Schwartz and Zamboanga 2008; Sam, 2006). At an individual level, it may present as changes in a person's behaviour (Berry 1976; Berry and Annis 1974; Sam and Berry 2006; Sommerlad and Berry 1970). Within this study, the focus is on the

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<sup>1</sup> US publications have had a 'tendency within Asian American programs ... to primarily, and sometimes exclusively, focus on East Asian Americans' (Kurien, 2018). 'South Asian population' has been the term used to incorporate the Bangladeshi population as well as Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans (Aspinall, 2003).



change that occurs for the ethnic minority population as opposed to the change to the host country.

Acculturation can pose difficulties for immigrants, with general acculturation stressors presenting themselves as language difficulties, daily resettlement difficulties, homesickness, and a negotiation between whether to acquire the national culture or maintain the heritage culture (Berry, 2006). Further challenges are created when the values of the immigrant's culture conflict with those of the new society: for example, migrating from a collectivist society to one that is individualistic (Sam and Virta, 2003). The acculturation experience can have a negative psychological impact on children of immigrants, and sometimes even later generations (Kulis, Marsiglia, Sicotte & Nieri, 2007) as they navigate between two or more cultures (Berry, 2006).

According to Berry (1997, 2005, 2006, 2008), there are four possible acculturative strategies that immigrants may experience: assimilation, separation, marginalisation and integration.

**Table 1: A model of acculturation (Berry, 2005)**

Assimilation	'When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures' (p.705).
Separation	'When individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others' (p.705).
Marginalisation	'When there is little possibility or interest in heritage cultural maintenance, and little interest in having relations with others' (p.705).
Integration	'An interest in both maintaining one's heritage culture while in daily interactions with other groups [and] to participate as an integral part of the larger social network' (p.705).

Within the UK, integration has been idealised as both socially and psychologically beneficial; however, the underlying assumption is that responsibility for this lies solely with the migrant community (Bowskill, Lyons & Coyle, 2007). Academic research investigating acculturation has been criticised for focusing on the individual in a way that "threatens to remove responsibility for multicultural relations from wider, collectively driven, socio-political forces" (Bowskill et al., 2007, p.795).

Far-right nationalism has become a dominant narrative in British society (Goodwin, 2011) and has influenced the rise of discrimination, arguably making the acculturation process more stressful (Berry, 1997).

### **1.9 Discrimination in the UK**

Discrimination presents itself in the UK in numerous ways. Studies have found that ethnic minority employees are likely to be paid less than their white colleagues,

despite equivalent levels of education (MacInnes, Tinson, Hughes, Barry Born & Aldridge, 2015); more likely to be over-qualified for their jobs; and more liable to endure insecure work (Brynin and Longhi, 2015). Within the workplace, ethnic minorities frequently report experiences of racism, which they claim has a severe impact on their emotional and psychological well-being (Ashe and Nazroo, 2017).

It has been documented that the British Bangladeshi population are part of a larger group of people who have become targets of Islamophobia: aggression based on ethno-religious and cultural differences (Abbas, 2009). Systemic influences such as the UK government's Prevent strategy have made them feel marginalised, targeted, stereotyped and treated unfairly (Goodfellow and McFarlane, 2018). Williams (2017) discusses that Muslim women of colour are vulnerable to a 'triple threat' of being women, being from an ethnic minority and being Muslim, exposing them to multiple layers of discrimination extending to violent attacks and hate crime. The monitoring group, Tell MAMA (2017), reported a 26% year-on-year rise in the number of anti-Muslim attacks and incidents of abuse, with women disproportionately targeted. This increase in violence and harassment in the public sphere is likely to make people, especially women, withdraw: thus leaving them less integrated, as well as fearful and depressed (Adams, Fryberg, Garcia & Delgado-Torres, 2006).

### **1.10 Discrimination and mental health**

Research has consistently demonstrated that discrimination can have serious negative effects on psychological well-being (Adams et al., 2006) across generational and cultural groups (Arbona and Jimenez, 2014; Cheng, Lin & Cha, 2015; Han & Lee,

2011; Miranda, Polanco-Roman, Tsypes & Valderrama, 2013; Polanco-Roman and Miranda, 2013). In the United States, research showed that higher encounters of racial microaggressions negatively predicted participants' mental health (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Yinglee & Sahran. et al., 2014). In the same study, racial micro-aggressions significantly correlated with depressive symptoms and negative affect. Willen (2007) found that perceived discrimination was related to higher body vigilance and reported anxiety while occupying public spaces for people of colour living in Israel. Perceived discrimination has also been associated with low self-esteem (Umaña-Taylor and Updegraff, 2007).

### **1.11 Ethnic minority well-being in the UK summary**

To summarise, ethnic minorities in Britain are faced with multiple difficulties and acculturative stressors. When they seek psychological help, they are often met with poor treatment. This population is vulnerable to multiple layers of discrimination based on race, cultural practices and religious beliefs. Discrimination appears to present itself in many ways (e.g., employment inequalities, access to services and hate crimes). Experiences of discrimination can have a serious impact on mental health.

## **1.12. Ethnic identity**

### **1.12.1 Theories of ethnic and racial identity**

As described above, EI refers to the extent to which an individual identifies with their cultural group. Several theoretical models have been proposed to describe and explain how people develop their EI. Some of the early models (Cross, 1971; Helms, 1990; Sellers, 1998) were based on the African-American population, and are discussed further below. Further, models by Phinney (1990), Smith (1991) and Umaña-Taylor (2004) overlook aspects of race unique to specific ethnic groups, and focus on the

universal elements of group identity for all ethnic groups (Shelton and Sellers, 2000). In addition, racial identity models incorporate the influence of societal oppression (Helms, 1990; Helms and Talleyrand, 1997). This is particularly significant for the Muslim Bangladeshi population, who are vulnerable to both ethnic and racial discrimination.

### **1.12.1.1 Phinney's Multigroup EI Model**

Phinney's (1990) model suggests that EI formation may be a developmental experience which forms through maturity as well as other external factors. She identifies four stages of EI development: Diffuse/Foreclosed, Moratorium, and Achieved (see Table below).

**Table 2: Phinney's identity stages**

Diffuse	Those who have not explored or committed themselves to their EI are within a 'diffuse' stage. It is assumed that they have not had to deal with the issues related to ethnicity, or have an understanding of its value (Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan & Sellars, 2000).
Foreclosed	Someone who may have accepted, without question, the EI they were exposed to and told about by family members or significant others. These individuals are unlikely to have explored their EI.
Moratorium	These individuals may be actively involved in exploring their EI; but may not be committed to it. Exploration may include experimenting with their identity through conversations regarding EI with others, reading, or building an awareness of issues related to EI (Marks et al., 2000).
Achieved	Following a significant amount of time exploring their EI, these individuals are committed to it (Marcia, 1966; 1980). They may have a sense of belonging to the group and have a greater knowledge and acceptance of it (Marks et al., 2000).

Phinney's model explores an individual's experience of developing EI. Phinney's theory can be seen as an extension of Erikson's (1968) model of identity formation, in which adolescents' uncertainty about identity can lead to a 'crisis', which is resolved as they gain a clearer sense of their identity. The development of identity can still be distressing and unsettling, especially for immigrant children because ethnic, religious, and national identities often result in conflicting values and behaviours (Birman, 1998).

### ***1.12.1.2 Ecological systems model of EI development***

In contrast to Phimmey's focus on the individual, Umaña-Taylor adapts Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems model (1992; Figure 1) to highlight the social factors that contribute to EI development. These can include the individual's ethnic group in their community, policies relating to socio-economic status, race, education and provision of healthcare. Umaña-Taylor used the model to specify that 'ethnic socialisation' is the process of conforming to prevalent ethnic values, practices and beliefs of surrounding communities (microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem) (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Social factors will interact with developmental changes, e.g. age and maturity. There appears to be less written about EI from this perspective; however, it can be useful for the British Bangladeshi community, as in locations such as Tower Hamlets in East London, Bangladeshis are the largest single ethnic group in the borough (Towerhamlets.gov.uk, 2018).

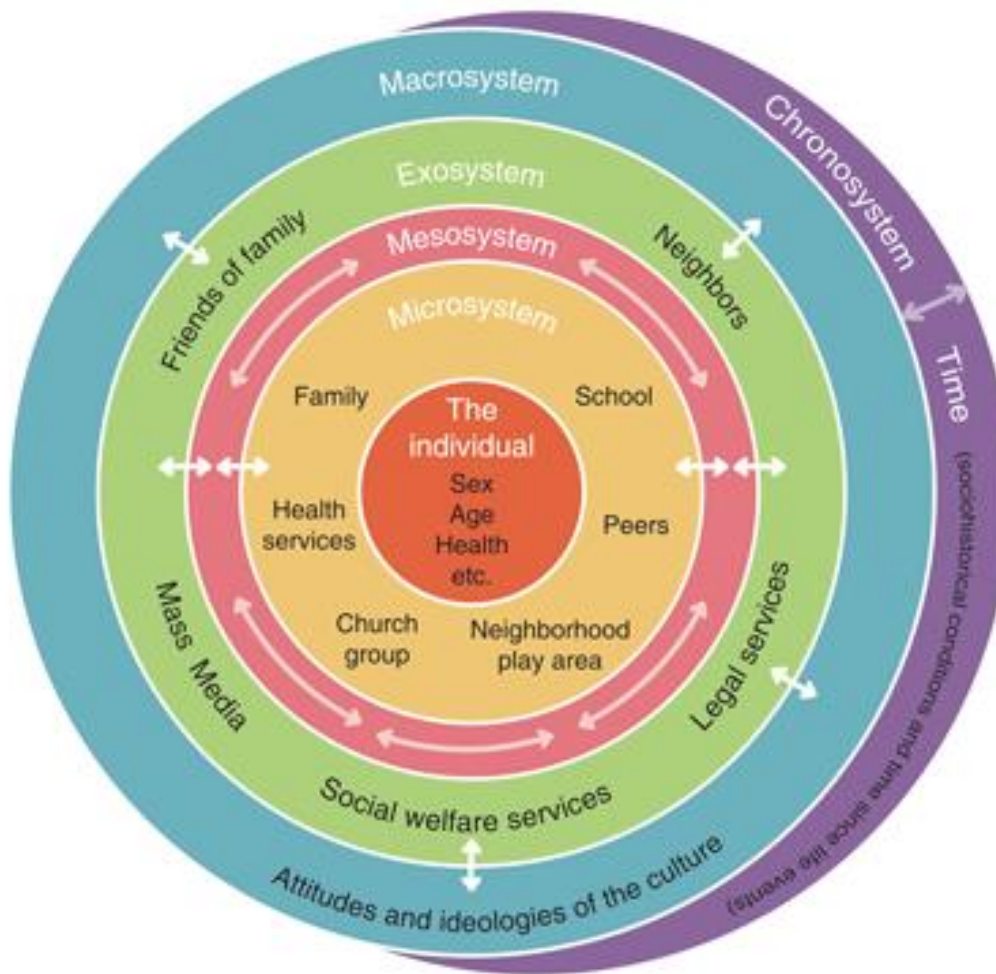


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems model

### 1.12.2 Commonalities across models

A number of other models look at ethnic and racial identity (Cross, 1971; Helms 1990). Smith (2006) offers an overview of the commonalities which exist between these and Phinney's model. These include belonging and acceptance, ethnic involvement and discrimination.

#### 1.12.2.1 *Belonging/Acceptance*

A common concept across the models is that EI is a dynamic process that develops over time. Phinney's model suggests a developmental journey into EI achievement, which involves a sense of belonging and acceptance both to and from an

ethnic group. In contrast, Cross' model (1971) and Helms' model (1990) suggest that a specific 'race-related' event triggers the process of change into EI achievement.

Americans of European heritage regularly score lower on measures of EI than people of colour (Roberts et al., 1999); this has been interpreted as the desire for people of colour (who tend to have experienced a 'race-related' trigger) to pursue a sense of belonging and historical continuity (Smith, 1991). Cross (1971) also describes a process from a dependence on European Americans as a reference group to internalising positive African American cultural attitudes. Cross (1971), Helms (1990) and Smith (1991) discuss how experimenting with different parts of their heritage is a process that individuals may go through before committing themselves to their EI.

#### **1.12.2.2 Ethnic involvement**

Partaking in cultural activities is one of the most common symbols of ethnic involvement (Phinney, 1990). Families play an active role in EI exploration, commitment, affirmation and belonging through a process of Family Ethnic Socialisation (FES; Farver, Narang and Bhadha, 2002). This includes language, social groups, religious and cultural traditions and even political activism. Ethnic socialisation at schools can also impact EI formation (Umaña-Taylor and Fine, 2004). FES has been seen to encourage EI exploration, feelings of positivity and commitment towards their EI (Umaña-Taylor and Fine, 2004).

Helms' (1990) and Cross' (1978) models describe a stage called 'immersion', in which members begin to idealise parts of their EI. This stage of ethnic involvement can become an all-consuming experience, as the person immerses themselves into their EI while simultaneously withdrawing from the dominant culture. Individuals may experience 'ethnocentrism', displaying an extreme preference towards everything related to their EI.



The person progresses “from uncontrolled rage toward [European Americans] to controlled; from insecure, rigid, feelings of inferiority to Black pride, self-love and a deep sense of Black communalism” (Cross, 1971, p. 23). Eventually the person learns to become more ‘flexible, tolerant, and bicultural’ (Smith, 2006).

### **1.12.2.3 Discrimination – Being visibly different**

Both Cross (1971) and Helms (1995) characterise racism as a trigger towards identity exploration and transitioning into a later stage of EI. The trigger may be a distinct event or a build-up of daily aggressions. In the UK, Hutnik (1991) found that EI was higher in adolescents of colour than in the white English group, who were not as invested in their ethnicity. Living as part of a minority group may be central in EI development and reactions to perceived discrimination (Hutnik, 1991; Pahl and Way, 2006).

### **1.12.3 Summary of EI models**

In summary, the development of EI is often thought of as a complex, active task. It can be influenced by a number of factors: such as feelings of belonging, levels of maturity, family and local community influence, the resources available to engage with cultural activities, and experiences of discrimination.

Although EI may appear to pertain solely to ethnicity, studies have addressed the role of other social identities and their influence on EI. These include factors such as sexuality, socio-economic difference or gender roles, and criticisms of EI models point out a lack of consideration of these factors (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995; Root, 1998). For instance, hijab-wearing Muslim women are often negatively

stereotyped by the Western world, which may result in differing world views between Muslim men and women (Williamson and Khiabany, 2010).

These models make generalisations about ethnic minority populations in order to better understand them. In doing so, they tend to relate primarily to the populations they were based upon (Root, 1998). Although much can be drawn from these particular models, we should be open to the idea that the British Bangladeshi population of 2019 will have their own particularities, which may not adhere to these models directly. According to Kleinman (1987), as the person's local world continues to evolve, their identity will also be subject to change. Therefore, culture and ethnicity cannot be seen as just a fixed set of cultural practices and values, but rather a dynamic process that continues to change.

#### **1.12.4 EI, acculturation and well-being**

Numerous research studies, predominantly quantitative studies from the US, have repeatedly pointed to the positive association between EI and well-being across ethnic groups. High EI has been identified a protective factor against mental health difficulties and is related to positive psychological and socio-cultural adjustment for ethnic minorities (Smith and Silva, 2011; Umaña-Taylor, 2011; Espinosa, Tikhonov, Ellman, Kern & Lui, 2018). Empirical research has also connected EI to a reduced lifetime prevalence of psychiatric disorders among ethnic minority adults (Burnett-Zeigle, Bohnert & Ilgen, 2013). For example, high EI was found to moderate the relationship between perceived stress and depression (Chavez-Korell and Torres, 2014).

Research has consistently demonstrated that a positive EI is critical to the development of positive self-perceptions among ethnic minority youth (French, Seidman, Allen & Aber, 2006; Pahl and Way 2006; Phinney, 1990). EI has been associated with higher self-esteem in ethnic minority populations (Carlson, Uppal & Prosser, 2000; Martinez and Dukes, 1997; Phinney, 1991; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004).

A growing body of research has demonstrated that EI can be a useful component which buffers against the negative effects of racism and discrimination (Phinney and Chavira, 1992; Phinney and Chavira, 1993). When faced with marginalisation, strong EI can aid people to acknowledge the positive qualities of their ethnic group, reducing the impact of oppressive narratives from the dominant society (Outten, Schmitt, Garcia & Branscombe, 2009). Adolescents with high EI reported higher self-esteem during periods of higher levels of discrimination-related stress than those with low EI (Romero and Roberts, 2003b); the latter are most negatively affected by high levels of discrimination (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone & Zimmerman, 2003; Sellers and Shelton, 2003; Sellers et al., 2006; Wong, Eccles & Sameroff, 2003).

Some research has demonstrated that EI seems to have a protective impact towards depressive symptoms during periods of discrimination-related stress (Greene et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 2006). One explanation for this might be that a positive social identity with others can provide a sense of belonging and social support: in line with social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), which holds that individuals' self-concepts are enhanced through group membership.

#### **1.12.4.1 EI and mental health outcomes**

Low levels of EI have been negatively associated with a variety of negative mental health outcomes. Arroyo and Ziegler (1995) found that African American students who were described as 'high achieving' demonstrated more assimilative values and beliefs (i.e. the values and beliefs of their successful white counterparts); however, they associated this 'racelessness' with higher levels of depression. Roberts and colleagues (1999) found low levels of EI correlated negatively to measures of loneliness and depression. One way of understanding these findings lies in considering the negative effects of discrimination and its associated stressors. Low levels of EI may make it harder for ethnic minorities to have a sense of belonging in a social group when they are feeling under threat (Torres and Taknint, 2015).

However, some studies have suggested negative effects of increased EI. For example, EI may increase vulnerability to discrimination (Greene, Way & Pahl, 2006; Major and O'Brien, 2005; Romero and Roberts, 2003b; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin & Lewis, 2006; Sellers and Shelton, 2003). Those participants who still appeared to be in the process of 'exploration' towards forming their EI were particularly negatively affected by experiences of discrimination (Torres and Ong, 2010). One way of understanding the negative effects of EI is through self-categorisation theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987), which predicts that individuals who associate with a collective group identity may be more vulnerable to distress, as they are more aware of the environmental aggressions related to that identity.

A meta-analysis investigating EI, discrimination and impact on well-being demonstrated an equal amount of research associated with the advantages and disadvantages (Pascoe and Smart Richman, 2009). The diverse findings may be related to the differences between population groups (in age, gender, ethnicity, measures and social context). For example, exploring EI appears to be more damaging to well-being in populations with a larger sample of women, perhaps because women of colour are faced with intersectional disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1990).

### **1.13 Chapter conclusion**

Ethnic minority populations, such as the British Bangladeshi population, are at risk of acculturative stressors as their families adapt to living in Britain, and also from discrimination and violence. These circumstances can have a negative impact on the well-being of this population. High EI has been associated with positive well-being in ethnic minority populations; and is a useful buffer against the stress that can be triggered through experiences of discrimination. In addition, there are negative consequences of low levels of EI in ethnic minority populations.

However, these findings should be approached with caution. Some research suggests the opposite effect: namely, that high levels of EI may actually increase vulnerability to distress when faced with discrimination, especially when considering populations that face intersectional disadvantages.

## Chapter 2

### Systematic review

A systematic review using a narrative synthesis approach was conducted to answer the question:

*What are the experiences of EI and well-being in British Bangladeshi<sup>2</sup> people?*

A standardised methodology for reviewing literature was used (Siddaway, Wood & Hedges, 2019) and the quality of the studies was appraised. The employed search strategy is described below.

A brief literature search revealed limited research in the area (Siddaway, Wood & Hedges, 2019); therefore a decision was made to include both qualitative and quantitative and peer-reviewed journal articles, and to widen the inclusion criteria. As such research did not appear to specify ethnic or cultural identity, it was deemed appropriate to include studies regarding acculturation, as often there has been overlap between the constructs (Smith, 2006).

Furthermore, not all papers stated ethnic identity and well-being as a primary aim but much of the results appeared to be related to the research question, and these were also included as part of this synthesis. Some of the studies did not explicitly state well-being as an outcome, many of the studies' findings were relevant to this study's

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<sup>2</sup> Within this study the term 'Bangladeshi' is used to describe the individuals. Whereas the term 'Bangla' will be used to describe the language from Bangladesh.

definition of well-being and were therefore included as part of this synthesis. For example, many of the studies discussed a sense of belonging, which has been linked to well-being (Mellor, Stokes, Hayashi & Cummins, 2008) so therefore has been included as part of this review. Pseudonyms, used by the authors in the studies, are used for all participants when referencing specific quotes throughout the report.

## 2.1 Search strategy

The following three concepts and associated search terms were used to conduct the research:

**Table 3:** Search Terms

Ethnic identity	OR	cultur* identity or migration or acculturation or integration or ethnic* or racial or muslim or immigra* or diaspora
AND		
well-being	OR	well-being or resilience or self-esteem or psychological health or mental illness or depression or anxiety or mental health
AND		
Bangla*	OR	South Asian or Pakistan* or Indian or Sikh or Punjab* or Sri Lankan or Hindi or Urdu

A systematic review was conducted on Scopus, Psychnet, Pubmed and Psychinfo between January 2019 and February 2019. In order to strengthen the search, hand-searches, additional electronic sources (e.g., Google Scholar, Taylor and Francis) and snowballing through references of extracted texts were also carried out. The search

terms are presented in Table 3. Terms were kept broad because there were many studies with Bangladeshi participants, but they were grouped under the category of South Asian people. Therefore, studies were assessed to check if the authors specified Bangladeshi population in their methodology.

The exclusion criteria included papers that were based on non-Bangladeshi populations, different clinical groups, or did not explore well-being and ethnic identity, as shown below (Table 4).

**Table 4: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Any generation</li> <li>● Any age group</li> <li>● Any time of migration</li> <li>● Any publication date</li> <li>● Mild to moderate difficulties (including stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms)</li> <li>● Religion/cultural/ethnic identity/acclulturation</li> <li>● Peer reviewed journals</li> <li>● Bangladeshi</li> <li>● British/UK based</li> <li>● Only published in English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Specific health conditions</li> <li>● Neurodevelopmental difficulties</li> <li>● Domestic violence</li> <li>● Substance misuse</li> <li>● From the perspective of health-care providers</li> <li>● Severe mental health difficulties/clinical sample</li> <li>● Non-Bangladeshi populations</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Results

The initial search yielded 7902 results and following a review against the selection criteria, eleven relevant papers were identified; the full process is described in Figure 2. Five were quantitative and six were qualitative. Studies have been numbered from 1-11 and details of each paper can be found in Table 5 (Quantitative) and Table 6 (Qualitative).



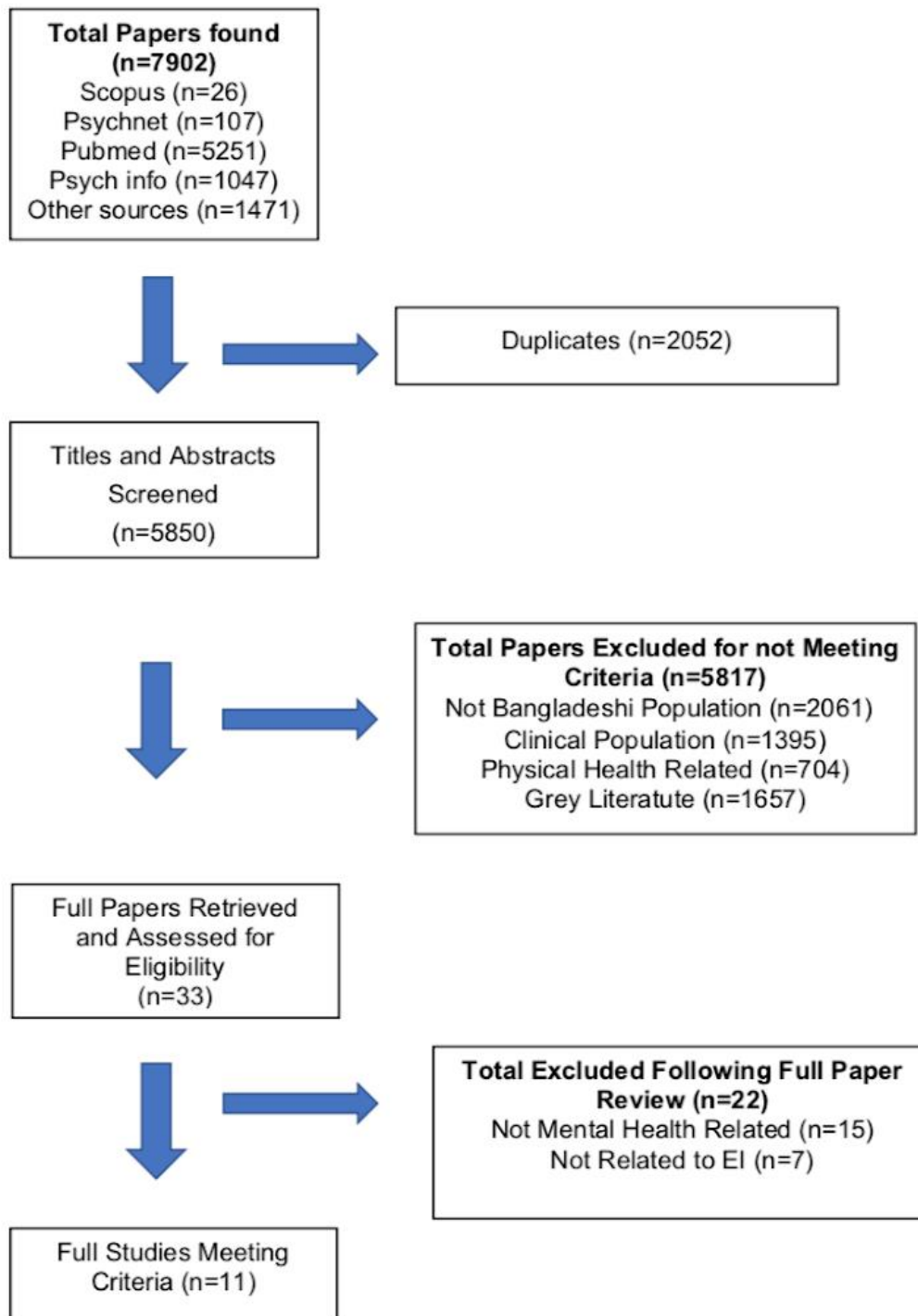


Figure 2: Flowchart of Selection Process

## **2.4 Quality assessment:**

The overall quality of the papers were reviewed using the qualitative and quantitative critical appraisal skills programme (CASP, 2019), see Table 7 and 8. All studies were included despite quality assessment (QA) scores. Each study QA scores are as follows (a breakdown of the scores can be found in table). A further summary can be found in Appendix T.

Overall, it appears that research is very limited in relation to the research question. The quality of the quantitative papers appeared to be of a higher standard than the qualitative studies. Furthermore, the themes that emerged through the synthesis of the qualitative studies were often not the main findings reported by researchers, but rather the ones that emerged from analysing the papers closely. These limitations are discussed further in the summary below.

Table 5: Summary of Quantitative studies

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Aut hors & Date	Bhui, Stansfeld, Head, Haines, Hillier et al (2005)	Quraishi and Evangelii (2007)	Bhui, Khatib, Viner, Kalineberg & Clark et al (2008)	Brown, Baysu, Cameron, Nigbur & Rutland et al (2013)	Nigbur, Brown, Cameron, Hussain & Landau et al (2008)
Participants: Age, Gender, Ethnicity & Generation	2623; 11–14yrs; White (529), White other (116), Mixed (165), Indian (231), Bangladeshi (601), Pakistani (165), Black Caribbean (113), Black African (234), Black British(110). 20% born outside of UK, 2% spoke no/or little English.	77; Female; Asian descent (31 Indian, 14 Pakistani, 8 Bangladeshi; 1 Sri Lankan; 18 Kenyan-Indian); 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation or above.	<b>2001:</b> White British (573); Bangladeshi (682); <b>2003:</b> White British (383); Bangladeshi (517).	215; 5 - 11 years; 110 females; 105 males Indian background (79%) Pakistani (7%), Bangladeshi (4%), Sri Lankan (4%), other (6%). 80% second/later- generation; 20% First generation immigrants to Britain.	386; 5 - 11 years; 198 male; 188 female; 180 white British background, 10% first-generation 43% second or later generations. 42% Indian, 4% Pakistani, 4% Bengali, 2% Sri Lankan, 1% Nepali.
Research design	Cross-sectional	Cohort correlational design	Longitudinal	3-wave longitudinal	Cross-sectional

<b>Method: Sampling, Data Collection, Data Analysis</b>	Purposive sampling; self-report measures; logistic regression	Opportunistic sampling; questionnaires; correlations & multiple regression	Random selection; self-report questionnaire; regression	Purposive sampling; Structured interviews: self-report & teacher ratings; time-lagged regression analysis	Purposive sampling; self-report questionnaires & teacher ratings; ANOVA
<b>Aims</b>	Cultural identity as a risk factor for mental health problems among adolescents.	Assess if cultural identity is related to psychological well-being in British women of Asian descent.	Investigate influence of different cultural identities on the risk of common mental health disorders amongst Bangladeshi and White British pupils.	To what extent do older and younger British Asian children favour "integrationist" acculturation attitudes & how do these children's adaptation outcomes change over the time-course of the study.	Measure acculturation attitudes in young children. Validate Berry's acculturation framework on a child sample by using appropriate bi-dimensional measures.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary of findings</b></p>	<p>Integrated friendship choices confer some advantage for all cultural groups. Bangladeshi and South Asian pupils with integrated friendship choices had lower levels of mental health problems than white pupils. Girls with integrated clothing choices and boys with integrated friendship preferences have fewer mental health problems.</p>	<p>No statistically significant relationship was found. British identity and Asian identity did not make an independent contribution to the overall relationship between identity and psychological well-being.</p>	<p>Bangladeshi pupils preferring traditional clothing are less likely to have MH problems compared to Bangladeshi pupils with equal preference for traditional and non-traditional clothing - sustained only among Bangladeshi girls. Friendship choices showed no prospective associations with later MH problems.</p>	<p>Children generally favoured an “integrationist” attitude, more pronounced among older (8-10 years) than in younger (5-7 years) children. Those holding “integrationist” attitudes showed the steepest temporal increases in social competence and peer acceptance, according to self-report measures. Teacher ratings indicated “integrationist” attitudes had increasing emotional problems at a later time point.</p>	<p>Acculturation attitudes may have some predictive utility – a greater desire for culture maintenance was associated with higher self-esteem in later-generation minority children – but do not witness any specific benefits of an ‘integration’ position.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths and Limitations</b></p>	<p><b>Limitation:</b> Gender and generation not stated. Not considered socioeconomic status for clothing. Limited conceptualisation of ethnic identity. <b>Strength:</b> Large representative Bangladeshi sample</p>	<p><b>Limitation:</b> Only university students. Students were from a mix of South Asian communities <b>Strengths:</b> First study that looked at the relationship between cultural identity and well-being in this population.</p>	<p><b>Limitations:</b> Clothing choices and mental health are complex variables determined by a number of interrelated factors e.g. Poverty, cultural beliefs, gender roles, fashion trends <b>Strengths:</b> Clear aims as well as recruiting a large sample of participants over a longer period of time</p>	<p><b>Limitation:</b> Mixed south Asian populations <b>Strengths:</b> Longitudinal design that recruited at three time points for 215 children.</p>	<p><b>Limitation:</b> Very small Bangladeshi sample (4%) <b>Strengths:</b> Wide range of EI factors considered.</p>

Quality Score	1.91	1.16	1.75	1.7	1.41
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**Table 6: Summary of Qualitative Studies**

	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
Authors & Date	Eade (1994)	Martin (2010)	Hoque (2017)	Mand (2010)	Franceschelli and O'Brien (2015)	Kibria (2008)
Participants: Age, Gender, Ethnicity & Generation	20; 18 – 25yrs; 10 male; 10 female; British Bangladeshi: 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation.	4; 20 – 30yrs; 1 male; 3 female; 1 Bangladeshi; 1 Pakistani; 1 Punjabi; 1 Gujrati	16; 15–19yrs; 9 male; 7 female; Bangladeshi, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Generation.	60; 9-10yrs; Gender and Generation unspecified.	25; 14-19yrs; 12 Girls; 13 Boys; 10 British Bangladeshi; 8 British Pakistani; 7 British Indian; Most 2 <sup>nd</sup> Generation	102; 18 – 68yrs; 51 male; 51 female; Bangladeshi; UK: 18 1 <sup>st</sup> generation; 22 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> generation US: 34 1 <sup>st</sup> generation; 24 1.5/2 <sup>nd</sup> generation

<p><b>Method: Sampling, Data Collection, Data Analysis</b></p>	<p>Opportunistic &amp; snowballing sampling; semi-structured interviews; analysis unclear.</p>	<p>Case studies; Opportunistic sampling;</p>	<p>Snowball sampling; Group and in-depth one-to-one interviews; analysis unclear describes identifying thematic commonalities.</p>	<p>Opportunistic sampling; Several activities including drawing, watching videos, informal inter-viewing as well as game playing in the school playground, lunch hall and in classrooms The children were also given disposable cameras and asked to write a diary during holidays. And interview accounts. All the children were interviewed individually at school using a variety of visual props. Data analysis unspecified.</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews. <i>Thematic approach</i> was used.</p>	<p>Opportunistic sampling &amp; snowball sampling; in-depth interviews; analysis unclear.</p>
<p><b>Aims</b></p>	<p>British Bangladeshi's understanding of their social identity and shaped by national and Muslim belongings.</p>	<p>Investigating the intersection between higher education, language and identity in Britain for ethnic minority graduates.</p>	<p>Examining the lives and multifaceted identity of young Bangladeshis in East London.</p>	<p>Experiences of 'home' from British born Bangladeshi children who are active members of transnational families.</p>	<p>How South Asian young Muslims living in England negotiate between the Muslim and British aspects of their identity.</p>	<p>The growth of revivalist Islam or 'new Islam' within Bangladeshi Muslim migrants in Western societies.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summary of findings</b></p>	<p>British Bangladeshis are caught up in a public debate about national belonging, some insights into construction of hybrid identities are given and how individual identities are maintained in global culture.</p>	<p>UK universities reproduce the monolingual ethos common in much of British Society, either by ignoring the linguistic repertoires of minority students or treating these as problematic.</p>	<p>Migrant story of non-belonging to national British space nor a cultural Bangladeshi community is complicated by language role of religion. Mother tongue and meanings of the hijab are important to identity.</p>	<p>While children identify Sylhet and London as home, the experience of these places differs in accordance with the different social relations, practices and material circumstances.</p>	<p>The experience of living in Britain as a Muslim is a complex experience &amp; young people are having to negotiate, combine multiple and at times contrasting identities</p>	<p>Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain and US see the growth of revivalist Islam to be a response to the growing salience of Muslim as a public identity.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths and Limitations</b></p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> A British Bangladeshi interviewed the participants, could have strengthened the relationship between interviewer and participants. Well written and strong introduction explaining constructs. <b>Limitations:</b> Poor analysis, limitations of study not discussed</p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> The paper is clearly written. <b>Limitation:</b> 1 case story so difficult to generalize. Analysis is also unclear.</p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> Focus group and individual interviews to enable in-depth exploration. Setting was considered for participants comfort. Well written article. <b>Limitation:</b> limitations not discussed in study, researcher effect also not discussed. Researcher ethnicity not disclosed</p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> Methodology enabled children to express experiences using several tools <b>Limitation:</b> Data analysis unspecified, sampling is also limited to one area and lacks generalisability</p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> large sample for qualitative research, Researcher position considered. <b>Limitation:</b> mixing south Asian groups hard to generalise</p>	<p><b>Strength:</b> Several contextual factors considered. Fieldwork has meant that a wide range of participants over an extended time, parallel networks for snowball sampling so wide range of participants <b>Limitation:</b> Researcher position not considered and analysis not clear, ethnic not discussed</p>



Quality Score	1.16	1	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3
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**Table 7: Quality Assessment for Quantitative studies**

Study ID	Did the study address a clearly focused issue?	Was the cohort recruited in an acceptable way?	Was the exposure accurately measured to minimise bias?	Was the outcome accurately measured to minimise bias?	Have the authors identified all important confounding factors?	Have they taken account of the confounding factors in the design and/or analysis?	Was the follow up of subjects complete enough?	Was the follow up of subjects long enough?	What are the results of this study?	How precise are the results?	Do you believe the results?	Can the results be applied to the local population?	Do the results of this study fit with other available evidence?	What are the implications of this study for practice?
S1 (QA score 1.91)	2	2	2	2	1	2	x	x	2	2	2	2	2	2
S2 (QA score 1.16)	2	1	1	1	1	2	x	x	2	2	0	1	0	1
S3 (QA score 1.75)	2	2	2	2	1	1	x	x	2	2	2	2	1	2
S4(QA score 1.42)	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2

S5 (QA score 1.41)	2	2	2	2	1	1	x	x	2	1	1	1	1	1
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**0 = no; 1 = somewhat; 2 = yes; x= not applicable**

**Table 8: Quality Assessment for Qualitative studies**

Study ID	Is there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	Is there a clear statement of findings?	How valuable is the research?
S6 (QA score 1.00)	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2
S7 (QA score 0.60)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
S8 (QA score 1.40)	2	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	1	2
S9 (QA score 1.10)	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	1
S10 (QA score 1.30)	2	2	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	2

S11 (QA score 1.20)	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	2
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**0 = No; 1 = Somewhat; 2 = Yes**

## 2.5 Themes identified across the papers

### 2.5.1 Process of synthesis

Themes were developed through firstly carefully reading each study and extracting all the relevant information (Table 5 and Table 6). The next step then involved 'Zooming out' from each study and providing a more 'conceptual overview' (see Baumeister and Leary, 1997 as cited in Siddaway, Wood & Hedges, 2019). Key concepts and findings from each study were grouped together and critiqued according to the study's quality, methodology and conceptual issues. In order to provide context, each theme is discussed alongside brief descriptions of each study's conclusions, sample, method, and specific findings and the strength of the evidence in relation to the research question (Baumeister and Leary, 1997 as cited in Siddaway, Wood & Hedges, 2019).

Four themes were constructed across the papers, in relation to the research question, that have been detailed below.

**Table 9: Themes Identified from Systematic Review of Quantitative and Qualitative papers**

<b>Theme 1</b>	The importance of Bangladeshi identity and its impact on well-being.
<b>Theme 2</b>	'Integration' and bringing ethnic identity into public spaces and its impact on well-being.
<b>Theme 3</b>	Discrimination, well-being and sense of belonging.
<b>Theme 4</b>	Islamic identity and well-being.

### **2.5.1.1 Theme 1: The importance of Bangladeshi identity and its impact on well-being**

Many of the studies discussed the various ways in which individuals develop and maintain their Bangladeshi identity and the impact this has on their well-being. For example, S6, a qualitative study in east London interviewed twelve first-generation and eight second-generation British Bangladeshi participants aged 18-25. The author aimed to get an understanding of how identity was being constructed by this population and overall findings suggested that there was much variation between participants. The authors described the British Bangladeshi population as continuously 'heart-searching' (S6 p.390) as they search for belonging within the British, Bangladeshi and Islamic community. They add that the political context in both countries (racism in Britain or unstable government in Bangladesh), family relationships in Britain and in Bangladesh can have an influence over this experience, for instance by either strengthening their Bangladeshi identity or at times creating confusion for them. Despite the authors not commenting on any generational differences on the impact of EI on well-being, it appeared that first-generation participants had a stronger sense of belonging to Bangladesh, in contrast to second-generation participants who appeared to have a less sense of belonging anywhere which can effectively impact on their psychological well-being.

Similarly, S11, a qualitative study set in Britain and the United states, aimed to understand the growth of Islam within the younger generation. As part of a wider sample, 44 British Bangladeshis were interviewed and ages ranged from 18-68 and included both first- and second-generation British Bangladeshis. Findings from this study suggest that British Bangladeshi young people were more likely to engage with

their Islamic identity rather than their Bangladeshi or British identity. The author discussed how the first generation of British Bangladeshi parents work hard to maintain the Bangladeshi identity in Britain, but are then being faced with resistance from the younger generations who appear to be more interested in Islam, which at times contradicts Bangladeshi cultural practices. This shift in cultural practice appears to impact the relationship between generations, which can also be argued as having an impact on the well-being of both generations.

In contrast; S9 a qualitative study investigated 9 and 10-year-old second-generation British Bangladeshi participants' sense of belonging in Bangladesh and Britain. Researchers reported that for this group of participants, Bangladesh and Britain appeared to be equally important for this group; *"I've got two houses. One in Bangladesh and one in London"* (pg.273). Both identities appear meaningful in different ways. This study also highlighted the role of family relationships and how they appear to play a dominant role in the development of their Bangladeshi identities. However, authors do draw attention to the social context of the children's lives; the study was set in one of the most deprived boroughs in London. The authors discussed how living circumstances can inform what is experienced as 'home' (pg. 285) for ethnic minority children; appearing to be the only study that considered socio-economic status and how that can have an influence on the sense of belonging.

Another aspect of Bangladeshi identity and EI that appeared to be important to this population is the Bangla language, S7 and S8 discuss this importance for their participants. In S7, the central discussion was regarding the experience of higher

education and minority status and its influence on identity. This is presented through four cases of second-generation young adults from minority communities. Overall findings suggest a lack of opportunities to bring EI into an academic space, which appeared to negatively impact the well-being of minority students. One of the British Bangladeshi participants discussed the importance of the *Sylheti* language for him and how this enables him to build relationships within his community but acknowledged that it was not recognised professionally. In S8, the Bangla language was a central theme within the wider study and was seen as an important part of the third-generation populations' identity. This qualitative study interviewed 16 third generation British Bangladeshi between the ages of 15-19 and investigated how identity was being constructed by this population. Some reported that speaking in Bangla felt more comfortable when socialising with peers, whilst for others it was identified as 'backwards' and 'useless' (p.188) and not worth investing in as it does not help them progress professionally and financially. For those who had predominantly Bangla speaking family members, speaking the Bengali language provides them with a practical resource, enabling communication and developing personal relationships. Authors suggested that the importance of Bangla in later generations of young people appears to be changing and creating confusion. They appear to have internalised the importance of English for professional progression; meanwhile many also appear to want to invest in the Bangla language but appear to be removed from a 'Bengali-speaking linguistic community' (p. 187), as often their parents and social circles use English to communicate.

In S6, authors discussed how racism was experienced in Britain by marginalised communities thus weakening their national ties to Britain. Authors suggested that the

experience of racism can at times strengthen individual's relationship to their mother-land. However, given that the majority of participants in S6 were first-generation British Bangladeshi's, it is possible that their ties to Bangladesh may differ to that of later generations making it easier for them to identify with their Bangladeshi identity. Whereas for later generations, that access is not as easy, therefore may create more confusion

In summary, it appears that there are differences between generations in how the Bangladeshi identity is being developed and maintained. It seemed that a strong Bangladeshi identity was evident in the first-generation migrants (S11 and S6) and less so in the second-generation population (S9, S7 & S11). In contrast, third-generation population (S8) appear to be experiencing more of a confusion about the importance of their EI - specifically the Bangla language. Context appears to play a large role in the formation of EI (S9). If we return to the idea that belonging is beneficial for well-being, these studies are suggesting that a connection to the Bangladeshi identity can be useful for well-being as this population appears to be at risk of being rejected in Britain, which will be discussed further below. It can be assumed that the impact of the Bangladeshi identity on well-being may differ between generations, and different practices such as language may be becoming less necessary for newer generations. However, many have suggested its usefulness as a means of creating and maintaining stronger relationships with others within the community which may also enhance well-being.



### **2.5.1.2 Theme 2: 'Integration' and ethnic identity and its impact on well-being**

In total, seven studies (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S7 & S11) have demonstrated the ways in which individuals from the British Bangladeshi population have attempted to live in line with their ethnic and British identity and how this has impacted their well-being. Two studies (S1 and S3) investigate integration<sup>3</sup> in adolescents, based on friendship choices and clothing preferences, related to well-being outcomes. S1 carried out a cross-sectional survey on 2623 adolescents aged 11-14 and found that Bangladeshi adolescents whose friendship groups comprised of both individuals from their own cultural background and the host culture, demonstrated fewer mental health difficulties (Brøndbo, Mathiassen, Martinussen, Heiervang & Eriksen, 2011). This suggests that 'integration' may be a positive resource or protective factor. Conversely, a longitudinal study (S3), investigated 682 British Bangladeshi pupils (aged 11-14) in 2001 and 2003 and found no significant relationship between friendship choices and mental health outcomes. Therefore, it can be argued that the positive effects of integrated friendship choices are not sustainable over a prolonged period of time.

S1 found that girls who wore both traditional and western clothing and boys who made assimilated clothing choices (preference for western clothing) had fewer psychological difficulties. However these effects were not statistically significant. Conversely, S3 findings revealed that Bangladeshi girls who preferred their own

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<sup>3</sup> Both authors used the same definition for 'integration' this was based on Berry's acculturation model (2005) which was outlined in the introduction. It is also worth noting that both studies were conducted in East London, where there is a high Bangladesh population, which may not be generalisable to other locations where British Bangladeshis may be part of the minority population.

traditional clothing were likely to have fewer future mental health difficulties, compared to those with integrated clothing choices. The S3 authors cautioned that clothing may not be an appropriate measure of cultural identity and integration, due to various factors e.g. financial and gender expectations (in some cultures boys and men are expected to wear western clothing and women and girls feel pressured by society to keep up with changing demands of fashion).

S4, a one-year longitudinal study on children, looks more broadly at integration attitudes as well as own cultural maintenance in children, the latter was measured by their desire to learn traditional language, eat traditional food, celebrate traditional events and listen to traditional music. Integration attitude was measured by views on eating with, playing with and befriending their white counterparts; and results demonstrated that, eight to eleven year olds demonstrated more preference for integration whilst the five to seven year olds demonstrated a preference for 'separation'<sup>4</sup> (e.g. low desire for integration). These findings suggest that desire for integration with the dominant culture may be a developmental experience that changes with time and maturity. Those with 'integrationist' preferences showed improvement in social skills and peer acceptance, however this was not sustained long-term, compared to other preferences (but not significantly). In the long term, S4 found that according to teacher ratings 6 months later, children with "integrationist" attitudes had increasing emotional problems e.g. described as "clingy" and "scared"(p.1663). These findings contradict earlier studies that suggest integration leads to better mental health. Although 'integrationist' attitude was linked to enhanced social skills and perceived peer acceptance, this did not necessarily

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<sup>4</sup> Separation based on Berry's acculturation model as discussed in the introduction.

mean positive mental health. Instead, it is portrayed by authors as a 'two-edged sword' where children could face increased social challenges by actively seeking to "integrate" with the majority while attempting to preserve parts of their cultural heritage.

In contrast, S5 found no evidence for an association between the 'integration' strategy and the best psychological outcomes in a sample of 386 five to eleven year old male and female children from both white British backgrounds and South Asian backgrounds. The study investigated acculturation attitudes and how this correlated with self-esteem and classroom behaviour; results showed no specific benefits of an 'integration' approach amongst British South Asian children. Cultural maintenance was associated with higher self-esteem, but without the desire for intergroup contact.

S5 found that British Asian children who were first generation, demonstrated lower self-esteem when they perceived that maintaining their culture was encouraged by the host country. In contrast, later-generations demonstrated the opposite effect, where the encouragement of culture maintenance positively affected their self-esteem, suggesting that experiences may differ across generations. The study also found that mental health difficulties were also likely to be found in the first generation children. Due to the pressures of learning a new language, first generation children may experience more difficulties in communicating their needs.

So far, the majority of studies have investigated children or adolescent participants; S2 recruited 77 second generation, young adult south Asian women. Its

aim was to investigate whether navigating between two identities (south Asian identity and British identity) could have a negative impact on well-being. The results, however, found no relationship between navigating between identities and its overall impact on well-being. Authors from S2 concluded that conflicting cultural identities may not create negative consequences for young second generation British Asian women. Conversely, navigating between the two worlds may actually be beneficial for this group as, by having a sense of belonging to both cultural backgrounds, they may then have more freedom to choose which values and belief systems they intend to integrate into their life.

To summarise, the research studies that have investigated 'integration' and well-being (in particular mental health) within South Asian participants (including British Bangladeshis) appear to demonstrate many contradictions. Some studies have demonstrated that integration can be positive for mental health (S1). Traditional western lens has often portrayed integration as more beneficial for ethnic minority communities (Bowskill, Lyons & Coyle, 2007) however as demonstrated in these findings (S3 and S5), better well-being can at times be achieved without a desire to integrate. In instances where gender was controlled for, findings again appeared contradictory (S1 and S3); S4 demonstrated that the desire for integration attitudes may be developed through age, and maturity and integration, and this was linked to emotional difficulties reported by teachers.

These findings should be considered alongside a number of other factors that may have influenced the conflicting results, for example Bangladeshis had been

combined with other South Asian groups (S4, S5 & S2), making it difficult to generalise these findings. S1, S3, S4 and S5 all appeared to share the same meaning for integration; but the researchers appeared to measure different types of cultural behaviours e.g., using choice of clothing (S3, S1 & S5) friendship (S1 and S5) food (S1 and S5) and language (S7 and S5). Using different measuring tools may have also influenced findings, making it difficult to make accurate comparisons between studies. Integration is a highly political construct; often promoted as the desired behaviour from individuals, it is also possible that children may have responded to questions that they assumed researchers wanted to hear, especially if researchers were outside of their community. Finally, there appeared to be a lack of researcher reflexivity throughout studies, and how their position as either an insider or outsider may have had an impact on what was disclosed by participants.

### **2.5.1.3 Theme 3: Discrimination, well-being and sense of belonging**

Despite the fact that discrimination was beyond the primary aim of any of the studies; five of the six qualitative studies discussed participants' experiences and impact of discrimination, microaggressions and misunderstandings from individuals on their well-being (S6, S7, S8, S10 & S11). In S6, first generation participants discussed not having a sense of belonging to Britain due to factors such as racism and other forms of discrimination leading them to invest more in their Islamic identity.

In S8, participants voluntarily shared experiences of discrimination and how this has had an impact on their well-being; many participants discussed how their Bangladeshi identity was being rejected at school. The authors suggest that

systematically eliminating a group's mother tongue is an act of 'symbolic violence' (p.88) against minority communities. The third-generation were beginning to internalise that their mother-tongue would not be useful for financial progression and cultural capitals, although they recognised that this mother tongue, offered a connection to their 'culture and identity' (p.189). The authors discussed how putting on pressure on young people to reject their mother-tongue and other parts of their cultural identity, is putting them at risk of not belonging to either the British society or their own community which makes the development of their identity even more complicated.

A similar experience of discrimination was identified in S10, which also interviewed a similar age group of participants (14-19), their sample included 25 South Asian teenagers, which included ten British Bangladeshi participants. The study aimed to understand how this generation negotiated between their Muslim and British identities; findings suggest this is influenced by a number of factors including gender, parental values and family relationships. One participant discusses how 'hurt' she feels by the negative narratives and her use of the words 'they' and 'ours', suggesting that she feels removed and rejected from mainstream society. A limitation of the study is the lack of emphasis on the impact of well-being as a result of experiences of discrimination.

Participants in S8 and S10 also describe their experiences of being discriminated against in relation to their Muslim identity and how this also makes it difficult for them to practice Islam in both public and professional spaces, threatening their sense of safety and their ability to form relationships with those outside of their community. Participants

from both studies discussed the many layers of discrimination, encountered at school, with peers and teachers.

Many of the authors put forward arguments and recommendations for a society that is more accepting of multiculturalism. S8 particularly offered rich and specific ways in which systems can create change to help enhance the mental health of third-generation British Bangladeshi people. A major limitation appears to be the lack of reflexivity from many of the authors. Only in S6 does the author identify himself as an outsider to the British Bangladeshi community, and therefore requested a person from within the community to support with the development of the interview schedule, recruitment and the conducting of interviews. However, it is not clear if this person was involved during the analysis stage and was also not included as an author for the study despite their apparent involvement and contribution to the study. This raises questions regarding the ethics of community involvement and lack of recognition. The remaining studies do not give any information about how the authors identified themselves, raising questions regarding how comfortable and open participants may have felt about disclosing their experiences of discrimination. Thirdly, despite these publications identifying themselves as qualitative studies, only S10 discussed the methodological approach used to analyse the data collected (thematic analysis).

To summarise, the consensus is that the British Bangladeshi population are at frequent risk of being discriminated against and marginalised from mainstream society. This has negative consequences on the sense of belonging for this population, posing risks to their well-being.

#### 2.5.1.4 Theme 4: Islamic identity and well-being

Despite the challenging socio-political context for Muslims in Britain, Islamic identity was also mentioned as a useful resource for participants. For example, in S8, multiple meanings of wearing 'hijab<sup>5</sup>' were discussed. The participants' reasons for wearing the hijab differed greatly. Some mentioned religious beliefs, fashion, community, culture, privacy, space, freedom, power, respect, confidence, modesty and a way of protecting themselves against male harassment. Some mentioned 'pleasing parents' (p.190), lower costs for clothing and 'spending less time on grooming hair' (p.190). Hijab was identified as 'an important part of who I am...my identity and my personality. I'm lost without it' (p.190). The authors reflected on times when the young participants in the study demonstrated challenging what seemed to be patriarchal traditions in wider society and also within their Bangladeshi culture. Similarly, in S10, participants emphasised the hijab as 'choice' and as 'empowering' because it enabled them to be viewed beyond their 'appearance and with respect' (p.705).

In S11 authors discuss the role of the local community (local mosques and other Islamic groups) that encourage the younger generation to get involved, to learn about religion and then collectively make agreements about which Bangladeshi practices are not in line with Islamic teachings. Similarly, in S6 many of the participants disclosed their sense of belonging towards Islam. Individuals put this down to the fact that anyone who identifies as Muslim can be part of that community and it doesn't matter where people come from.

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<sup>5</sup> Within the study, the hijab was referred to as a personal choice of women's dress code related to the loose covering of the body apart from the face and hands



In summary it appears that across these studies, the Islamic identity is a resourceful identity that gives participants a sense of belonging and acceptance (S8, S10, S11 & S6). Authors in S6, S8 and S11 have related this back to the experiences of living in Britain and being rejected, therefore seeking spaces where they can belong, which as discussed above may positively impact well-being.

## **2.6 Summary**

This systematic literature review explored the question: *What are the experiences of EI and well-being in British Bangladeshi people?* It identified four themes: the importance Bangladeshi identity and the impact on well-being; 'integration' and ethnic identity and its impact on well-being; discrimination, well-being and sense of belonging; and Islamic identity and well-being. These studies suggest differences between generations, age groups and genders in how the Bangladeshi identity is being developed and maintained. Many of the researchers predicted that this rejection leads the later generations to invest in their Islamic identity (S6, S8 & S11), which participants have described as being a space where they have a sense of belonging and acceptance (S8, S10, S11 & S6).

## **2.7 Gaps in literature and rationale for current study**

Despite the useful findings from the literature synthesis, it seems clear that the research investigating the link between EI and well-being in British Bangladeshi people is limited. Very few of the qualitative studies appear to have stated ethnic identity as a primary aim, or have explicitly investigated the experience of it and its relation to the well-being of the British Bangladeshi population as opposed to South Asians.

As demonstrated in the quality appraisal, the qualitative studies appear to have a number of limitations often methodology and analysis were not clearly stated or critiqued. Furthermore, it appeared that researchers often used narrow definitions of EI (e.g. clothing) and of well-being (often referring to just mental health). As suggested, 'integration' is a political term and assumptions regarding it may have coloured the researchers approach. There also appears to be a lack of researcher reflections and reflexivity and it is unclear whether the research has been conducted by researchers inside or outside of the British Bangladeshi community.

Research is currently very dated; only two studies have been published since 2011; the only study focusing on third-generation British Bangladeshis was a qualitative study investigating the experiences of adolescents (S8). Very few of the studies have considered the experiences of working age adults and this is not representative of the current third-generation perspective. Finally, none of the studies included in this review appear to have been conducted from a clinical psychology perspective and given the issues highlighted, many implications for clinical psychological practices are evident.

Therefore, this study will focus on the experiences of EI in third-generation British Bangladeshis and its relation to their well-being. This study will also consider wider definitions of well-being and EI to help reduce any previous assumptions. Finally, insider knowledge of the Bangladeshi community will be used to help inform this research, which is discussed further in the following chapter.

## **2.8 Research aims and questions**

This study aimed to explore the importance of EI and well-being in the lives of third-generation British Bangladeshis.

The two research questions were as follows:

- How do this population experience their EI?
- How does this relate to their well-being?

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Overview

I will begin by describing the use of thematic analysis (TA) to explore the importance of EI in the lives of third-generation British Bangladeshis. I will then detail the process of recruitment, explain the choice of semi-structured interviews to gather data, and detail ethical procedures undertaken. Next, the data analysis process will be discussed, providing examples of how transcripts were analysed. Finally, the procedures ensuring the quality of the results will be described.

#### 3.2 Design

This study was a thematic analysis of individual semi-structured interviews with participants who identified as third-generation British Bangladeshis living in London. As stated in the introduction, a critical realist epistemology was selected.

#### 3.3 Choice of a qualitative design

Through staying as close to individuals' experience as possible, qualitative techniques aim to understand individuals' lived experiences (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999) "in great detail" (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2008, p.263). A qualitative methodology enables researchers to apply an intersectional lens, where the multi-dimensional experiences of a person's life, how they view the world and "navigate their day-to-day experiences of power and privilege" (McCall, 2005, as cited in Hunting, 2014, p.1) is considered. Qualitative findings can be used to challenge dominant narratives about marginalised populations (Dumka, Gonzales, Wood & Formoso, 1998).

### **3.4 Choice of thematic analysis**

Braun and Clarke (2006)'s methodology for TA was employed in this study. TA refers to an extensive method of identifying and analysing patterns of meaning within the collected data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is suitable for obtaining an understanding of how a group may conceptualise the phenomena being explored (Joffe, 2012).

TA is also not attached to any pre-existing theoretical framework (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Therefore, it might be viewed as a 'contextualist' method, located between the two poles of realism and constructionism, in line with theories such as critical realism: this study's epistemological position (Willig, 1999). The critical realist epistemological position acknowledges the study of 'persons-in-context' (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006 p.109). TA enables researchers to both reflect and unravel the surface of a group's interpretation of their reality (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Additionally, TA enables a larger sample size than other qualitative methodologies; and thus, to look deeply at themes between all participants who met the study criteria.

### **3.5 Consideration of alternative methodologies**

While designing the study, I considered other qualitative approaches, such as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith and Osborn, 2004) was also deemed unsuitable, as it uses a smaller sample size – yet the aim of this study was to look at themes shared between the participants rather than provide an in-depth focus on each of their individual lived experiences.

Narrative Analysis (NA) explores the stories that people tell and the way in which

they tell them (Riessman, 2008). There is a focus on which stories are privileged over others (Wells, 2011). Although this could have been useful here, participants may have felt inclined to portray certain narratives due to issues of racism and Islamophobia. While acknowledging the importance of this, it was not the primary aim of this study. Moreover, NA largely encourages the researcher to keep accounts as wholes, rather than dividing them into factors, which means that the analysis is more sensitive to participants' fluctuating experiences. Within this study, I was interested in identifying commonalities across participants, through the idea of shared themes. Therefore, TA was deemed most appropriate.

### **3.6 Data Collection via Individual Interviews: Design and Pilot**

In qualitative studies, the most commonly used technique is the semi-structured interview format (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). A key benefit is that it enables an exchange between the researcher and participant (Galletta, 2013); the flexibility allows for improvisation and useful follow-up questions (Hardon and Hodgkin, 2004; Rubin and Rubin, 2005; Polit and Beck, 2010), and is not expected to be followed strictly. It allows the researcher to cover the main areas of the study (Taylor, 2005) and explore the research area in a similar way with each participant (Holloway and Wheeler 2010). Details of the interview schedule are provided below.

### **3.7 Participation criteria**

Inclusion and exclusion criteria as set out in Table 10 ensured a degree of sample homogeneity amongst potential participants. This enabled investigation of the study aims amongst participants with similar characteristics.

The participants were British Bangladeshis born in Britain and currently lived in and around London. In order to qualify as third-generation, participants' parents needed to be born in the UK or have moved there at a very young age with grandparents or caregivers. There is a variety of dialects within the Bangladeshi language (mainstream Bangla, otherwise known as Shuddo Bangla and Sylheti Bangla). Therefore, to ensure homogeneity, it was decided that given the UK demographics featured a higher population of Sylheti-speaking British Bangladeshis, a focus on this population would be appropriate. No age was specified; but during the initial telephone call, this was discussed on a case-by-case basis.

**Table 10: Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Inclusion	Exclusion
Family heritage from Bangladesh (on both sides of the family)	Born and raised in Bangladesh
Identify as Sylheti British Bangladeshi	Raised outside of Britain
Born in the UK	Currently experiencing any severe mental health difficulties
At least one parent/caregiver who was either born in the UK or came to the UK during childhood.	
18 years or older	

### 3.8 Service user consultation

A total of five pilot interviews were conducted with members of the British Bangladeshi community; a sample of the transcripts can be found in the Appendix I. The pilot interviewees were not included as participants for this study. Following the pilot interviews, consultations took place with each of the participants. Here, the study's aims and rationale were discussed, and pilot participants were invited to give their feedback. Participants agreed that a study of this generation's experience of living in Britain was

important and would contribute to healthcare professionals' understanding. Consultants also agreed that they had personally experienced a difference between the generations and felt this was also not well understood by professionals. Some consultants reflected on how hard it can be to talk about the micro-aggressions they experience in the UK, as they have felt socialised into never voicing these concerns; and hence, at times, feel immune to them. This contributed to the development of debriefing materials for participants.

### **3.9 Recruitment**

Fifteen participants were recruited through snowball sampling, "a distinct method of convenience sampling. This method is commonly used to locate, access and involve participants from specific populations in cases where the researcher anticipates difficulties in creating a representative sample of the research population" (Cohen and Arieli, 2011, p. 426). Snowball sampling is beneficial for hard-to-reach populations (Cornelius and Skinner, 2008; Wyatt and Silvester, 2015). Initial participants were contacted through various social networking platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and identified through personal contacts. Participants who took part in this study were not known to me personally and as detailed below, confidentiality was discussed with each individual.

### **3.10 Participants**

A total of 15 participants were recruited. Participants were a mix of both males (n=7) and females (n=8); all those who volunteered met the inclusion criteria. Participants' age range was 18-30 (m = 24). All participants were either currently in higher education or educated to university level. All participants also identified



themselves as Muslim. Four participants had completed postgraduate studies in their respective fields. Professions included one teaching assistant, two teachers, two retail workers, two university students, three lawyers, a business owner, two people simultaneously involved in social media, and two civil servants. All participants had at least one parent who had migrated to the UK during childhood. Pseudonyms have been used for each participant.

**Table 11: Participation demographics**

Participant identifier	Gender	Age
Bilal	Male	26
Kadeer	Male	22
Madeeha	Female	27
Roxana	Female	22
Haroon	Male	29
Jasmine	Female	21
Koplona	Female	28
Noor	Male	22
Dania	Female	24
Salman	Male	27
Chadiya	Female	19
Anaaya	Female	25
Tajeem	Male	18
Ibrahim	Male	26
Zahreen	Female	25

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

#### **3.11.1 Ethical approval**

An application for ethical approval was submitted and approved by the University of Hertfordshire's Ethics Board (Appendix A). An amendment to change the methodology for the study was submitted and granted (Appendix B). The Code of Human Research Ethics (British Psychological Society, 2014) was used as a guide to ensure ethical conduct. A change of circumstances required a further amendment to change the secondary supervisor for the study, this was submitted and granted (Appendix C).

#### **3.11.2 Informed consent**

Prior to all interviews, participants were emailed or given an information sheet clarifying the aims of the study, what participation would comprise, confidentiality, how their data would be stored, any benefits and risks, and informing them of their right to withdraw (Appendix D).

Prior to the interview, each participant received a phone call to discuss the information sheet and give them an opportunity to ask questions or decline to participate. They were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary. No participants declined at this point. Finally, prior to starting the interview, all participants signed a consent form (Appendix E).

During the phone call, I disclosed to participants that I am British Bangladeshi. I disclosed growing up in London and being bilingual. This sort of disclosure of personal information was aimed at developing a rapport with participants that facilitated the

sharing of sensitive information. There was also hope that this would both help promote a level of trust between us and address the power dynamic between myself as the interviewer and any interviewee: which can involve one person doing more of the asking (or taking) and the other doing the telling (giving) (Homewood,2015).

Following the interview, a debrief was carried out with each participant in order to reflect and process what was talked about. Details on local support services, and out of hours support service contact information, were provided to participants following completion of the interviews (Appendix F).

### **3.11.3 Confidentiality**

All data collected in this study and participant identifiable information was anonymised and stored electronically in password protected conditions to ensure confidentiality. Participants were informed that their information would be kept confidential unless there was a concern for their safety. Audio was recorded on an encrypted audio device kept in a locked drawer; all files were removed once they had been uploaded electronically to the computer. Participants were informed that recordings would be kept for 5 years and then destroyed. The data collected was managed in line with the Data Protection Act (The Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport, 2018).

### **3.11.4 Possibility of distress and prevention of harm**

The research interviews required participants to talk about experiences of discrimination. Given the worldwide negative associations with Islam, there was a risk that the research interviews might trigger feelings of distress for participants. As a

result, it was made clear that participants had a right to withdraw, take a break or decline to answer any questions. I utilised my clinical skills as a Trainee Clinical Psychologist in creating a containing space.

Participants were reminded that their participation was entirely voluntary. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study, that all copies of the audio and transcript files would be deleted and reminded that their data was anonymised.

If they became distressed in relation to the content of the interview, they were given the details of support services in a debrief sheet (Appendix F) which covered a large geographical area, meaning that participants from varying regions could access support.

### **3.12 Data Collection**

#### **3.12.1 Devising the interview schedule**

In response to the apparent lack of uniform, global guidance on how to develop a semi-structured interview guide, Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson and Kangasniemi (2016) produced a rigorous tool, following an in-depth, systematic review of the literature. The following five-phase guide was used to develop this study's interview schedule. The following five-phase guide was used to develop this study's interview schedule (details on how this was followed can be found in Appendix U).

- 1. Identifying the prerequisites for using semi-structured interviews.*
- 2. Retrieving and using previous knowledge.*
- 3. Formulating the preliminary semi-structured interview guide.*

*4. Pilot testing the interview guide.*

*5. Presenting the complete semi-structured interview guide.*

### **3.12.2 The interview process**

Interviews were either carried out face-to-face at a community centre in Central London or over the telephone. A benefit of offering phone interviews is that participants would not be required to travel, reducing the amount of effort and time necessary. Moreover, it is easier to contact hard to reach populations; and allows people to discuss sensitive material in a place where they feel safe (Mann and Stewart, 2000). A disadvantage of telephone interviews is lack of social cues (i.e. eye contact and body language), which may prevent the possibility of more detailed information (Mann and Stewart, 2000). Participants were given the choice of which method was more suitable for them and told that they could terminate the interview at any time.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 70 minutes. The interview schedule was used flexibly to facilitate the participants in determining the direction of the interview. Specific questions in the form of prompts were asked in response to material raised by the participants. At the end of the interviews, participants were thanked for their time and given the opportunity to ask questions.

### **3.12.3 Insider researcher**

As most diversity research is conducted by white researchers, a researcher from an ethnic minority background is considered beneficial in encouraging openness among ethnic minority participants (Kenny and Briner, 2010). This was considered alongside dangers of in-group over-familiarity (Atewologun and Singh, 2010). During interviews, I

endeavoured to remain aware of any personal biases by trying not to follow up on topics that interested me personally due to my similarities with participants. Instead, I kept in mind the relevance of discussions to the overall research aims.

My role as someone similar to my participants could enable more complete acceptance by them (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009) – yet some may have assumed that if our experiences were so similar, there was no need for them to explain their personal lived experiences (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

Throughout the study, I employed supervision and a reflective diary (a sample can be found in Appendix M) to challenge my personal prejudices and assumptions (Atewologun and Singh, 2010). However, in qualitative research, holding a completely neutral stance, free from the researcher's own perspective is essentially impossible (Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999). I discuss the strengths and limitations of my role as an insider in chapter 5.

#### **3.12.4 Data recording and transcription**

All interviews were audio recorded using an encrypted Dictaphone. Audio recordings were either transcribed by myself or through the use of a professional transcription service, which also signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix R). The accuracy of the transcriptions was checked by myself and my external supervisor through cross-referencing with the audio recordings before they were destroyed.

#### **3.13 Data analysis**

Braun and Clarke's (2006) description of TA was used to analyse the data. An

inductive “bottom up” strategy was used to develop themes and stay true to the data whilst attempting to minimise any of my own theoretical interests, or from a coding frame (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Though the interview schedule was developed based on the research regarding EI and acculturation and its benefits on mental health, effort was made to ensure that the data was not actively interpreted through this perspective, so that I was able to identify the lived experiences of the participants. I was, as we have seen, aware that my assumptions and biases would have an influence over the study (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In order to minimise this bias, various methods were put in place, described below.

The TA approach encouraged me to focus at a latent level, which suggests that the researcher should interpret data outside the explicit ‘surface’ level, and consider any implicit concepts, beliefs, and assumptions that may have influenced the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). TA enables the critical realist stance taken in this study. It is assumed that from the data collected, we can gain an insight into the participants’ motives and experiences - while acknowledging that the phenomena under study are located within a socio-cultural context in which there are existing narratives about racism, as well as Islamophobia, which may impact the experiences of the participants in this research, as well as my own interpretations. Therefore, a reflexive stance was imperative throughout the research process.

Braun and Clarke (2006) explain six phases of completing a TA. How this has been applied in this research project has been detailed below. Working through the phases in a linear fashion was a challenging task; at times, this involved returning to previous stages before moving onto the next. Below, I have given an outline of the

overall data analysis journey.

**Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data.** In order to be “immersed” within the data, the transcript was read and re-read (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This process allowed the data to become very familiar. The use of a reflective log allowed the identification of any ideas or patterns noted for their potential codes or themes.

**Phase 2: Generating initial codes.** The coding process was split into several parts. Initially, all 15 transcripts were coded by hand in a line-by-line approach, to help stay as genuine to the text as possible. This process enabled the codes derived from the text to be as data-driven as possible (Appendix Q). These were then transferred to Nvivo (Appendix O). Investigator triangulation (Foster, 2012) was employed during the coding phase to help improve the validity of the research and control for my own biases. An independent researcher was requested to independently code 8 transcripts; this was then compared to my own codes, to check for any differences. These were then discussed with my external supervisor, to check the credibility of the coding (Tracy, 2010).

**Phase 3: Searching for themes.** This next phase involved the employment of a wider lens, and looking at the data from a broader, thematic level (Braun and Clarke, 2006). At this stage, mind maps (Appendix J) were formed to experiment with different groupings of codes and start constructing themes from the data. Many similarities and differences between the themes were noted. An initial thematic map of the themes and subthemes can be found in Appendix K.



**Phase 4: Reviewing themes.** Subsequently, I reviewed the themes more broadly to see if they were reflective of the codes and the story of the dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and whether they were clearly distinguishable from one another. Several changes were made to the themes and sub-themes at this stage while forming a consistent narrative. Following this, the dataset was re-read as a whole, to check the validity of the themes.

**Phase 5: Defining and naming themes.** Subsequently, the themes identified were defined and refined to make sure that the “essence” of the theme was reflective of the data story (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 66). As part of this process, the data for each theme were structured into a “coherent overall story” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 66).

While creating the narrative for the findings, my supervisor and I had discussed the language being used for the themes and subthemes. Initially, a sub-theme for the first theme, was called “discrimination”. While discussing the content within this sub-theme, although we agreed that participants were describing instances of being discriminated against, the word did not come from them. Rather, it was how I categorised their experience. It was decided that a better term for understanding their experiences would be *‘being made to feel like an outsider’*<sup>6</sup>: a term that came from the participants. During this phase, we re-structured, re-named and reviewed the themes and sub-themes multiple times, in order to provide “informative, concise, and catchy names” that accurately and meaningfully accounted for the story of the data (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 68). The final thematic map following this process is included in

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<sup>6</sup> *“Made to feel” is a term used in this study to reflect the language used by participants when describing how they believed they were led to feel throughout their experiences as British Bangladeshis in the United Kingdom*

## Appendix L.

**Phase 6: Producing the report.** The last part of the analysis involved reporting the results. To construct a clear narrative of the themes and sub-themes derived from the study, I engaged in many reflective conversations with my supervisors and revised each section multiple times. The quotes selected for each section were discussed during supervision and evaluated for their powerful accounts of each sub-theme.

Once a first draft of the results was compiled, a three-way meeting was arranged with my supervisors, and we reflected on how some of the complexities presented by participants in the interviews were not as apparent in the report. Following this, a review was carried out to form a more accurate narrative of British Bangladeshi people's experiences.

### **3.14 Quality assurance**

In order to assess the quality of a piece of qualitative research, measures that have been developed to assess the quality of quantitative research (e.g., reliability, validity, objectivity, and generalisability) have been deemed unsuitable (Yardley, 2007). As these measures are rooted in 'realist' epistemological positions, that seek objective truths. As per the systematic literature review described in the previous chapter, I have attempted to adhere to the quality guidelines for qualitative research as posited by the CASP (2019). A table detailing the steps to meet and assess these criteria for the current study can be found in Table 12.

Table 12: Quality Assurance

Criteria for Quality	How the Current Study Met this Criterion
1. Is there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	<p>This goal of this research was to understand the experiences of British Bangladeshi people and the relationship between their EI and well-being. In the current study, this was clearly stated at the end of the rationale provided for the study.</p> <p>This topic is highly relevant to the current political climate where the British identity appears to be under threat and there has been a rise in far-right nationalism and increased discrimination towards populations such as British Bangladeshis. These experiences can have an impact on this population's well-being.</p> <p>This topic is also highly relevant for current clinical practice as understanding the experiences of this population can help equip psychologists to manage distress in more culturally appropriate ways. It also highlights the role of psychologists in not only direct clinical settings but also in wider macro-level contexts.</p>
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	<p>Qualitative research was deemed as an appropriate method for collecting the experiences of EI for third generation British Bangladeshis. Qualitative data collection method enables the use of open-ended questions.</p> <p>This approach enabled me to adapt and change the questions whilst collecting data, enhancing the quality of the data gathered and the insights generated. Furthermore, a qualitative design allowed for rich, nuanced accounts to be constructed, allowing for new perspectives to be developed.</p>
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	<p>A review of the literature demonstrated the apparent lack of research in this area; there appeared to be a lack of "voice" from the population. Therefore, a qualitative methodology was deemed appropriate and necessary. Furthermore, thematic analysis was deemed appropriate as it was adaptable to a critical realist epistemological position and its flexible nature enabled a larger sample of participants (in contrast to many other qualitative methodologies).</p> <p>Consultation with those within the community and pilot interviews was a helpful way of confirming that the research design was appropriate for eliciting data related to the study's aims.</p>

<p>4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?</p>	<p>Snowball sampling was used within this study and has been criticised for at times excluding members of the community in order to counteract this, multiple parallel snowball networks were created to access a larger pool of participants.</p> <p>Given that the majority of Bangladeshi people migrated during a similar time (as discussed in the introduction) followed by this study's criteria for investigating third generation participants, therefore many of the participants were of a similar age group. The participants appeared to be in alignment with the goals of the study.</p>
<p>5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?</p>	<p>Participants were offered the possibility of being interviewed face to face or over the phone. I was flexible with times to reduce further challenges for participants.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews gave participants the freedom to describe their experiences in depth. As discussed in the methodology, a rigorous method was used to develop the interview schedule, e.g., pilot interviews and referring to previous research. Audio recordings of interviews ensured the accuracy of data collection.</p> <p>A detailed account of the interviewing, data collection and analysis process is provided in the methods.</p>
<p>6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?</p>	<p>This was important in this study, and more so as I was an insider researcher. I continued to reflect on my thoughts, values and emotional experiences at every stage of the research process, utilised a reflective research diary, continuous reflective conversations with my supervisors and multiple discussions with my peers. Through these conversations, any personal assumptions and biases were discussed, and we considered their impact on how the data was interpreted and written up.</p> <p>Reflexivity was used not only for my personal emotional safety, but also enabled transparency, accountability and the goal of producing trustworthy research (Shaw, 2010).</p>

<p>7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?</p>	<p>Ethical approval granted from UH ethics board.</p> <p>Situational ethics were also given thought, and with my supervisors we considered if any harm would be caused through the research process. The current study appeared to have a low chance that any harm would come to participants in terms of distress and plans were in place should any have occurred. Details of the study were given to participants prior to their involvement.</p> <p>Relational ethics were also given considerable thought. Given my position as an insider researcher, questions were asked in a sensitive manner and sufficient time was given for participants to respond. Confidentiality was discussed with every participant.</p> <p>A debrief was carried out after each interview; information about how to seek additional support if needed was also provided.</p>
<p>8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?</p>	<p>An honest in-depth description of the analysis process can be found in the methodology section and working examples of this process is in the appendices. Sufficient data is presented to support findings whilst also providing evidence for data that appears contradicting.</p> <p>During the analysis process, I remained reflexive and consistently used supervision to discuss any of my own potential biases whilst selecting quotes for the final report.</p>
<p>9. Is there a clear statement of findings?</p>	<p>Triangulation in the form of an independent researcher was asked to code 8 of the transcripts and these codes were compared to the ones identified by me. These differences were discussed with supervisors.</p> <p>Within the report, there is an abundance of raw extracts from the transcripts are in order to provide a rich description of the data. This is to enable readers to also make their own interpretations and conclusions in regards to the data.</p> <p>Effort was made to ensure that any contrasting views in the data were also presented and discussed in the final chapter.</p> <p>Furthermore, extracts were explored in context to help the reader understand the circumstances surrounding them and interpretations were made to create a deeper understanding of the data.</p> <p>The study aims are readdressed in the discussion chapter with detail about how the study's aims were met.</p>

<p>10. How valuable is the research?</p>	<p>This study provides an in-depth exploration of an area that appears to have very limited research available, it contributes to the literature highlighting the importance of considering EI in the lives of third generation British Bangladeshis. The findings suggest some clear implications for clinical practice as well as societal level changes. The study also highlights the need for racial, religious and cultural discrimination to be addressed by society.</p> <p>The study extends the literature on EI and adds weight to the argument that EI should be promoted, preserved and encouraged in later generation British Bangladeshi people as it can be beneficial for their well-being.</p>
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## Chapter 4

### Results of Thematic Analysis

#### 4.1 Overview

This study aimed to explore the importance of EI and well-being in the lives of third-generation British Bangladeshis. In this chapter, the results of the thematic analysis will be presented. Three main themes were constructed from the data:

**Table 13: Thematic Map**

<p><b>Theme 1:</b> “Oh my God, I’m different.” Being made to feel like an outsider in Britain</p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1:</b> Overt experiences of being made to feel like an outsider. <b>Subtheme 2:</b> “We have no representation.” A lack of role models in public and professional spaces. <b>Subtheme 3:</b> “I act a bit more white.” Fitting in to survive. <b>Subtheme 4:</b> “I don’t know if what I’m going to tell you is going to be used against me”: Mistrust and invalidation in mental health services.</p>
<p><b>Theme 2:</b> “You’re a coconut.” Being made to feel like an outsider within the British Bangladeshi community</p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1:</b> “They’re just being so judgmental.” <b>Subtheme 2:</b> “A contradiction between my culture and my faith” - Negotiating identity.</p>
<p><b>Theme 3:</b> “A proper sense of belonging”</p>	<p><b>Subtheme 1:</b> “Figuring out who I am.” Transitions towards a stronger ethnic identity and finding spaces of belonging. <b>Subtheme 2:</b> “I feel like this is what I come from, this is what made me who I am right now”: The importance of heritage and language. <b>Subtheme 3:</b> “Everyone had each other’s backs.” Drawing strength from family and community. <b>Subtheme 4:</b> “If you don’t have that anchor, that Bangla anchor, you won’t be able to survive.” Drawing on the Bengali culture and Islam for strength and belonging.</p>

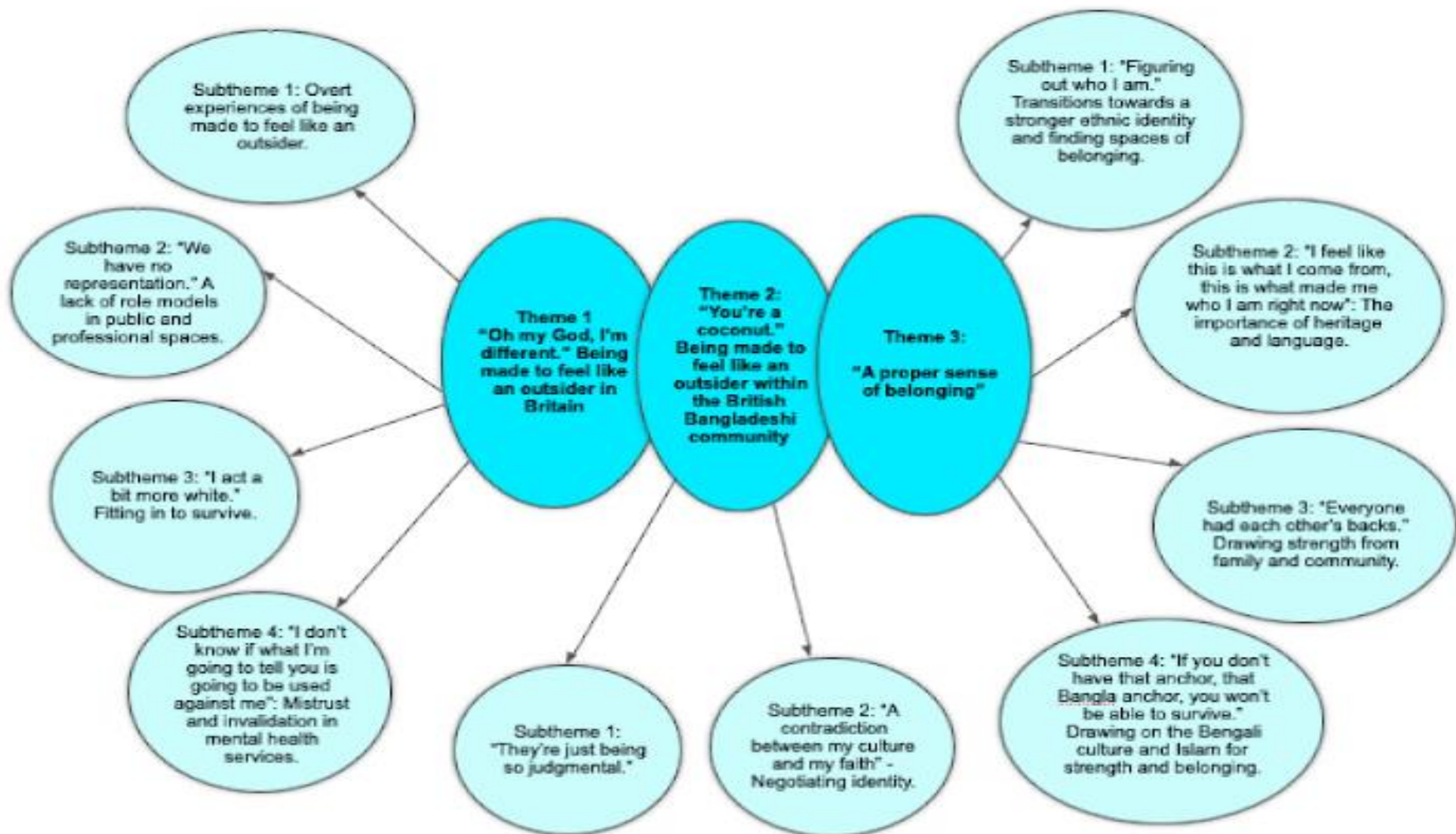


Figure 3: Thematic Map



In order to improve conciseness ellipses (...) have been used to indicate that words have been taken out of the quote. The use of (-) is to signify that the participant has taken a pause. Square brackets have been used for words that have been added to quotes to improve clarity.

#### **4.2 Theme 1: “Oh my God, I’m Different.” Being made to feel like an outsider in Britain**

Within this theme, most participants talked through their experiences of existing as third-generation British Bangladeshis living in and around London. Participants often described experiences of feeling like an outsider while navigating public and professional spaces.

Haroon: The first question they ask is, “Where are you from?” And I’d say, “I’m from London.” And then, you can see them looking at you, like you haven’t answered the question, it’s not enough...why your skin colour is not white, so why are you brown?

Sometimes this experience of being made to feel like an outsider was overt and shocking, in the form of racist abuse. At other times, it was expressed more subtly, through assumptions, omissions, or misrepresentations. Participants also discussed times when they have responded to this experience by “pretending to be something I wasn’t” (Kadeer) and discussed some of the emotional consequences of using this as a strategy. Within this theme there are four subthemes:

**Table 13.2 Breakdown of Theme 1: “Oh my God, I’m different”. Being made to feel like an outsider in Britain**

Subtheme 1	Overt experiences of being made to feel like an outsider.
Subtheme 2	“We have no representation.” A lack of role models in public and professional spaces.
Subtheme 3	“I act a bit more white.” Fitting in to survive finally.
Subtheme 4	“I don’t know if what I’m going to tell you is going to be used against me”: Mistrust and invalidation in mental health services.

#### **4.2.1 Subtheme 1: Overt experiences of being made to feel like an outsider**

Participants provided vivid descriptions of experiences of racist abuse in public places, and the impact of this on their sense of identity and belonging. Kolpona described an experience asking for directions in Central London.

Kolpona: I asked about eight people in the space of an hour and four people shooed me physically with their hands... And two people racially abused me... called me effing terrorist... I was like, “Oh my god, I’m different.” I forgot that, like I was so confident in being British Bangladeshi this entire time. And it was just like a massive knock ... and having to reassure everybody that I’m the same even though, I just look a bit different...

Although these experiences appeared common amongst participants, there was still a palpable sense of shock, confusion, and disbelief in their recollections. Experiences of overt racist abuse were particularly prevalent amongst participants that observed the Hijab, which identifies them as Muslim. They described a sense of problematic stereotypes associated with Islam, that has, at times, made them a target of racial abuse.

All of the participants described Britain as home; the only home they had ever known. Yet many repeatedly spoke about how their experiences of racial abuse made them feel unwanted in Britain. This seemed to leave them with a lingering feeling of homelessness or rootlessness.

Aayana: I actually had conversation with [a friend] the other day, like if anything happens and we get kicked out this country, where am I going to actually go? I need to make sure I have enough money to buy a villa in Spain or something [Laughs].

Participants reported experiences of being exposed to negative assumptions and stereotypes made about their religion and culture, and how this was being promoted through wider systems such as the media.

Jasmin: ...we know our culture, we know our community, we know we're not like terrorists or bad .... But yeah, regularly seeing things on the news and the misrepresentation of our community is bloody annoying... Because they genuinely don't have a clue ...

The overt stereotypes and assumptions described in public discourse also appeared in descriptions of professional environments. Roxana discussed her experience of having her religious beliefs being addressed and linked to terrorism during a job interview.

Roxana: So, for example, did an internship for two weeks, the partners loved me, they sent messages to HR, everything. And then when it came to my interview, they asked me questions like, “So what do you think the issue with terrorism is? Do you think racism still exists? What’s the solution to terrorism?” ...I think it’s very much because they saw me with a hijab, and they wanted to see if I’d be offended...

There were many examples where participants felt that their Bangladeshi practices had been misunderstood (in a negative way) by the dominant culture. Participants alluded to expectations from the dominant culture to behave in a particular way. Madeeha described an early experience of this, at primary school.

Madeeha: ...like the kids will always turn around and say, “Madeeha doesn’t have table manners.” But I didn’t know the table manners that they were talking about, so I would eat with my hands and behaved a certain way. I didn’t really understand what table manners meant. Like we have manners and things we observed when at the dinner table, but it is not the same thing as it was in those white spaces. And that was so objective to them, but to me, I didn’t understand what they were talking about.

Many participants also discussed feeling that negative assumptions are made about the British Bangladeshi family unit. They described a sense that deviating from expected British cultural norms, on issues such as when to leave the family home or how to interact with different generations, seemed to lead to judgements about their values or character, which seemed unfair or misguided.

Haroon: ...They [white counterparts] can't grasp the fact that we still live at home with our parents. They don't see us as fully mature because we do that... so my whole mindset is, I like parts of that culture, I like the fact that family stay together and that the young look after the elders when they're older.

These judgements seemed particularly prevalent in relation to the roles and choices made by women in the Bangladeshi community. Others, like Aayana, identified dominant society's assumptions that older women don't speak English or work outside the home.

Aayana: ...people think freshies or housewives. ... If I say [my mum] was practically born here, the next question is, "Oh, so [does] your mum speak English?"...(laughs) I swear, that's the next question....they would never even bother asking me, they would never find out if she was a teacher at all.

The quote below similarly demonstrates how participants reported feeling that cultural practices specific to gender have been misrepresented. Madeeha described how the dominant culture set expectations of feminism that differed from her own experiences of feminism within her own culture.

Madeeha: ...something that I think [white] people miss is that these families are run a lot of the time by matriarchs, the backbone of these cultures particularly, in the way that they run and manage their household, they don't just sit and answer to their husbands or take the man's money when he comes into the house - that is something that is missed. There are different ways in which patriarchy operates and different ways in which women are empowered, there are ways in which our culture, ways in which women have found to challenge patriarchy... [wearing hijab] Those are very beautiful things, and there are feminist things that my mum has taught me that I don't want to lose in favour of a white feminism.

Negative assumptions about women, their role and intellect seemed to be exacerbated by the presence of native accents. Some participants also spoke about how being held up against these negative standards had an impact on their confidence.

Jasmin: [having a middle-class British accent] ...they just see you as like white basically or smart, intelligent. But that's not really the case. There is a lot of people with [non-British] accents who are very smart. Well, naturally ... fresh<sup>7</sup> accent sounds so uneducated.

Aayana spoke about how having a different vocabulary has impacted her confidence at school.

Aayana: So, before I was like I'm a very dominant character, but now working in a place full of white people, I feel like that's weakened me a little bit ... standard

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<sup>7</sup> The use of the term 'Fresh' is commonly used to imply newly arrived immigrants.

of English in this country means so much, when it's complete bullshit basically, because it doesn't matter how you sound. So, working in the school ... they [white counterparts] have a really wide vocabulary... that's very flawless... It's impact[ed] my confidence... I question myself

Additionally, when applying for jobs and senior roles, many participants spoke about it being harder for them than their white counterparts.

Kolpona: ...We need to like work a million times harder than you [White British people], we need to be outstanding in order to apply for a mediocre role... And it's not enough for us to just be mediocre, as opposed to a white mediocre counterpart. [They'll] get the role, no problem. They can go to an average school, have an average upbringing... and they'll be just fine... Whereas, we need to prove ourselves to be better than just that.

Participants also discussed how they feel as if there is a requirement to socialise in what they may believe to be British cultural practices even if they conflict with their religious identities. Otherwise, many feel it is possible that they will not progress either socially or professionally.

Roxana: (other British Bangladeshis) They know that they need to go to the pub to network with people, otherwise you're not going to go anywhere.

In the example below, Aayana explains how the choice of setting and timings of social events keeps her isolated from the peers that she would otherwise like to socialise with.

Aayana: [Aayana's workplace was] having a Christmas do and they didn't think of us, as in, the fact that we don't drink, they went to a ... like a bar... I wasn't there to be part of that, so I'm not in the jokes. So, I've missed out, which makes me feel left out... I'm forced to socialize with my own kind... I would say it's discrimination... I did vocalize [it]... Yeah, they did a vote... They were all white (Laughs)... I was laughing about it because it was ridiculous. ... So, how can I have a social life, if they're going for drinks after 8, which is very late. I still want to be part of it because I know there's going to be a stigma against me if I'm not there because they are just not going to invite me again, which is not a nice feeling.

To summarise, within this subtheme many participants described their experiences of abuse and perceived unfair treatment in both public and professional settings. This was felt to contribute to making them feel like an outsider in Britain. Many participants seemed to feel that they were being understood through the lens of problematic societal narratives that were associated with being brown and Muslim. It appeared that, although, participants seemed to identify Britain as home, there was also an apparent feeling of being unwanted by Britain. It appeared that participants' cultural practices felt misrepresented and negatively interpreted by the dominant culture. Furthermore, participants' lived experiences as British Bangladeshis seemed to differ greatly from the stereotypes that they felt exposed to. Finally, a lack of perceived



understanding from the professional environment also appears to be marginalising participants further and even potentially impacting their professional progression.

#### **4.2.2 Subtheme 2: “We have no representation.” A lack of representation and role models in public and professional spaces**

Many participants described an apparent lack of representation in the mainstream system which contributed to making them feel like an outsider.

Kolpona: It's quite ironic ... the legal industry is quite dominated by white males. The specific field I went into was immigration and all immigrants are ... non-white. And they are governed, and they are judged and prosecuted by white people, who have no understanding of their culture, their customs, their experiences...they're called aliens... only very recently have ... immigrants stopped being called aliens...

Participants seemed to describe the apparent lack of diversity within systems they are regularly part of and affected by, which appears to play a role in creating and maintaining a system of inequality and potential mistreatment. Most participants discussed under-representation and the lack of perceived positive role models in positions that they are aspiring towards.

Chadiva: ...growing up, I've not seen many Bengalis, and I'm still not seeing many Bengalis ... I worked in a law firm in my gap year last year. And I think,

there was only one Bengali paralegal, but I've not seen one Bengali solicitor, and there's a difference between being a paralegal and a qualified solicitor.

Ebrahim: Because if you look at it, how [are] we [British Bangladeshis] represent[ed]... in mainstream media? We have no representation.

As a result of this perceived lack of representation in professional or educational spaces, a few participants described some of their difficulties of feeling like lone representatives of their culture. Most participants appeared to feel unsafe or uncomfortable to be themselves in these settings and interactions.

Salman: When I'm moving around white people. 100%. I give the pressure a lot to myself too. ... So, I sort of feel like I have to give the right impression sometimes.

A result of these feelings of discomfort and unsafety also seemed to impact participants' decisions to partake or withdraw from these spaces. A sense of heightened consciousness and a lack of playfulness was experienced when they did choose to take part.

Kadeer: [participating in predominantly white university activities] I wouldn't have done it. I would have walked away. It wouldn't have been as fun. I would be stepping on my toes thinking about positive representations. I would have been trying to be like ... explaining myself.

A consequence of lack of representation in public and professional spaces appeared to be a lack of safety and playfulness and a heightened awareness of speaking, being, and behaving in these spaces, seemingly reinforcing participants' status as outsiders in Britain.

#### **4.2.3 Subtheme 3: "I act a bit more white." Fitting in to survive**

Within this subtheme, many participants discuss experiences of pretending as a survival strategy whilst navigating predominantly white spaces. This appears to be triggered by their beliefs about the negative societal narrative around being brown.

Kadeer: I am an outsider... I am brown. But I have to pretend to be white as much as I can... It was me pretending I'm white in order to get myself ahead. And I didn't realize how bad it was to do that ... I spent a lot of time thinking about a lot of things in terms of trying to prove myself.

A similar type of experience was reported in many different contexts and across ages. In some of the early lives of participants, "pretending to be something I wasn't" (Kolpona) was used by many of them to help avoid racial discrimination and enable peer acceptance. Whereas in later life, it appears to have been used as a strategy to excel professionally.

Maheeda: You are different, you never quite fit in. To the school, and the outside world, and like my culture and my Asian-ness is something I wanted to get rid of. I wanted to erase it because it made me a target for like bullying and racism.

Many participants reflected on pretending as a strategy during adolescence to help them “get in with the crowd” (Roxana) or due to perceived social pressures.

Roxana: I would never do things like drink or drugs, but I was just always like trying to get in with the crowd. I wouldn't wear my hijab half the time, like I was really rebellious.

This belief appeared to persist in adulthood for many of the participants. They believed that “acting white” (Zahreen) could help them progress.

Zahreen: I would act more like - when I'm with someone who's interviewing me and I don't know them ... I act a bit more white... And [a middle class] accent would come out, I don't know where from, it just comes out.

A few participants shared experiences where they felt as though their Bangladeshi background made them an outsider and, therefore, they over-compensated by performing a better articulated English accent.

Kolpona: So, I had to ... be better articulated than my white counterparts expected me to be. Generally, just carried myself a lot better than people expected, in short...I don't know, like overcompensate for being Bangladeshi.

Many participants discussed the emotional consequences attached to this approach of fitting in. Most participants appeared to be experiencing difficulties whilst making choices between what they perceived to be national norms versus their own cultural norms.

Chadiya: I feel as if I'm not able to fully express myself, fully express the background I come from... yeah, I do feel as if I'm just painting like a Western white, you know voice and face and everything in terms of the way I deliver myself, which is not great.

Kolpona talked about the anxiety of always watching one's behaviour and feeling worried about how being herself would be perceived.

Kolpona: I think, it felt a little bit like having some kind of split personality, where, at home, I can be relaxed and can completely be myself. But there are times, where I feel bit embarrassed of some of the things that we do...it was just exhausting, pretending to be something that I wasn't actually. Like, just constantly feeling alienated or probably even anxious being caught out, if I slipped up at all in try to keep up this façade.

Many participants discussed the perceived negative consequences of seeking approval from white people. A few participants discuss feeling sad for those who seem to do so.

Haroon: (a friend seeking approval) I feel quite sad for him. I'm going to say pity, but I don't think it's a good thing because you're almost trying to dilute your religion or your ethnic background to appease other people... so you never really truly going to be happy, never going to be confident with yourself, unless you accept yourself as a whole.

Kadeer is one of many participants that reported feeling a systemic, almost institutional pressure to conform to whiteness, presumably from the political parties and educational systems Kadeer mentions.

Kadeer: There was always a pressure to institutionalise, which they see as a very positive end goal. By "they," I mean the current political party and media that tends to support them, people generally controlling opinion in the UK. Essentially trying to make us white but we are brown... I have been taught so much white stuff.

To summarise this subtheme, participants describe using pretending as a strategy when occupying public and professional spaces. At times, this was used with the intention to avoid racism and discrimination. Whilst for others, pretending seems to be a strategy employed in the hope of gaining acceptance from the dominant culture within educational and professional settings, which appears to encourage them to be someone they are not. Participants also discussed the negative emotional consequences attached to this approach and how it furthers their experience of feeling like an outsider.

#### **4.2.4 Subtheme 4: “I don’t know if what I’m going to tell you is going to be used against me”: Mistrust and invalidation in mental health services**

A third of participants described barriers to accessing support from mental health services. Some felt that they were deterred from approaching these services, while others had attempted to seek help but reported negative experiences, which they attributed to the cultural differences between themselves and clinicians. Participants felt that clinicians’ views may be unfairly shaped by stereotypes associated with the Bangladeshi and Muslim cultures, which appeared to reinforce their experiences of feeling like an outsider whilst seeking support. For a few others, clinicians having limited knowledge of the Bangladeshi culture appeared to be a significant barrier.

Roxana: [accessing therapy] I think I would, but then at the same time, they wouldn't get it, they wouldn't get this... I'd be able to speak to them, but I don't know if it would help at all... I'm most comfortable around people from my own community, but then I thought even though I'm an English speaker, I feel like unless they've really understood my culture, I wouldn't really be that open...[if a clinician has] done the Masters in Bangladeshi culture, then I'll be like, maybe.

Following on from the quote above about the seeming reluctance to engage with services, a few participants also spoke about the possible consequences of opening up to professional services. For example, Kolpona shared her experience as a British Bangladeshi woman, who also identifies as Muslim, during an assessment with a white male psychiatrist. She seemed to refer to government policies accused of targeting Muslims, and even though she sought support, she described experiencing fear whilst

doing so.

Kolpona: ...he kept telling me to speak quite freely... I was sharing some of the things for the first time in like four years. And I was finding it very difficult to articulate and catch my breath because I was crying...I don't know if what I'm going to tell you is going to be used against me. I don't know, if you're going to refer me on to some kind of counterterrorism program... and to not share what's happened to me in fear of you referring me and me ending up in prison or worse... I said, what kind of life is that, I can lose my job, I can lose my ability to study amongst many other things, on the basis of something that occurred to me without my consent, without my understanding even and I'm suffering and I have been suffering for many, many years, but I suffered in silence... I said, but if I was white, it would be completely different.

All the participants that accessed support described feelings of rejection and perceived misunderstandings from the therapists that they had been working with over a period of time. These apparent misunderstandings seemed to negatively impact the therapeutic relationship because the participants seemed to feel as though they were being interpreted and understood through a problematic lens constructed through dominant societal narratives.

Madeeha: A limit... how much [the white therapist] could help me because she didn't understand my experiences...she was trying to reject some of the things that I was saying and was quite resistant to accept my reading of my experience,



instead she was trying to call it something else, for example I would call it “racism,” and she would call it “bullying.”

Kolpona: ...after 12 weeks of being with her, [the therapist says] “I think it’s outrageous that your parents open your letters.” And I thought to myself, yeah, that actually it is outrageous. But A, I don’t think you should have expressed that. B, the fact that you expressed that, mean[s] that you have no understanding of that context. Then I felt the need to automatically defend my parents... but at that moment, when she had expressed that, I was like, oh, is this her understanding of my family the entire time, that [they] were quite primitive, but that’s not what I’ve been trying to explain to her.

This subtheme suggests that those that hope to seek access from mental health services may feel reluctant due to dominant societal narratives about the British Bangladeshi culture and Islam. In addition, those that did access support reported experiences of feeling invalidated and misunderstood by therapists who were part of the dominant culture.

Haroon: I think it’s more difficult to talk to someone who’s Bangladeshi. I feel like people judge within the culture more. So, it’s easier to talk to strangers about your problems sometimes, like a therapist or someone. And the further away they are from you, the easier it would be.

However, it is important to note that some participants who had not previously

accessed mental health services reported that the “outsider” status could be a positive factor in seeking help, stating that they would prefer to be seen by someone outside of the Bangladeshi community. A common rationale appeared to be due to the judgement that they have perceived to be present within the British Bangladeshi culture, a topic which is discussed in Theme 2.

#### **4.2.5 Summary of Theme 1**

Within this theme many participants described their experiences of frequent questioning, abuse, and perceived unfair treatment in both public and professional settings. For example, a pressure to provide a more detailed description of their brown skin could be seen as reinforcing a narrative that people of colour are not truly British. Frequently being called a terrorist or being asked about terrorism, led most participants to feel that they were being understood through the lens of problematic societal narratives. Despite identifying Britain as home, there was also an apparent feeling of being unwanted by Britain. Furthermore, some participants alluded to encountering a prescribed dominant culture that seems to conflict with their own Bangladeshi and Islamic practices. Participants shared often feeling comfortable with and enjoying some of their own cultural practices, yet at times it was felt to be interpreted negatively by the dominant culture. It seemed as though participants attempted to correct, in their daily lives and also in the interviews, some of these misinterpretations by discussing their lived experiences of being a British Bangladeshi, who also identify as Muslim, and how this differs greatly from the stereotypes they felt exposed to.

It appeared that a lack of perceived positive role models in both public and professional settings, combined with some of the perceived negative stereotypes, could

have contributed to participants feeling like lone representatives of their culture. A consequence of this appeared to be a lack of safety and playfulness whilst navigating these spaces. Within the second subtheme, participants described using pretending as a strategy when occupying public and professional spaces. At times, this was with the intention of avoiding racism and discrimination, and at other times, it was to seek peer acceptance. The final subtheme discusses some of the barriers to accessing support. Many participants described a fear that negative societal stereotypes associated with the Bangladeshi and Islamic culture may influence the care they received. Although some felt that talking to someone outside their community would actually help them to avoid feeling judged by their community. For those that did access services, a lack of understanding from therapists impacted therapeutic relationships negatively.

#### **4.3 Theme 2: “You’re a Coconut.” Being Made to Feel Like an Outsider Within the British Bangladeshi Community**

Within this theme, for many participants, there was a discussion about moments when it had felt difficult to find a sense of belonging within the British-Bangladeshi community.

Maheeda: You’re supposed to fit in, and these are like your people... But then the same for like when I hung out with family, I was the coconut, the too white kid... I was seen as not as connected to brown...I was seen as the outsider... It is not nice; it is like you have less of a right to that heritage. You have less of a claim to it...

A few participants described what seems to be divisions within the community as well, where they felt judged for how British Bangladeshi they are. The British Sylheti culture, for example, is experienced by many participants as being isolated from more prominent Bengali cultures. A few participants also discussed their experiences of colourism (see Glossary in Appendix S) within the community, which influenced how they have previously viewed themselves negatively. Further conflicts arose during negotiations of Bangladeshi and Islamic boundaries, and generational differences seemed to create a disconnect within families.

#### **4.3.1 Subtheme 1: “They’re just being so judgmental.”**

A term that many participants often came into contact with was “coconut” which implied they looked Bangladeshi but thought and behaved like their white counterparts.

Kolpona: ...The first thing I accomplished was being able to somewhat reduce the frequency of being called a coconut (Laughter) which is what I’ve been called since I was back in primary school by my Bengali friends. They’d be like, “You don’t know Bangla, you’re a coconut, you’re just brown, but you don’t know anything, stay with yourself.”

A few participants identified difficulties in switching between predominantly British Bangladeshi spaces and majority white spaces, and vice versa. They described a perception that being in the white majority environments has an influence on the language and dialect they choose, which appears to create a distance between the participants and their British Bangladeshi peers. The result appears to be an absence of a true sense of belonging in either space and a difficult balancing act between being

*Bangladeshi enough but not too Bangladeshi.*

Salman: I'm the only one [out of British Bangladeshi friends] that went to college and University, and I'm sort of the only one that's working like in a professional environment ... my friends call me a white bird, because they think I speak so posh... [when] I went to university. I was like, trust me, I'm not posh.

Dania: Like, if I was being too English, it's like, "Oh, you're becoming English, don't forget your Bengali culture." And if I was doing something too Bengali for them, it's like, "Oh, you're here in England, like if you didn't want to do this, then you shouldn't have come here" ...I wish I was a bit more comfortable expressing either side to, like my British side to my Bengali side and my Bengali side to the British side.

Whilst negotiating their multiple identities (the British, the Bangladeshi, and the Muslim), many participants described a sense of judgement from members of their own community.

Roxana: [British Bangladeshi friends would say] "Why would you do that? Why are you doing Christmas presents" ...like it's really difficult. I think we [British Bangladeshi community can be] very toxic as well. I've seen it, like I've had to cut people out of my life because they're just being so judgmental about what I'm doing.

Some participants identified a specific inter-generational challenge, where the difficulties encountered during their day-to-day lives do not seem to be understood by the older generation. This left some participants feeling more alone with these difficulties.

Kolpona: So, I think that's where there's a backlash because you'd come home and you know in your mind, oh, I've just been discriminated, it's a really terrible thing and I feel very terrible about myself. And you spend the rest of your day thinking I'm awful and then you come home and then your family members are like, what what's the problem, you try to explain and [they] can't relate.

Another challenge identified by a few participants is the difficulties encountered for those of a darker complexion.

Haroon: I'm quite dark compared to other people I'd say and I was made to feel that I wasn't as attractive or desirable because of it ...Bengali people can be quite racist and quite closed off too...I think the next generation or the generation after that, there'll be no issues about race and skin tone and they'll definitely be more open about it.

Jasmin: Darker skin Bengali girls, who are looking to get married, they may be getting rejected by potentials because they are darker skinned... Maybe it is dying out with more educated and more like a little bit woke<sup>8</sup> brown guys...

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<sup>8</sup> *Woke* 'Alert to injustice in society, especially racism' (Urban dictionary)

Fear of judgement or misunderstanding was sometimes linked to feelings of anxiety when meeting or communicating with members of the British Bangladeshi community. Some participants discussed experimenting with groups such as online British Bangladeshi groups or Islamic/Bangladeshi university societies. They described some of the difficulties that they encounter when accessing these spaces.

Noor: They're [members of the online British Bangladeshi groups] level 10, they're level 20 and I'm level zero point one, level one [laughs]... I feel anxious fitting in with them, same way I feel anxious fitting in with the English people after work going to a pub. It's the same thing. It's like I wouldn't do that...

Some participants discussed the differences between being a British Bangladeshi and how this feels very different from being a Bangladeshi living in Bangladesh. For example, Noor described being a Sylheti British Bangladeshi and feeling as though he does not fit with the Sylheti Bangladeshis in Bangladesh. Furthermore, he highlighted that the mainstream Bangladeshi culture that he has access to through social media is actually the "shuddo" Bangla culture, which he seems to feel is different from the Sylheti culture. He, therefore, described feeling removed from that too.

Noor: ...Like, if I were to go back to Bangladesh right now, I would not fit in at all. I can't integrate, I can't speak the language... If they really listen to me, they [will] probably think, was this guy trying to speak properly, and he can't even construct

a sentence... I don't even associate myself with them, like they're alien to me completely. Their [mainstream Bangladeshi] culture... and I know these people love their culture, I see their Instagram ...and for me, it's like, wow, you're all alien to me and you're supposed to be Bangladeshi as well.

#### **4.3.2 Subtheme 2: “A contradiction between my culture and my faith.” Negotiating identity.**

Jasmin: I will choose the faith over my culture ... as an act of worship...

Many participants described being made to feel like an outsider within the Bangladeshi community through conflicts between Bangladeshi and Islamic values and practices.

Jasmin: Bengali culture is like spending loads and loads of money [on weddings]...Islamic culture would be spend as little as possible because there's more blessing in it. And so, I would choose that over a massive wedding...in our culture, we [are] encourage[d] to marry a Bengali guy, but I wouldn't go for that, so I would say actually no, there's a massive spectrum of Muslims, we should be accepting anyone and everyone...

Zahreen discussed the difficulties involved in finding a balance between Islamic and Bengali traditions at home.



Zahreen: It's just sometimes, it's our traditional culture, they don't value women much, but Islamically they do. So, I wish it was more Islamic than tradition, but they're not...what I don't like is the amount of pressure put on the daughter-in-laws, like you have to clean, cook every day (at) a certain time, behave certain way ... I really do enjoy living here [with] them [in-laws home], it's just sometimes it's too ... overwhelming sometimes... Yeah, I don't think I can change that. The only thing I can do is move out... my mother-in-law, she doesn't want it...but my husband's thinking about it.

Marriage appeared to be a recurring topic whilst discussing identity with the participants. For example, Roxana talked about the conflict of finding someone who has the right balance of the diverse identities and how this was important and meaningful for her.

Roxana: They were all Bengali, but then Islam wasn't there ... there are the guys that usually come through the ratio of people that are practising, but then they don't have enough Bengali. It's just like, how do you find someone with the same balance as you, it's tricky.

#### **4.3.3 Summary of Theme 2**

Within this theme, participants discussed the ways in which they have felt like an outsider within the British Bangladeshi community both here in the UK and when they visit Bangladesh. Many participants described their difficult experiences whilst trying to fit in with other British Bangladeshis. Some reflected on being stigmatised within the community for not being "Bangladeshi enough" in Britain by other British Bangladeshis.

Participants disclosed their experiences of racism within the community, usually from older generations, where the apparent reverence for lighter skin tones alienates those with a darker complexion. Participants did appear hopeful that this would change in following generations.

For many of the participants, some of the traditional practices that are maintained by Bangladeshi culture appear to become more difficult after marriage as new families form and younger generations interact with more of the Bangladeshi traditions (such as marrying into a husband's family and living in a shared house with them). Some of the female participants discussed difficulties related to patriarchal traditions, and while these have reduced significantly, participants still found themselves at times negotiating these new boundaries. Often, aligning with Islamic knowledge was used as a way to create new norms and challenge the Bangladeshi cultural status quo. Prioritising Islamic values over Bangladeshi values appears to have been an important decision for many of the participants.

#### **4.4 Theme 3: “A Proper Sense of Belonging”**

This theme includes the journeys participants had in order to discover a sense of belonging. Many of the participants described the distinct ways in which their ethnic identity was formed and continues to form. Participants appeared to describe their ethnic identity as constantly moving and changing and influenced by many factors.

Bilal: It just felt like a proper sense of belonging, where I didn't feel like I was kind

of trying to lie to myself or trying to get myself to be someone that I wasn't. It was the first time I was in a friend circle and I was like, oh, I can just be me, they're all like me I think, they're British South Asians, so am I.

For many, exposure to Bangladeshi cultural events and traditions triggered the development of their ethnic identity. Participants described what seems to be a developmental experience where a desire to invest in the Bangladeshi identity seems to be formed through age and exposure at university. Participants described their journeys through crisis, exploration and, for some, a resolution in terms of their identity. Throughout these processes, participants reported finding spaces in which they felt they belonged that then encouraged them to further explore their Bangladeshi heritage.

Participants also talked through the significance of the Bangladeshi heritage and language and how this has, at times, been an empowering experience for them, playing an influential role in forming their Bangladeshi identity. Relations with their family and wider community are discussed as fundamental to their experiences of safety and belonging. Furthermore, participants related their experiences of feeling like an outsider (Theme 1) which also appeared to influence their decision to strengthen their ethnic identity. Finally, during hardships, many participants discussed drawing on Bangladeshi and Islamic resources.

#### **4.4.1 Subtheme 1: “Figuring out who I am.” Transitions towards a stronger ethnic identity and finding spaces of belonging**

Participants' Bangladeshi identity appears to have been formed by many different factors. For example, many participants recalled specific cultural events that inspired

them to preserve a part of their Bangladeshi heritage. Many participants also described what appears to be a developmental experience towards a stronger Bangladeshi identity. For example, as they grew older and went to university, many began to ask more questions about themselves and their cultural background. It appeared that many began without fixed ideas of who they were at school, and university appeared to be a pivotal space at a seemingly appropriate time where this could be explored.

Bilal: [about feeling Bangladeshi] Initially it was like nothing, and then in year six, loads of culture and then up to about GCSEs and university, like trying to get rid of my culture and then at university, accepting and owning my culture and now, it's like it makes me who I am...When I got to the University and I started to meet my other friends and stuff like that and I found that it's not just me, there's so many people just like me ... when you're growing up, it's very black and white, you're one person at home and you're one person at school ... now, I'm not two people, I'm like more one person, where I'm one person at home, ... I'm the same person at the workplace, I'm the same person kind of with my friends.

Many participants discussed the journey towards a stronger Bangladeshi identity being influenced by peers from other ethnic groups who appeared proud of their heritage.

Haroon: Our university was quite diverse, so then you'd see people talking about their culture, about their food, they're bringing their food with Tupperware something that they had be quite ashamed to do, to begin with. They didn't seem to care about it, didn't really affect them in any way... I learnt about their culture,

[it] interests me. So, I thought, why would other people not care about mine, or why would they judge me for it.

Kadeer is one of many participants who described a sense of belonging in spaces shared with other British Bangladeshis or even other South Asians of a similar generation.

Kadeer: At school I remember doing Oedipus and Shakespeare... it was great and I liked performing ... but I am trying to buy into someone else's idea of what interesting is... So there were people who did drama and ... and you have performed this stuff a million times and it is not that fun and engaging. You're just dealing with the existential anguish of white men. I was like, "Let's do something different." ... [Bangla society play] was about, it was about being with people, chilling with them and going to rehearsals and stuff...It was much more fun, and it was much more genuine. It felt so easy to play that character...I changed [the character Kadeer played] that to people I knew and recognised... you would be able to think about the depths of their character. It wasn't tokenistic it wasn't superficial.

Many of the participants who grew up in predominantly white areas spoke about how engaging with people of the same or similar ethnic backgrounds (e.g. wider South Asian or Muslim groups) enabled them to find spaces in which they felt a sense of belonging during early adulthood, at university, or through online groups and word of mouth.

Roxana: I went to Islamic Society [at university] ...proper religious and like, they don't talk to guys, there's a lot of things that I didn't identify with... So, I maintained ISOC (Islamic society) for keeping my faith and peace...And then Bangla society, I was like, "This is where I'm going to be able to meet other people like me." I feel safest with the people who are most like me.

For one participant, in particular, it appeared as though our conversation took place at a time of confusion about her identity. The interview seemed to be a reflective space where she was able to explore her identity.

Chadiya: When I was first talking to you, and I was saying British because that's what I [am] really used to say[ing] ... I'd say, I'm British instantly, I wouldn't say British Bengali...But, it's really important to put it out to the society, that I'm not just British, I'm not just Bengali, I'm British Bengali... I guess, that's from today onwards, I'll be looking on my country and just researching slight bit more about my background because it just made me realise, how much I don't even know about the Bangladeshi history, which is a shame really... So, I guess, I'm much happier now, because now I know, I've got quite a lot of things to learn about the Bangladeshi history and that I'm not as ignorant as previous years, I guess.

Some participants mentioned online groups as a possible safe entry into a community that they could identify with.

Noor: I follow one of their [Sylheti British Bangladeshi group] co-founders on

Instagram... because it's like wow-we, you're like me, but you have so much love now for it ... That was astounding for me to see...the Bangladeshi flag...the red symbolizes blood and the green symbolizes freedom ... And I already understand this with the niche groups I see on social media

It is important to note that, for around a third of participants, this period of transition and exploration of ethnic identity was associated with emotional distress at this time of their life. In response, some participants described turning to their Bangladeshi heritage in order to find meaning, strengthen their roots, and challenge the "breakdown [in a] sense of self" (Kadeer).

Kadeer: I'm doing ... loads of white literature... I'm not trying to perform whiteness. So I became really conscious of performance, identity as performance... then surely I should choose one that's more genuine to who I am? [Referencing to mental health] While I was at University, a lot of other things were going on as well, in terms of just figuring out who I am and my family support and stuff like that. At University, I was depressed. I had depression for a few years. And it's still about, like it was because you just have to think about who you are as a person constantly and just sort of breakdown a sense of self...ethnic identity is meaning, ethnic identity is a source of truth, it's a history behind your existence.

Many of the participants described role models that seem to have demonstrated to them how to balance oneself between the West and the Bangladeshi culture.

Zahreen: I think it was my mom. She's very independent and she's culturally herself. Although she was born and brought up here, she values culture...she still wears shalwar kameez in the gym... it wasn't westernized, but it also wasn't too cultural ever, it was like, it split in the middle...

Many participants described an experience of going through a journey of exploration and now appeared to confidently navigate outside spaces. Some participants spoke about how using their Bangladeshi identity in professional settings enabled them to stand out more. This appeared to be a more enjoyable experience in contrast to participants in Theme 1 who discussed difficulties when they felt unable to display their Bangladeshi identities in professional settings.

Bilal: I think like when you're in a really big corporation, it's really difficult for you to stand out, but for me, my culture and my ethnic background has kind of helped me differentiate myself from the crowd.

Jasmin: I think at University, it's a weird thing, because I went to quite a white dominated university... You can't go full-out talking about your culture, but you can sprinkle it... [Its] empowering, definitely. It's good...

A few other participants acknowledged the journey towards safety in environments that previously appeared threatening. Having a strong sense of identity that came from exposure and experimentation appears to have empowered them to



navigate the systems in a way that met their needs without compromising their values.

Kadeer: I know that it's away from truth, but at least I'm able to recognise it, and perform it where I need to perform it, in order to progress myself. But also, know there is distance from who I am as a person...this whole constant like moving in and out ...

Kolpona: Yeah, I feel a lot more comfortable in society. I feel a lot more comfortable outside of my bubble as well. And not just amongst Bengali speaking people, I feel a lot more confident when I'm speaking to English people...being sure in my own identity.

#### **4.4.2 Subtheme 2: "I feel like this is what I come from, this is what made me who I am right now." The importance of heritage and language.**

Ebrahim: I feel proud [learning heritage]. I feel like this is what I come from. This is what made me who I am right now... They [family] lived the horrors of the war [in Bangladesh in 1971], but it's good knowing that when my granddad, my paternal granddad came here, he was one of the first working in the factories and stuff like, rebuilding Britain. And my granddad was directly involved in building Bangladesh... So, I've got two histories right there and stories to tell to my grandkids ...knowing my roots ...played a huge part in grasping my identity.

Most participants spoke about being brought up in a Bangladeshi household. This included a lot of the practical things such as Bangladeshi food or language, which

made them feel Bangladeshi to some extent. However, when it came to learning about the history of Bangladesh, many participants appeared to experience an extra layer of commitment towards their Bangladeshi identity through engagement, discussion, and a newfound passion and connection to Bangladesh.

Jasmin: Obviously, all this time it was just, "Yeah, I'm Bengali," but now it's more on an intellectual level, you yourself are like, "Wow, I'm Bengali, this is so interesting." So, you go to events and you learn about Bangla history and there's discussions about being Bengali, and you're just like, "Wow, being Bengali is actually quite deep, isn't it?" So yes, it's quite- -then the passion from one being Bangladeshi kind of blossoms, which is quite nice.

Learning this history appeared to play a significant role in shaping participants Bangladeshi identity. For some, the learning occurred through family members, whilst for others it came from events held by this generation of British Bangladeshi communities at universities and through social media groups.

Noor: So, in terms of that particular part of history, that fascinated me wildly because that directly related to me, because that's my mother's, my parents... that should have more significance than any other culture because that's where my parents are from... But that's a big thing in 1971, but my parents never speak to me about it. What's that about? I'm only learning this through social media ... Because of this... I'm thinking deep into that.

Some participants spoke about how connecting with family members seemed to play a pivotal role in shaping their Bangladeshi identity.

Chadiya: ...if I didn't attend those gatherings, if I didn't listen to those stories, I wouldn't be where I am, I wouldn't be able to relate back to my background and be able to tell people that I am from this specific country, like where my background comes from.

Many others discussed the ways in which their families had attempted to preserve the practices through the generations, which made it easier for them to access skills such as the Bangla language.

Bilal: My mum and even my dad as well, to be honest, they always kind of impose this rule, where they wanted me to learn how to speak Bengali, so they had a rule, "Oh, inside the house, we speak Bengali, you reply to me in Bengali"...so some of the phrases and stuff. When you translate it back to English and stuff, it's just so funny and stuff. So, I really like that kind of side of things.

Most participants described their sense of pride and commitment to speaking in Bangla, and many mentioned its historic significance.

Ebrahim: I enjoy speaking Bengali. It's like, if I speak to a person that's older than me and they're from Bangladesh, I'll speak to you in Bengali because that is who

I am and that's where you're from as well, that is your language...Bangladesh is known for fighting for its language, like trying to gain an independence through protecting their language, one of the few countries that's ever done it. So, that's why it's like, speaking Bengali is everything for me.

Despite the fact that participants spoke about not always being completely fluent in the language, they appear to have felt pleasure when speaking it in its own incomplete form. This enabled them to build meaningful relationships with the older generation.

Chadiya: And the fact that I know [Bangla] makes me feel better... With my dad, I always speak Bengali with him. Of course, I still make mistakes, then he laughs, but that's just how it is... So, I guess me speaking Bengali, just reminds me, yes, I am coming from a different background.

The commitment to language preservation seems to be of great importance for many of the participants who described a range of experiences with the language in many of its recognisable contexts. For some others, there was a commitment to passing on Bangladeshi heritage stories to their children and the wider community.

Roxana: [about a potential partner] ...can they speak Bengali, and will I be able to teach my kids Bangla ... everyone fought for language, that there was so much going on and that I really want to preserve that.

Bilal: I want to be someone that can carry on helping people, accept their cultural identity... One of my biggest fears is for people who get to that stage that I was in when I was 16/17. And instead of coming back and embracing their [Bangla] culture, they just go the other way.

#### **4.4.3 Subtheme 3: “Everyone had each other’s backs.” Drawing strength from family and community**

Most participants talked about how relationships with their family, extended family, and the local community appeared to play a large role in giving them a sense of belonging. Many of the participants lived with their parents or with their in-laws and spoke positively about the benefits of close family ties. Many attributed this closeness to one another as being influenced by their Bangladeshi heritage and one that they hoped to continue.

Tajeem: I lived with my extended family when I was small. Some of them, aunts and uncles, they spoke Bengali and English mix. Apparently, I was brought up by my grandparents as well, my dadoo [grandmother] and dada [grandfather]... Oh, it was great. There was always someone to be with me.

Maheeda: That is a happy space for me. That is a space I can do both of my cultures. Particularly with my brothers. Who have experienced that as well, it is like, they get both sides of it. The adapting to both sides... And so there is a happy middle for me, and it is in these very very safe space at home.

For all participants, prioritising the family's needs over individual needs seemed

to be a practice that was introduced as a core part of Bangladeshi culture. This is also one part that many participants spoke about being important to them and a cultural aspect they hoped to maintain to some extent.

Haroon: I was like, you owe everything to your parents, it's almost like an honor to look after them as they get older. That's a really big thing that I love about my culture...the fact that they stay together and they look after each other, that's a massive part, quite proud of that.

Similarly, other participants spoke about pride they felt for the Bangladeshi family unit and the values it is based upon. Although they do not function in a manner that appears to strictly adhere to the practices of former generations, a commitment seems to remain to uphold fundamental family values.

Zahreen: So, Bengalis, although they don't show women importance, they still do value women ...when I was getting arranged marriage, all of them [potential suitors] ...one of the first questions they asked me is, "Would you look after my mum?" Not their dad, not anyone else, "my mum." So, in that way they do respect their mothers and want to make their mom happy... I like the fact that for example the bahu [daughter-in-laws], they should keep their in-laws... because when I have children, I would want them to keep me...

Conversely, many participants also spoke about how relationships within the community seem to work together to make changes to some of the traditions and practices. A lot of the time, this was mentioned by the female participants.

Madeeha: The sense of family, the bonds, the relationships, the way people treat each other. Like you are smashing the patriarchy no matter what the culture. There are things I find difficult, like being the bride, being a shy retiring quiet bride<sup>9</sup> is something I cannot do. Why do I have to sit there and be a doll, and my husband agrees.

Many participants also spoke of the relationships in the wider community, with other British Bangladeshis, that also appear to help this generation feel closer to older generations.

Dania: ...all these uncles and aunts... who aren't actually your aunts and uncles, who are just random people, but because I think we're all Bengali and there's just a sense of community that we all have, you feel a lot closer to a lot of people.

Similarly, some of the participants who grew up in East London, around a large Bangladeshi community, also reflected on the benefits of being in an environment where the British, the Bangladeshi, and the Islamic parts of their identities can all be experienced together.

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<sup>9</sup> Madeeha appears to be referring to a common narrative amongst the elder members of the Bangladeshi community, that newly married women should appear shy as it is often believed to be a sign of modesty.

Salman: But one thing we had was that we had a really, really strong sense of community in that school... at the end of the day, everyone had each other's backs. And we knew that we were very lucky because not many other people like us around the country...Literally, I didn't realize the bubble I was in...our teachers used to always say to us, we can't wait for us to start university because ... we didn't realize the scopes beyond Tower Hamlets, like different people actually exist.

Sometimes, it was being part of large diverse ethnic communities that helped create a sense of belonging for many of the participants who were born and bred in London.

Dania: I think especially being a British Bangladeshi in London has helped...I think a lot of people understand each other's struggles as well knowing that, like I know that you are British, but you also have another side to you.

A few participants spoke about the benefits of being in an environment where Muslim Bangladeshi identity was understood by the system. Salman spoke about the experience of having British Bangladeshi teachers who understood the different cultural demands and helped to bridge the gap between home and the world outside.

Salman: Ramadan was like a very, especially in Stepney, is very, very accommodating... so the teachers do like give us extra help... I don't know why



they did it, but we [teachers and students] connected a lot more through being Bengali.

#### **4.4.4 Subtheme 4: “If you don’t have that anchor, that Bangla anchor, you won’t be able to survive.” Drawing on the Bengali culture and Islam for strength and belonging**

For many of the participants, an understanding of cultural heritage seemed to be a strategy for managing the experiences of being made to feel like an outsider in Britain.

Ebrahim: 100% yeah... 10 out of 10 situations, the guy that knows what he’s talking about, will always win that debate. If you don’t know your stuff, you’re never going to win...It is your artillery, it’s your machine gun, it’s your bomb, this is everything. It’s your kids winning when you know your history.

Those that pursued belonging within the Bangladeshi or Islamic heritages seemed to find strength and comfort in the knowledge that they acquired and, as a result, appeared to feel empowered by these histories and able to respond better in difficult settings. The more they described feeling as though they must respond to dominant narratives, the more it seemed to strengthen their EI.

Roxana: When you're facing that adversity, you tend to cling to those identities more, so I think not getting a job because I wear hijab... I think there’s two ways to take it; some people just be like, “No, I’m just going to denounce this identity completely,” and some people are like, “I’m going to cling to it more.” And for me,

I think Islam and being Bengali, like I stand [by it] more.

For a few participants, such as Madeeha, her personal experience of racism appeared to influence her to invest in post-colonial academia, which appeared to play a significant role in helping her connect with her Bangladeshi identity as a possible process of activism. Through this connection, she seems to have strengthened her bonds with family and has become open to learning from this part of her background.

Madeeha: [learning about critical race theory and intersectionality at university] I guess that academic space, ... helped me understand why I rejected my culture ... And that learning gave me the importance to like un-reject my culture and re-learn and reconnect with my family. Be more open to spending more time with people who look like me.

Haroon, on the other hand, learnt about world histories possibly in order to counteract oppressive societal narratives about the Bangladeshi culture that he identifies with. He seems to use “scientific developments” as a means of affirming the validity of Bangladeshi cultural practices against negative assumptions. He reported that this knowledge has helped him build up a confidence in himself.

Haroon: [investing in his heritage] ...made me more confident in myself. Like, the Western culture always sees themselves as the moral arbiter of everything, and then watching what they've done throughout history and learning what other cultures have done, which is nothing in comparison...makes me feel a lot better

about myself. I'm not shitty, our people are not shitty, we didn't go around trying to conquer and enslave and murder all those people... the scientific developments also say that eating with your hand is better for your immune system ... But, before that, I had no argument for it, but they would say, "Oh, you eat with your hands? Oh, that's disgusting" ...And I would try to make excuses, or I wouldn't mention it, or I would shy away from it...maybe more in college and university, I think that changed my mind... it made me more confident about who I am.

Similarly, many other participants, such as Roxana, seem to be empowered by knowledge of their history and heritage in response to the assumptions made about religion and gender.

Roxana: ...knowing stuff about Islam really helps because people would just like... assume stuff about Islam, like women are oppressed, for example...And then with Islam, you bring it in and actually you know women are not oppressed, we're actually very liberated, I feel very liberated.

Jasmin: If you don't have that anchor, that Bangla anchor, you won't be able to survive.

Many participants made similar generalised comments about the benefits of being aligned with their culture and heritage in response to "racism and xenophobia"

(Jasmin) as well as other experiences of being made to feel like an outsider. It could be interpreted that constant demonstrations of pride for the heritage reinforces itself, thereby strengthening the part of the identity that repeatedly comes under threat.

Jasmin: ...you know the racism and xenophobia, that's all right now...But with me, I want to counteract that and show that I'm actually really proud, and I don't feel inferior, and I don't feel like I should shy away from my culture and my language...

When faced with frustrations concerning how British Bangladeshis are perceived, the investment in heritage learning seems to have helped to dispel stereotypes about Bangladeshi culture.

Kadeer: We have this stereotype that brown people are here for science and engineering and stuff. It goes against a lot of those stereotypes and says poetry is a fundamental part of Bangladeshi culture.

For some participants, the desire to invest in Islam can be viewed as an act of resistance against the perspectives that Muslim women and communities are being faced with. In understanding the value of her Islamic practice, it appears that Maheeda has come to be empowered by it. She affirmed its beauty and appears confident in it despite negative stereotypes about the religion.

Maheeda: ...I think in white feminism, displaying as much flesh as possible, or forced to display as much flesh as possible is one way of being liberated. My mum found liberation in the way that she chooses how to dress. In a like way, I am going to choose to go out in my hijab, in these spaces in these very very white spaces... that is an act of resistance and act of holding on. And that is what a lot of women have done, they have re-fashioned modern attire into these modest outfits, and they made it so beautiful. That is an act of resistance, that is an act of feminism, and that came from my own culture...

However, it is also worth pointing out that a few participants talked about the apparent emotional consequence of identifying with their Bangladeshi identity, especially when faced with discrimination.

Bilal: I think at that point, you kind of make fun of your culture as a defence mechanism to kind of try and integrate and back off the fact that you are from that particular culture. So for example, if you are faced with an environment, where you are around non-Bangladeshis and British friends and stuff like that and they're making fun of you for a particular stereotype, then you bounce off that joke and you make more jokes about your particular territory or group of people to try and integrate... But now, it's like if someone makes fun of my culture in person, I take offence to it.

Many of the participants described turning to the skills and resources that are rooted in their Bangladeshi and Islamic identity when faced with any kind of difficulties.

Kolpona: ...my practice and my understanding of faith is very much based on

hope and it's based on everything happening for a reason and persevering, etcetera. Not to say that you just sit on a situation or not act upon it, but just to be able to be positive about it.

Most participants, when faced with difficulties, referred to their family and friendships as an initial response.

Aayana: I'd go to my family first and I'll keep going to my family, until ... like they can't do nothing no more and they just tell me not to come back, like they can't do anything.

In another example, Kolpona talked about how learning the language has given her another way of communicating her difficulties using humour.

Kolpona: ...I come across things that like loads of phrases, that in Bangla, I think of in like certain situations. That kind of give me comfort, because they're so funny. That, I don't think could be translated to any other language, but those specific phrases kind of shaped the way I'd cope with that situation, like through humour.

Some participants talked about drawing on the stories of their ancestors when they are experiencing difficulties too.

Chadiya: So, being able to persevere through a genocide, I still can't imagine, I don't think I'll ever be able to imagine, how that must have felt like, must have been much worse than any horrible situations, that I've been put in. So, just having that constant reminder that, "Oh, my ancestors have gone through a genocide and what am I doing here," is like sulking about something that's much smaller than genocide. I guess, that would encourage me and motivate me to actually persevere through those struggles.

A few participants also discussed how, through life experiences, they seem to have learnt that identifying more with their Bangladeshi identity makes them feel safer.

Aayana: I feel more safer being Bengali, rather than trying to be British. I got older, and when things in my life got serious... that's when I thought of culture, and that's where my cultural identity became a lot stronger. So, I do feel like I'm more Bangladeshi than British...that's the way I could survive.

For many participants, their Islamic identity was described as their main priority and strategy when dealing with adversities.

Noor: Because Islam encompasses all things and everything... Obviously I'm a Muslim, so that's the backbone of... everything should be around Islam.

A few of the participants seemed to be using Islamic teachings as a way of

addressing the difficulties that they were experiencing between their identities and different generations within the British Bangladeshi community.

Ebrahim: You can have a Imam, that's a therapist as well... these guys aren't therapist[s], but they're like leaders in the Muslim world...he delivered a sermon about parents and their kids and he was talking about like today's day and age, like he says that even parents as well, you're too worried about culture than you are about religion. That's what he said to the parents. Do you know what? That's the reason why, even just by saying that, I love that guy because he just said what's exactly wrong.

#### **4.4.5 Summary of Theme 3**

Within this theme, participants talked about figuring out who they are, and this process appears to be influenced by many factors. Overall, movement towards their EI seems to have fostered a strong sense of self and confidence in cultural practices that many participants want to maintain. Some discussed the impact of growing older and gaining awareness of their sense of self, and how this has, at times, been a distressing experience. University appears to be influential in shaping participants' journeys towards figuring out who they are because it is a space of learning and engagement with others that they can identify with.

For many, the journey towards their Bangladeshi identity began early in their lives as family members worked hard to preserve cultural practices. In the schooling environment, participants reported drawing on their Bangladeshi heritage to help build



relationships with other British Bangladeshis. While in professional settings, this seemed to help them stand out, and they reported feeling more confident whenever they felt comfortable with their identities. Some participants appear to have found a way to move between and negotiate all the different parts of themselves that they feel a sense of belonging with.

Exposure to the Bangladeshi heritage appeared to be inspiring for many participants, who stated that they gained a sense of pride and passion. As they look into the future, a common attitude involved the desire to maintain their cultures (i.e. language and Bangladeshi heritage) when raising future generations, and also a fear of losing some of what they understand their cultures to be. It appears research into the cultures and histories of Bangladesh and Islam is an avenue of resistance for some participants against stereotypes and expectations, and many seemed to gain confidence in themselves by finding reasons to be proud of their Bangladeshi and Muslim communities, including their cultures and heritages. Although one participant did discuss how identifying with EI can also be detrimental since it makes one more aware of the stigma, subsequently leaving them at risk of taking more offence. Finally, participants discussed the numerous ways in which they draw upon their Bangladeshi and Islamic resources during times of hardship.

#### **4.5 Overall Summary**

Participants discussed their experiences of being made to feel like an outsider because of their race, religion, language, misunderstandings around cultural practices, and gender norms within public and professional spaces. At times, their strategy for

survival involved pretending to be something they were not. Many participants within this generation appear to be facing multiple challenges whilst trying to engage with their own community, and they face intergenerational difficulties whilst negotiating patriarchy and a desire to prioritise their Islamic values. Despite these challenges within the community, participants talked through various values, traditions, and practices that originate from their Bangladeshi heritage; ones that have been passed on through family members, social circles, and social media. It seemed that connecting with these elements enabled a sense of belonging at a number of different stages within varying contexts and moments in their lives. This theme of belonging identifies the benefits to well-being associated with connecting with the values and practices of the British Bangladeshi community and Islam.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### 5.1 Overview

In order to orient the reader with what the research hoped to examine, it is helpful at this point to revisit the aims of the study before summarising its findings. The overarching research question was: *“The importance of EI and well-being in the lives of third generation British Bangladeshis.”*

The two research questions were as follows:

- How does this population experience their EI?
- How does this relate to their well-being?

A number of themes and subthemes have been identified, relevant to the research questions. There will be a brief description of each theme and how this study links to previous research and theories. There is then a discussion about the study’s implications followed by a discussion of the study’s strengths and limitations and recommendations for further research.

#### 5.2 Theme 1: “Oh my God, I’m different.” Being made to feel like an outsider in Britain

##### 5.2.1 Subtheme 1: Overt experiences of being made to feel like an outsider

Within this theme, most participants talked through their experiences of existing as a third generation British Bangladeshi living in and around London. Many participants

described experiencing frequent questioning, abuse, and unfair treatment in both public and professional settings, particularly in regard to their Islamic identity. This was described as a major contributing factor to their experiences of feeling like an outsider in Britain.

Participants discussed their experiences of racism and aggression due to their physical appearances (e.g. having brown skin or wearing a hijab). Participants frequently reported being called a “terrorist” or being asked about terrorism, and this seemed to lead most participants to feel that they were being viewed through the lens of problematic societal narratives that were associated with being Muslim. Some participants recalled their experiences of having their Muslim identity being brought to the fore in professional settings. It seemed that participants were alluding to institutional oppression that they often feel they have little control over. Consequently, although participants seemed to identify Britain as home, these experiences of micro to macro level aggression and hate appeared to have created feelings of being “unwanted” by Britain.

This echoes the findings of the systematic review and previous research that has described the British Bangladeshi population as becoming targets of Islamophobia (Abbas, 2009; S6, S7, S8, S10 & S11), especially women who observe the Hijab (Reynolds and Birdwell, 2015). As suggested by (Berry, 2006), experiences of racism and discrimination appear to have led participants to experience difficulties in developing a secure identity.

Participants described their experiences of their own Bangladeshi and Islamic practices, which they seemed to feel comfortable with and enjoyed. At times, however, it appeared that these were felt to be interpreted negatively by the dominant culture. In the interviews, participants corrected some of these misinterpretations by discussing their lived experiences of being a British Bangladeshi, who also identify themselves as Muslim, and how this differs greatly from the stereotypes they felt exposed to. Participants seemed to distance themselves from stereotypical, reductionist, or racist perspectives and sought to redefine common social misunderstandings of how patriarchy functions within their families. This study reiterates many of the findings of the systematic review, where participants discussed negative stereotypes attached to Bangladeshi practices (S6, S7, S8 & S11). Although much of the research was based on earlier generations, this study has demonstrated the continuity of a similar experience of discrimination for this generation of participants.

### **5.2.2 Subtheme 2: “We have no representation.” A lack of role models in public and professional spaces**

Alongside these perceived negative stereotypes, a lack of perceived positive role models in both public and professional settings was described to have contributed to making participants feel like they were lone and model representatives of their culture. A consequence of this appeared to be a lack of safety and playfulness whilst navigating these spaces. At times, they seemed to avoid partaking in opportunities they would otherwise have wanted to engage with, making them “separate” themselves from the dominant culture (Berry, 2005). Ethnic minorities are more likely to be conscious of disclosing their personal characteristics and behaviours, as this puts them at risk of confirming negative stereotypes associated with their group (Steele and Aronson,

1995). As a result of these experiences, British Bangladeshi people may become wary of disclosing their EI, potentially leading to anxieties about openness in public and professional spaces.

### **5.2.3 Subtheme 3: “I act a bit more white.” Fitting in to survive**

Participants also describe using “pretending to be something I am not” as a strategy when occupying public and professional spaces. Many describe the act of adopting whiteness as a means of avoiding racism, being accepted by peers and gaining professional success. Participants implied that any behaviour informed by their own cultural background may be negatively perceived by the dominant culture.

Identifying more with the dominant culture has been demonstrated as increasing economic gains (Mason, 2004). Assimilation and integration, based on Berry’s (2005) acculturation model, results in higher wages for immigrants, while separation and marginalization appear to decrease earnings (Drydakis, 2012). Despite a correlation between assimilation and positive life satisfaction, assimilation and marginalisation also appeared to be negatively correlated with mental health (Berry and Hou, 2016). Similarly, in this study, “pretending to be white” had a negative consequence for many participants e.g., loss of confidence.

Prioritising one’s own cultural values has contributed to feelings of isolation and an inability to create more meaningful relationships with colleagues. They are at risk of feeling anxious, exhausted and missing out on promotional opportunities because these interactions demand more of them than their white counterparts. “Emotional labour” is

the process of managing one's own feelings and emotions in order to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job (Hochschild, 1979). This can be seen as a useful framework to help understand the extra emotional costs to the British Bangladeshi participants discussed when interacting in predominantly white professional settings.

Attending professional social gatherings such as pubs after work can create challenges (such as feeling isolated amongst colleagues or reducing opportunities to network) as it appears to conflict with the participants' values. This is supported by previous research on the possible conflicts that arise between differing cultural values (Sam and Virta, 2003). Participants appeared to have a desire to live somewhat "integrated" lives but this seems compromised by the limited range of social events available to them.

Berry's model of acculturation (2005) provides a helpful framework for understanding some of what the participants described. It seemed many participants were between marginalisation, assimilation, and integration processes. For example, many participants described experiencing marginalisation as they felt excluded by the majority. At other times, they described assimilating to the norms of the majority culture, believing this could help them excel professionally. Integration appeared to be present too, as they described competently navigating between the practices of their ethnic background and the national culture; for example, being able to bring in their EI into the academic work at university. This overlap between acculturative strategies is consistent with prior evidence on second-generation migrants (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987; Schwartz and Zamboanga, 2008). The participants did not appear to be using "separation" as an acculturative strategy. This may be because the participants were

educated to university level and economic pressures in the UK require them to work and integrate themselves within the dominant culture.

#### **5.2.4 Subtheme 4: “I don’t know if what I’m going to tell you is going to be used against me.” Mistrust and invalidation in mental health services**

Finally, within this theme, three participants who accessed mental health services all described negative experiences, where therapists often seemed to fail to understand the unique cultural nuances. Many participants who hadn’t engaged with mental health services described a fear that negative societal stereotypes associated with the Bangladeshi and Islamic culture would influence their care. Bowl’s (2007) study highlighted the lack of representation in clinical services and poor understandings of cultural norms. In this study, a few participants, who had previously not sought mental health support, discussed some anxieties about disclosing mental health-related difficulties to healthcare professionals within the community due to a fear of being judged. Being judged within the community is explored further in Theme 2.

#### **5.2.5 Summary and conclusions: Being made to feel like an outsider in Britain**

In summary, this study has demonstrated that race is an important factor for participants and can alienate one from feeling British. Furthermore, at times, practicing one’s EI (e.g. wearing hijab) can increase the likelihood of being a target of Islamophobia and hate crimes both in public and professional spaces. Other practices of their EI have been reported to often be misunderstood by the majority culture through a negative and often oppressive lens, which can seem to create discomfort and a feeling of stigmatisation in participants. Many participants described experiences of a pressure to demonstrate high national identity or more assimilative behaviours in



professional settings as a strategy to excel professionally and avoid further discrimination.

A lack of perceived role models from within the community can be a further isolating factor. Participants described feeling pressured into performing less authentic versions of themselves sometimes and hesitated being playful in professional and educational settings. When cultural norms were prioritised, participants risked being unable to create meaningful relationships at work, possibly impacting their potential for promotions and connections. Access to mental health services also appeared to be a challenge as participants recalled negative experiences. Many seemed to fear being misheard or understood only through oppressive lenses. From this theme, it appears that being a British Bangladeshi, who also identify as Muslim, can negatively affect emotions (e.g. lack of confidence), personal safety, relationships, and professional achievement.

### **5.3 Theme 2: “You’re a Coconut.” Being made to feel like an outsider within the British Bangladeshi community**

#### **5.3.1 Subtheme 1: “They’re just being so judgmental.”**

Participants described how the Sylheti Bangladeshi culture differs from their experience of the mainstream Bangladeshi culture that they see online, which can be a further alienating experience. A few participants described their anxieties in joining newer Sylheti Bangladeshi social media groups, which appears to maintain the position of outsider even within the community. Engaging with their EI also appears to put

participants at risk of further alienation as it was possible they would be rejected by the so-called “in-group.”

A third of participants also described instances of being viewed within the British Bangladeshi community as being too aligned with the national identity. In other words, “a coconut,” implying one has brown skin on the outside with culturally white values and behaviours inside. Participants described this as an alienating experience that acts as a barrier from within even their own generation when trying to connect to their EI. Adopting whiteness is seen as undesirable and creates a division between individuals and their other British Bangladeshi counterparts. This finding was not present in the systematic review and therefore brings new knowledge to our understanding of the experiences of third-generation British Bangladeshi people.

Shankar and Subish (2016) have discussed the concept that the white race was seen as more beautiful within South Asian cultures due to a legacy of British colonialism in which the ruler was always white and dark or black natives were meant to be ruled. The implications of inferiority by skin tone were noted by some of the participants who felt as though they were less attractive within their communities because of their darker complexions. Colourism within the community seemed to contribute to feelings of alienation within the British Bangladeshi community. These participants did, however, associate this thinking with the older members of their community, and reported hope that this would change with newer generations. It is possible this change in thinking may be influenced by their presence amidst university discussions regarding inequality and social justice. Nevertheless, colourism within the British Bangladeshi community may have an influence on how much people invest in their EI. This finding relates to a wider

conversation appearing across social media and other online forums, where South Asian women, in particular, discuss the ways in which colourism within the community is having a negative impact on their identity (Mahalingam, 2017).

### **5.3.2 Subtheme 2: “A contradiction between my culture and my faith.” Negotiating identity**

The split between Islamic identity and Bangladeshi Identity is identified in the systematic review (S11), and the current study adds to this understanding as it shows this may still be the case in the current generation. Similar to S11, it appears generational conflicts still exist between older and more recent generations. For many of the third-generation participants in this study, it appears Islamic practices are valued over cultural practices. Unlike the studies in the systematic reviews, which were primarily based on children and adolescents, many of the female participants in this study discussed facing this dilemma of Islam vs. Bangladeshi culture after marriage. This conflict often arose through interactions with in-laws of older generations. Returning to this study’s definition of well-being, it appears that such conflict between generations can have a negative impact on relationships, wherein a greater adherence to Islam amongst the third-generation has resulted in direct conflicts with the British Bangladeshi culture, such as through marriages with Muslims of other races.

Research does not appear to have discussed this complexity when looking particularly at the British Bangladeshi population. Many participants experienced a conflict between Islam and Bangladeshi practices, which were further complicated by the generational divide. Intergenerational conflicts have been identified in Scandinavian South Asian adolescent populations (Singla, 2005) and in a meta-analytic review of 68

qualitative studies by Lui (2015), which investigated Asian and Latino Americans populations. Intergenerational conflict and differences in acculturation attitudes in the latter study appeared to be more present amongst second-generation participants and those living in less ethnically disperse regions (Lui, 2015).

### **5.3.3 Summary and conclusions: “You’re a coconut.” Being made to feel like an outsider within the British Bangladeshi community**

To summarise, relationships within one’s community can impact an individual’s sense of belonging within that community. For participants, it was difficult to form or sustain relationships within the community due to a sense of judgment on how Bangladeshi one truly was, primarily based upon their level of cultural awareness, skin tone, and existing conflicts between Islamic and Bangladeshi culture. In terms of well-being, these in-group experiences appear to negatively impact mental health (e.g. rejection and isolation). At times, they appear to impact self-esteem and confidence whilst also affecting relationships within the community with peers and those of older generations.

## **5.4 Theme 3: “A Proper Sense of Belonging.”**

### **5.4.1 Subtheme 1: “Wow-we, you’re like me.” Transitions towards a stronger EI**

Within this theme, participants discussed the ways in which they have formed or are still forming their EI. All participants spoke about life events that influenced their identities such as age, early education, university, marriage, family gatherings, and experiences of racism. They often reflected upon these experiences and described

them as triggers, all of which appear to have influenced the values they chose to live by at different stages in their lives.

Many of the participants described a growing awareness, exploration, and commitment to their Bangladeshi and Islamic identities as they matured from childhood through late adolescence and into early adulthood. This is in agreement with a number of theories and research that have suggested the developmental nature of identity. Early theorists such as Erikson (1968) hypothesised that it is during adolescence that individuals develop their personal identity through the exploration and experimentation of their values and beliefs. During the interviews, some younger participants appeared to be going through this process of apparent crisis and exploration. They appeared to benefit from the discussion we had about their EI status. This process of exploration, or searching, is also consistent with previous evidence suggesting that these processes are common during the developmental period of adolescence to adulthood (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004a).

Family Ethnic Socialisation (FES) (Umaña-Taylor and Fine, 2004) showed how families who engaged with their Bangladeshi practices at home were more likely to influence their children into identifying with their own Bangladeshi and Islamic identity. This has previously been seen in Asian-Indian adolescents within the US (Farver, Narang & Bhadha, 2002) and is also consistent with previous studies investigating FES in adolescent populations (e.g., Umaña-Taylor and Guimond, 2010).

For many participants, stepping into culture-specific spaces (e.g., British South Asian, Muslim) helped them make sense of their experience living as British Bangladeshi, and empowered them to get a better sense of themselves. Online movements also appeared to give participants a safe entry into their heritage, without forcing a specific commitment. This appears to be in line with Siraj's (2011) sociological study investigating the experiences of Muslim women in Scotland. Participants reported being part of groups and feeling united over their shared importance of female modesty (Siraj, 2011). This was also demonstrated in S9 of the systematic review.

In line with the ecological systems model (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), Bengaliness was not simply limited to the house. Peer relations were also a source of Bangladeshi culture, which allowed the "bubble" of Bengaliness to expand beyond simply participants' own homes. Witnessing others' relationships with their culture also seemed to be considered a safe, secure, and enjoyable way of negotiating identity.

Many participants described a sense of belonging when they found spaces where they were able to be their Bangladeshi, Islamic, and British selves. Participants talked about learning and negotiating parts of their Bangladeshi and British identity into their daily lives. All participants discussed various traditions, practices, and values that originate from Bangladesh and have been passed on through family members, social circles, and social media. Partaking in cultural activities is seen as one of the most common symbols of ethnic involvement (Phinney, 1990) and encourages a process towards EI achievement according to Phinney's (1990) model. Some participants talked about introducing their Bangladeshi identity into professional and educational settings, and how this helped them develop better relationships with others.

Many participants recall forming relationships with other British Bangladeshi peers and sharing parts of their Bangladeshi identity at school or university. This was described as another positive experience that enabled participants to express themselves creatively. Similarly, Tajfel and Turner's (1986) social identity theory describes how a sense of belonging and social support is important for understanding one's place in society and can enhance one's self-esteem.

Finally, having a strong sense of identity originating from exposure and experimentation appears to have empowered participants in the current study to navigate public and professional systems in a way that gets their needs met without compromising their values. For example, strong EI seems to have enabled some of the participants, such as Kolpona, to "feel more comfortable outside of my bubble." This evidence can be seen as relating to the internalization-commitment stage discussed by Cross (1971). This is argued to be the point where one's negative feeling towards a majority white population subsides and the individual is able to be more "flexible, tolerant, and bicultural" (Smith, 2006, p.6). This confidence and comfort in outside spaces often appears to follow a period of exploration.

#### **5.4.2 Subtheme 2: "I feel like this is what I come from, this is what made me who I am right now." The importance of heritage and language.**

Many participants spoke about not being completely fluent in the Bangla language, yet feeling pleasure and pride whilst speaking it. This enabled them to build meaningful relationships with the older generation and other members of their

community. Most participants described speaking and learning Bangla as a positive and useful experience.

The Bengali language is also described as intimately tied to the heritage of Bangladesh, especially since the 1971 liberation movement concerned itself primarily with the Bangla language. Learning the language was seen as an empowering experience that connected newer generations to their motherland.

#### **5.4.3 Subtheme 3: “Everyone had each other’s backs.” Drawing strength from family and community.**

In contrast to spaces in which the participants have felt as though they were rejected by their community, this subtheme explores the situations and settings in which participants recalled finding comfort, support, and acceptance within the community. Most participants talked about how relationships with their family, extended family, and the local community played a large role in giving them a sense of belonging. Many of the participants lived with their parents or with their in-laws. For all participants, a collectivist attitude was identified as the family's needs appeared to be prioritised over individual needs. This type of collectivism has been identified in later generation Canadian south Asian people as well (Shariff, 2009).

A few participants spoke about the benefits of being in an environment where Muslim Bangladeshi identity was understood by the system and how this helped to bridge the gap between home and the outside world during early childhood. It seemed that combining Bangla and British identity at school was a way of connecting the two worlds, and it enhanced their creativity and appeared to be an empowering experience.



According to the Umaña-Taylor's (2004) use of the ecological model of EI development, existing as a numerical majority in a micro context can be protective for individuals as they are less likely to experience feeling like a minority.

#### **5.4.4 Subtheme 4: “If you don’t have that anchor, that Bangla anchor, you won’t be able to survive.” Drawing on strength from the Bengali culture and Islam.**

As discussed in the introduction, individuals who report higher EI tend to use strategies for coping with discrimination that are associated with increased levels of self-esteem (Umana-Taylor, Vargas-Chaes, Garcia & Gonzales-Backen, 2008). Within this study, it emerged that experiences of discrimination did, at times, lead to exploration and investment in EI. Additionally, the more participants invested in their EI, the more equipped they felt when faced with discrimination. As emphasised by Ibrahim when he says, “the guy who knows will win,” it is possible that EI can be a protective factor when faced with discrimination (Greene et al., 2006; Sellers et al., 2006). However, for a few, it did heighten their awareness of discrimination and increased the chances of feeling offended. As in social identity theory (Tajfel, 2010), their greater feelings of alignment with the group may have led to them feel threatened when the group was discriminated against. This supports research suggesting EI can have a positive impact on building a sense of belonging within a community. However, it can also heighten one’s risk of being negatively affected when perceiving discrimination (Greene, Way & Pahl, 2006; Major and O’Brien, 2005; Romero and Roberts, 2003; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin & Lewis, 2006; Sellers and Shelton, 2003).

Most participants talked about drawing on Bangladeshi and Islamic values and practices during times of adversity. For most participants, when faced with difficulties, participants turned to their families and friendships as an initial response to

experiencing distress. Many participants spoke about being able to draw on their Bangladeshi identity (e.g., Bangla humour) and also their Islamic identity (e.g., engaging in prayer, trusting in Allah and showing patience) as ways of coping with distress. Previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of Islamic coping strategies for Muslim clients suffering with anxiety and depression (Vasegh and Mohammadi, 2007).

#### **5.4.5 Summary and conclusions: “A proper sense of belonging.” Figuring out who I am.**

Developing a Bangladeshi identity appears to create a sense of belonging for many participants. This is experienced very differently compared to the way in which it is experienced by their families. However, families played a large role in the formation of the participants' EI. For some, belonging is described as a developmental experience sometimes facilitated by British Bangladeshi spaces at university. Sometimes the ability to live with both British and Bangladeshi is modelled by peers. Within educational and professional settings, the Bangladeshi identity appeared to help individuals create more authentic versions of themselves. At times, this enabled them to achieve academic success and professional success when working within their own community.

Aligning with their Bangladeshi identity helped individuals build relationships with others from within the community but also with those of the majority culture as well. Incorporating the Bangladeshi identity into their daily lives, created confidence for many participants in the workplace and enabled meaningful relationships with the majority culture. Many felt a sense of pride in the significance of their history and language, and the connection to Islam and Bangla identity further provided a source of strength for them. Although individual experiences differed, a sense of safety appears to arise in

community spaces that share EI. However, experiences of racism also triggered the need for participants to connect to their EI, arguably creating a separation that pushed some to stay exclusively with their communities. Nevertheless, these situations appear to have helped them engage better with the outside community because having a strong sense of community helps them to feel comfortable with themselves while negotiating public and professional spaces.

The findings of this study appear to be in line with evidence suggesting that EI can be helpful for well-being (see meta-analysis by Smith and Silva, 2011). In this instance, it has been shown to positively impact ability, confidence, and relationships. Berry and Hou (2016) also demonstrated that integration and separation, both associated with high EI, demonstrated the highest scores for mental health.

## **5.5 Implications**

This study does not imply that a solution to discrimination and racism is to equip those on the receiving end of abuse with strategies to manage societal subjugation and oppression. Responsibility should lie with those who discriminate both personally and institutionally. Our roles as clinicians and researchers should be used to eliminate systemic discrimination and racism in all its forms since we are equipped with the skills and power to act as allies and advocate for the rights of the people that we serve (Reynolds, 2011). Based on this study's findings, there are implications related to the following areas:

- Clinical practice

- Training availability for staff
- Recruitment within Clinical Psychology
- The wider role of psychologists for systematic change

### **5.5.1 Implications for clinical practice**

Part of our responsibility as clinicians is to understand and offer appropriate support to any individual that requires support for mental health difficulties. In an attempt to tackle mental health difficulties present in the UK, The Department of Health allocated significant funds for “Improving Access to Psychological Therapies.” Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is the model that is used predominantly. However, research has indicated that, at follow-ups, a higher dropout rate and significantly poorer change in insight was reported by African Caribbean and Black African groups when compared to their white counterparts (Rathod, Kingdon, Smith & Turkington, 2005). This study suggests that further research is needed into the efficacy of CBT for other minority groups.

Given the diversity of service users with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, clinical practice must devise or use a strategy that does not impose on an individual’s experience but draws from it instead. It would be beneficial for the community if clinical psychologists are able to use their skills in research to understand how the community perceives mental health and to study Bengali and Islamic understandings of mental health and psychological therapy. This would help clinical psychologists respond in line with the community’s culture, whilst also acknowledging that understandings may differ between generations.

One approach that has a limited but growing evidence-base related to working alongside marginalised communities is narrative therapy (Monk, Winslade, Crocket & Epston (1997). For example, in East London clinicians worked alongside the Imams at a local Muslim Centre (in a predominately British Bangladeshi area), working in partnership with BME voluntary sector groups to shape psychological interventions to the “needs and strengths of communities” (Byrne, Mustafa & Miah, 2017, p.396). This approach was seen as more holistic and “acceptable and relevant to community members” (Byrne, Mustafa & Miah, 2017, p.396) as it took into account a breadth of identities both communal and personal, including ethnicity among other threads of belonging.

Young women from the Muslim Women Association of South Australia utilised narrative collective documentation through the use of media tools (e.g. online videos) to raise awareness and influence bystander action projects to address Islamophobia (The bystander project, 2019 p.13).

The current research also points towards the central role that EI potentially has in later generation immigrants’ sense of self and well-being. Despite this, EI does not seem to be regularly considered within the therapy context. EI models as discussed in the introduction could provide a useful framework for therapists to use when considering EI therapeutically. Williams (2018) encourages using EI models to help create more conversations with clients about their multiple identities, some of which may feel dominant and others that may not be as developed as this can create pathways for more helpful conversations with clients. Therapists would be able to use these models to help them gain more of an understanding of how clients may be experiencing their EI.

For example, if a client is experiencing a crisis related to their sense of self/identity, EI models could potentially inform approaches such as narrative therapy to help clients explore and experiment with their history and heritage. Furthermore, it may also be useful for therapists to reflect on their own relationship with their EI, as EI might impact on the therapeutic relationship in different ways. For example, Williams (2018) discussed how a therapist from an ethnic minority group may be in an early stage of racial identity development (for example in a pre-encounter stage where there is preference for a 'pro-White/anti-Black' world-view (Cross, 1974) and therefore experience hostility towards a client of the same 'racial' background. This mismatch of EI between those of the same race or cultural background can create distancing and difficulties within the therapeutic relationship. Similarly, Williams suggested that a therapist from the dominant race or cultural background, who is also in an early stage of EI development (see Helms (1995) white and people of colour racial identity model), is at risk of being defensive or upset when exposed to racially charged material from ethnic minority clients. Therefore, using EI models as a tool for self-reflection, e.g., within supervision might be useful.

### **5.5.2 Training for staff**

In this study, participants who accessed support from mental health services reported a lack of awareness that their culture had a negative impact on them. Therefore, another implication of this study is the need to enhance the awareness of our colleagues and other professionals on issues related to diversity. Diversity training, conducted over a significant period of time and emphasises diversity awareness and skill development can help reduce prejudice among students, improve skills of medical professionals (Anand and Winters, 2008; Rudman, Ashmore & Gary, 2001; Smith,

Constantine, Dunn, Dinehart & Montoya, 2006). It can enhance productivity and engagement of employees from diverse backgrounds, and retain women and ethnic minorities in the workplace (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry & Jehn, 2016). Working alongside marginalised groups in order to gain an understanding of their experiences and to use that knowledge to inform diversity training programmes can avoid tokenistic representation (Ocloo and Matthews, 2016).

### **5.5.3 Recruitment within clinical psychology**

Many of the participants talked about the feeling that they could not be open with practitioners who they do not personally identify with. Therefore, another implication of this study is the need for more British Bangladeshi clinicians, especially those of a generation similar to this study's participants.

Within UK clinical psychology, research has indicated that there is a poor representation of ethnic minorities (Daiches, 2010). There may be multiple benefits of a more diverse, representative, and inclusive profession. For example, an enhanced understanding of the needs of diverse communities creates opportunities to build relationships with such communities that may be in fear of accessing mental health services. Effort is required to recruit individuals with culturally diverse experiences and perspectives rather than recruiting only those most acculturated to the majority culture (Nagayama Hall, 2006). It can be argued that the standards to enter training privileges some whilst marginalising those that have valuable experience living in marginalised communities.

#### **5.5.4 The wider role of psychologists for systematic change**

Clinical psychologists have taken a predominantly individualistic approach which has prevented them from maximising the variety of their skills (Harper, 2016). The individualist approach has limited clinicians to providing predominantly individual therapy (Norcross and Karpiak, 2012) that manages distress once it has manifested. As a result, this under-emphasises preventive strategies and neglects the role that social context plays in the experience of one's distress (Snow, 2012). As clinicians and researchers using knowledge of theory, practice, and research, it is our ethical responsibility to offer solutions targeting the macro system (Nelson and Prilleltensky, 2005).

This study has highlighted how experiences during childhood and adolescence can be extremely influential, especially within the educational setting. Clinicians and researchers could advocate for an educational model that honours and seeks to understand the narratives and everyday social worlds of ethnic minority pupils, weaving this complex negotiation of identities within the curriculum can make learning relevant, rewarding, and more meaningful (Hoque, 2017).

### **5.6 Strengths**

#### **5.6.1 Current context**

As analysed in the systematic review, research in this area, is very limited and also very outdated. The British Bangladeshi population is constantly changing and developing, responding to wider macro narratives and economic pressures that need to be understood within each unique period and context. This study contributes to an



understanding of third generation British Bangladeshis' experiences of EI and how this is linked to their well-being in 2018-19.

### **5.6.2 Researcher reflexivity**

As identified from the systematic review, previous research looking at this population does not appear to discuss researcher reflexivity. Due to my personal connection to the research topic, I continually reflected on my thoughts, values, and emotional experiences at every stage of the research process; utilised a reflective research diary; and had continuous reflective conversations with my supervisors and multiple discussions with my peers. Reflexivity was used not only for my own emotional safety but also enabled transparency and accountability in order to help produce trustworthy research (Shaw, 2010).

### **5.6.3 Insider research**

One strength of this study is that, in contrast to previous studies investigating this population, my status as a British Bangladeshi woman, who also identifies as Muslim, allowed me to conduct insider research. Sharing a racial identity and showing racial awareness with participants has been shown to be helpful and valuable in research (Vass, 2017). It has been suggested that “feelings of empathy and emotions which insiders share from knowing their subjects on a deep, subtle level” can enhance communication (Hayano, 1979, p. 101), stories were met with respect, validation, and understanding (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p. 58). My external supervisor is also a third-generation British Bangladeshi and is an experienced and active member of the community; not been shaped by Westernised conceptualisations of psychology. He offered a different lens of expertise, particularly during data analysis. I also conducted a

number of pilot studies in order to help me identify my biases and develop a questionnaire that was appropriate, respectful and helped answer the research question.

## **5.7 Limitations**

### **5.7.1 Insider research**

Kanuha (2000) cautions that the position of an insider should not lead to an assumption that they have a comprehensive understanding of the particular experiences within the studied community. In Adler and Adler's (1987) discussion of complete member researchers, they suggest that in this "ultimate existential dual role" (p. 73), researchers might struggle with role conflict if they find themselves caught between "loyalty tugs" and "behavioural claims" (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007, p. 70). Asselin (2003) has pointed out that the dual role can also result in role confusion when the researcher responds to the participants or analyses the data from a perspective other than that of researcher. She observed that role confusion can occur in any research study but noted that there is a higher risk when the researcher is familiar with the research setting or participants through a role other than that of researcher. Disciplined bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective research process, with a close awareness of one's own personal biases and perspectives, might well reduce the potential concerns associated with insider membership (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Within this study, an effort was made to have reflexive conversations with my supervisor and keep reflective logs. When it came to coding the transcripts, an independent researcher was asked to code a few of the transcripts, and this was compared with my own codes. Differences were then discussed with my supervisor as detailed in the methodology. To give an example, writing this report was also a challenging experience

as I found myself constantly negotiating “who is going to read this?” and “how will they read this?” I was aware of times I felt tempted to censor information that I feared would feed into stereotypes and perpetuate or even worsen the participants experiences of discrimination. In contrast, there were other times when I felt over-inclusive and struggled to choose the quotes that best represented participants’ experiences. Supervision was used as a reflective space where these concerns could be raised and overcome with both of my supervisors.

### **5.7.2 Participants**

Another limitation of the study is that all of the participants were either educated to university level or still at university. This can be seen as excluding those that have lower levels of education or limited English proficiency or those from more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds such as seasonal workers. Despite insider research, participants were still aware that this research would be available to a white audience, and it is possible that this may have impacted how much was shared during the interviews for fear that people might take offence.

### **5.7.3 Snowball sampling**

Snowball sampling risks there being a bias during the selection process creating external and internal validity limitations (Valdez and Kaplan, 1999; Moore and Hagedorn, 2001). Relying on referrals from initial participants and the eagerness of potential participants risks the exclusion of people who may not be part of that particular network (Van Meter, 1990). As an insider, I had access to multiple parallel snowball networks, and made an effort to ensure that participants were recruited from as many different pathways as possible.

#### **5.7.4 Population**

One of the common limitations of qualitative studies is that small samples are typically not seen as representative of a wider population (Queirós, Faria & Almeida, 2017). Therefore, while not generalisable, the knowledge gained in this study can still be transferable.

#### **5.8 Areas for further research**

Due to the limited available research in this area, there are multiple possibilities for future research. Given the limitations discussed regarding the sampling method used for this study, in order to strengthen this study's generalisation, a replication of the study with a larger sample of participants would be useful (Atkinson and Flint, 2001).

In addition, widening the participant criteria to explore other experiences of EI and well-being would also be a beneficial addition to the research, especially, for example, other age groups and those that may not have accessed further education. The experiences of these participants are specific to those living in and around London. Therefore, it is possible that this may be different for those living outside of this location. This sample identified themselves as heterosexual, and it would be useful to see if gender identity/sexual identity has any influence on how one identifies with their EI. Furthermore, it would be useful to consider socioeconomic status and how this may also play a role in one's EI development and well-being. Given that this study focused on the Sylheti population, it may be useful for us to understand the experiences of the non-Sylheti population, and how they experience being part of the British Bangladeshi community.

## **5.9 Learning from the research**

Throughout this process, I have been able to engage in a number of discussions with friends, family, and colleagues about the ways in which we think about our ethnic identity, and the spaces in which this has been welcomed or made us vulnerable to discrimination. This has motivated me to continue to advocate for dismantling racism and discrimination, both in micro settings, such as the therapies we draw on, and on a macro level, addressing the policies that harm. I am appreciative that this research has equipped me with evidence that I can now draw on to influence such change.

The process of conducting this research has been inspiring and enjoyable as well as challenging at times. Like many of my participants, I always experienced the pressure of being a lone voice for the British Bangladeshi community. But through this research, I have connected with others who have had similar and different experiences. Like many of the participants, I owe my strengths and resources to my family and my community. My sense of belonging within the British Bangladeshi community feels strengthened through the process of conducting this research.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Ethics approval



HEALTH SCIENCE ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY ECDA

## ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION

**TO** Romena Toki  
**CC** Dr Jacqueline Gratton  
**FROM** Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair.  
**DATE** 21/08/18

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Protocol number: **LMS/PGR/UH/03444**

Title of study: What is the importance of Ethnic Identity in the Lives of 3rd and 4th Generation British Bangladeshi People

Your application for ethics approval has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

This approval is valid:

From: 21/08/18

To: 01/06/19

**Additional workers:** Dr Jacqueline Gratton; Ansar Ahmed Ullah

**Please note:**

**If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete. You are also required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form if you are a member of staff. This form is available via the Ethics Approval StudyNet Site via the 'Application Forms' page <http://www.studynet1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ethics.nsf/Teaching+Documents?Openview&count=9999&restricttocategory=Application+Forms>**

Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1A. Should you amend any aspect of your research, or wish to apply for an extension to your study, you will need your supervisor's approval (if you are a student) and must complete and submit form EC2. In cases where the amendments to the original study are deemed to be substantial, a new Form EC1A may need to be completed prior to the study being undertaken.

Should adverse circumstances arise during this study such as physical reaction/harm, mental/emotional harm, intrusion of privacy or breach of confidentiality this must be

## Appendix B: Ethics amendment 1 - Change of Analysis



HEALTH SCIENCE ENGINEERING &amp; TECHNOLOGY ECDA

**ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION**

**TO** Romena Toki  
**CC** Dr Jacqueline Gratton  
**FROM** Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair.  
**DATE** 22/02/2019

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Protocol number: aLMS/PGR/UH/03444(1)

Title of study: What is the importance of Ethnic Identity in the Lives of 3rd and 4th Generation British Bangladeshi People.

Your application to modify and extend the existing protocol as detailed below has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

**Modification:** Detailed in EC2

This approval is valid:

From: 22/02/2019

To: 01/06/2019

**Additional workers:** Dr Jacqueline Gratton; Ansar Ahmed Ullah**Please note:**

If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete. You are also required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form if you are a member of staff. This form is available via the Ethics Approval StudyNet Site via the 'Application Forms' page <http://www.study.net1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ethics.nsf/Teaching+Documents?OpenView&count=9999&restricttcategory=Application+Forms>

Any conditions relating to the original protocol approval remain and must be complied with.

Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.

Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1/EC1A or as detailed in the EC2 request. Should you amend any further aspect of your research, or wish to apply for an extension to your study,

## Appendix C: Ethics amendment 2 - Change of Supervisor



HEALTH SCIENCE ENGINEERING &amp; TECHNOLOGY ECDA

**ETHICS APPROVAL NOTIFICATION**

**TO** Romena Toki  
**CC** Dr Jacqueline Gratton  
**FROM** Dr Simon Trainis, Health, Science, Engineering & Technology ECDA Chair  
**DATE** 27/03/2019

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Protocol number: **aLMS/PGR/UH/03444(2)**

Title of study: What is the importance of Ethnic Identity in the Lives of 3rd and 4th Generation British Bangladeshi People.

Your application to modify and extend the existing protocol as detailed below has been accepted and approved by the ECDA for your School and includes work undertaken for this study by the named additional workers below:

**Modification:** Detailed in EC2 Form.

This approval is valid:

From: 27/03/2019

To: 01/06/2019

**Additional workers:** Tahmid Rahmid - community specialist  
Dr Jacqueline Gratton

**Please note:**

**If your research involves invasive procedures you are required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form, and your completed consent paperwork to this ECDA once your study is complete. You are also required to complete and submit an EC7 Protocol Monitoring Form if you are a member of staff. This form is available via the Ethics Approval StudyNet Site via the 'Application Forms' page <http://www.studynet1.herts.ac.uk/ptl/common/ethics.nsf/Teaching+Documents?Openview&count=9999&restricttocategory=Application+Forms>**

**Any conditions relating to the original protocol approval remain and must be complied with.**

**Any necessary permissions for the use of premises/location and accessing participants for your study must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection commencing. Failure to obtain adequate permissions may be considered a breach of this protocol.**

**Approval applies specifically to the research study/methodology and timings as detailed in your Form EC1/EC1A or as detailed in the EC2 request. Should you amend any further aspect of your research, or wish to apply for an extension to your study,**

## Appendix D: Participant information sheet

**Participant Information Sheet****Title of study****What is the importance of Ethnic Identity in the Lives of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Generation British Bangladeshi People****Introduction**

You are being invited to take part in a study conducted by Romena Toki, a Trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of Hertfordshire. This thesis is supervised by Dr Jacqueline Gratton, who is a Clinical Psychologist and senior lecturer at the university

**What is the aim of the study?**

I am looking for members of the British Bangladeshi community to take part in an interview as part of my thesis research. The research aims to explore the ethnic identity for this group of people and also their general well-being. Therefore, some questions will ask about experiences related to general mental health and quality of life. This information will help explore how ethnic identity may or may not impact on interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being within the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the British Bangladeshi community.

**What does taking part involve?**

It is completely up to you whether or not you decide to take part in this study. If you do agree to take part, you will be asked to give your consent to complete an interview as well as some information about yourself (age range, education). There will be a short 10-15 minute phone call to discuss eligibility. If eligible, and you are still interested we will agree to a time and place for a face to face interview that will be no longer than 60 minutes.

**Can I take part in this study?**

To take part, you need to be a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> generation British Bangladeshi (that is that your grandparents arrived in the UK) and be at least 18 years of age or older. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time during the study, without giving a reason and any data you provided will not be used in the results. If you would like to support this research further, I would be grateful if you would forward the leaflet to your contacts that might meet the eligibility criteria.

**What are the benefits of taking part?**

The Bangladeshi community in London is one of the largest in the UK. The most recent generation has not been widely researched and therefore it would be beneficial for Psychologists to understand the unique strengths of the community but also become aware of the most recent challenges that this generation are experiencing. This research can help better equip Psychologists to support this community.

**What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?**

During the interview you may be asked some sensitive questions which may cause some discomfort. If you are concerned about this, we recommend speaking with your GP or other health professional. Other sources of support can be found at:

Anxiety UK ([www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)) phone 08444 775 774 (Mon-Fri, 09:30am – 5:30pm)

Mind info line: 0300 123 3393

**Confidentiality**

All information you provide in this study is completely anonymous and confidential and will be used only for research purposes, unless we think that you or someone else is at serious or immediate risk, in which case the appropriate person or organisation will be contacted. The interview will be recorded and professionally transcribed, without any identifying information attached so responses cannot be attributed to any person. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement before any data is shared. There may be some short anonymised quotes used in publications. Your data will be stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, 2016 (GDPR). The data will be stored on a password-protected computer. And will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the project in line with University guidelines.

**What will happen to the results of this study?**

The data collected during the study will be used as a part of a Doctoral Clinical Psychology project at the University of Hertfordshire. Research findings will be submitted as part of doctoral thesis. In addition, I will write up an article for publication in a journal, again no participant will be identifiable. Ethical approval for this study has been obtained from the University of Hertfordshire Health, Science, Engineering and Technology Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority and the UH ethics protocol number is:

**Taking part in this study**

If you wish to take part in this study, then please contact me on [rt16abh@herts.ac.uk](mailto:rt16abh@herts.ac.uk).

**Further information**

If you would like further information about the study, please contact me by email ([rt16abh@herts.ac.uk](mailto:rt16abh@herts.ac.uk)).

**Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the University's Secretary and Registrar at the following address:**

Secretary and Registrar  
University of Hertfordshire

College Lane  
Hatfield  
Herts  
AL10 9AB

Thank you very much for reading this information and giving consideration to take part in this study.



Appendix E: Consent form

**UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE  
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR STUDIES INVOLVING THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
(‘ETHICS COMMITTEE’)**

**FORM EC3  
CONSENT FORM FOR STUDIES INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

I, the undersigned [*please give your name here, in BLOCK CAPITALS*]

.....  
of [*please give contact details here, sufficient to enable the investigator to get in touch with you, such as a postal or email address*]

.....  
hereby freely agree to take part in the study entitled [*insert name of study here*]

The Importance of Ethnic Identity and Well-being in the Lives of 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation British Bangladeshis .....

(UH Protocol number .....aLMS/PGR/UH/03444(1).....)

**1** I confirm that I have been given a Participant Information Sheet (a copy of which is attached to this form) giving particulars of the study, including its aim(s), methods and design, the names and contact details of key people and, as appropriate, the risks and potential benefits, how the information collected will be stored and for how long, and any plans for follow-up studies that might involve further approaches to participants. I have also been informed of how my personal information on this form will be stored and for how long. I have been given details of my involvement in the study. I have been told that in the event of any significant change to the aim(s) or design of the study I will be informed, and asked to renew my consent to participate in it.

**2** I have been assured that I may withdraw from the study at any time without disadvantage or having to give a reason.

**3** In giving my consent to participate in this study, I understand that voice, video or photo-recording will take place and I have been informed of how/whether this recording will be transmitted/displayed.

**4** I have been given information about the risks of my suffering harm or adverse effects. I have been told about the aftercare and support that will be offered to me in the event of this happening, and I have been assured that all such aftercare or support would be provided at no cost to myself. In signing this consent form I accept that medical attention might be sought for me, should circumstances require this.

**5** I have been told how information relating to me (data obtained in the course of the study, and data provided by me about myself) will be handled: how it will be kept secure, who will have access to it, and how it will or may be used.

**6** I understand that my participation in this study may reveal findings that could indicate that I might require medical advice. In that event, I will be informed and advised to consult my GP. If, during the study, evidence comes to light that I may have a pre-existing medical condition that may put others at risk, I understand that the University will refer me to the appropriate authorities and that I will not be allowed to take any further part in the study.

**7** I understand that if there is any revelation of unlawful activity or any indication of non-medical circumstances that would or has put others at risk, the University may refer the matter to the appropriate authorities.

**8** I have been told that I may at some time in the future be contacted again in connection with this or another study.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

Signature of (principal) investigator.....Date.....

Name of (principal) investigator *[in BLOCK CAPITALS please]*

.....

## Debrief Sheet

Thank you for giving your time to take part in this research project. I hope this research will help improve people's understanding of the relationship between Ethnic identity and well-being for British Bangladeshi people.

The information that you have provided will be kept confidential and all data will be destroyed after the completion of the research. You can ask to have your contribution removed from the study without giving a reason up to 1 month after participation.

If participation in this research has caused you any distress, discomfort or upsetting feeling, you may wish to contact immediate sources of support such as your family, friends, GP or a therapist.

If you would like further support, please find below the details of some organisations that may be useful. These sources of support will be able to help you regarding any concerns or worries you have regarding your emotional and psychological well-being.

### Your GP

Please consider contacting your GP if you are feeling low or anxious.

### Psychological therapies

If you think that you may benefit from engaging in a talking therapy (such as cognitive behavioural therapy), then you may wish to consider self-referring to your local psychological therapies service, or asking your GP to refer you.

**To find your nearest service, you can search on the NHS choices webpage:**

[https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Psychological-therapies-(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

### NHS Choices

If you're worried about an urgent medical concern, call 111 and speak to a fully trained adviser.

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx>

Helpline: 0113 825 0000

### Samaritans

This is a 24 hour a day, free and confidential helpline for anyone experiencing any emotional distress. Freephone: 08457 90 90 90 Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

If you have any further questions, or would be interested in being informed in the outcome of this study, then please contact the researcher, Romena Toki, by email on [rt16abh@herts.ac.uk](mailto:rt16abh@herts.ac.uk) If you have any complaints about the study, please contact Dr Jacqueline Gratton by email ([j.gratton@herts.ac.uk](mailto:j.gratton@herts.ac.uk)). Thank you again for your participation and support.

## Appendix G: Interview schedule - Draft 1

### Interview Schedule

*Below I have listed the themes to be explored. The precise wording of the questions will be developed using pilot interviews. Visual aids might be used if it helps keep the conversation as clear as possible.*

#### **Theme 1: Ethnic identity**

*I will begin by briefly providing a definition of Ethnic identity, from my perspective. Invite them to have a think about what this may look like for them. This definition will be revised prior to any interviews.*

**I will define all the different aspects that I have identified as being under the umbrella term 'Ethnic identity'. It can be seen as something that encompasses both a person's worldview and their behaviour. I have categorised it as including someone's race, ethnicity, country of origin from earlier generations, country they are in now, their sense of belonging, their pride, their spirituality, their political selves, their professional selves, their cultural practices and traditions, any knowledge of their cultural history, whether they identify as being part of a collectivist or individualistic culture. It can also be influenced by gender, or even age and sexuality. I suppose it can be viewed as a complex thing.**

*This question is about getting them to talk about the different parts of their identity. This may be worded as... **I am just trying to understand how you would view this. I am wondering which of these examples or others examples you can relate to?** Some visual prompts may be used to help keep the conversation as clear as possible.*

*Discussion about what terms to use with a question such as... **I have used the term ethnic identity, but we don't have to use that term. Which term would you like to use?***

*If this hasn't already been answered, after understanding what the participants consider to be their identity, I may ask ... **How would you answer the question where you are from? Prompt may be... What you would call your identity / heritage?***

*Discussion about how their identity affects the way they live their life, for instance asking: **So you have identified the following categories** (list the categories they have identified) **as being part of your** (insert term participants have chosen) **can you talk me through each of these?** Prompts: *Which would you like to start with? What does this look like? How is that different to others who may not identify themselves in the same way as you do? Anything you like or dislike?**

## **Theme 2 - Relational well-being**

5) **What is your relationship with your family like?** *Prompts: Anyone you are closer to or more distant from*

6) **How do you think your family would say is part of their** *(insert term chosen by participants)? Prompts: What is important to them? Spirituality, traditions, profession etc (Some visual prompts may be used to help keep the conversation as clear as possible).*

7) **Is there a difference between how they live their life and yours? If so what does this look like?**

*Prompts: If we think about those elder than you – what does their life look like? How would you identify their challenges?*

*What about the generation that is younger than you.*

*Do you think your challenges and opportunities are different to theirs ?*

8) **What kind of things do you do to maintain good relationships with those around you?** 9) **Do you have a social group outside of your family?**

*Prompts: If so what do your social groups look like?*

*What do you look for in friends?*

*Where did you/do you make friends?*

*These are other prompts, if they have not already been covered through the previous questions.*

Financial Well-being

Societal and Political well-being

Socialising and celebrating

## **Theme 3. Internal state**

10) *To discuss ways of managing stress and conflict. Questions would be for example,*

**When you have had difficult times in the past, what has helped you or What do you draw on to manage stress and conflict in your life?**

11) **Does your knowledge of your** *(Insert term chosen by participant)* **help you to navigate the challenges that you have mentioned/not mentioned?**

## Interview schedule

### **Ethnic identity**

*Introduce the topic- tell them that is what I am looking at. - reminding them that it is the topic*

**I will define all the different aspects that I have identified as being under the umbrella term 'Ethnic identity'.**

**It can be seen as something that encompasses both a person's worldview and their behaviour. I have categorised it as including someone's race, ethnicity, or their culture or heritage. The country you are living in, where you are from? Or spirituality? I suppose it can be viewed as a complex thing.**

What do you remember from being a child that you wouldn't have had if you weren't Bangladeshi?

What is Bengali about that?

Why did you pick on that memory?

What does that look like now?

Which part of yourself if any would you say is Bengali?

What part of yourself is not Bangladeshi if any, or is something else (maybe British, English, Asian)?

What would you characterize as your Ethnic identity?

Which part of yourself are you most proud of?

Which part do you think realistically is the most prominent in your life and how?

What would it feel like if future generations don't carry it on?

Evaluate – how does that feel for you? Are you satisfied with that?

Would you prefer to be? Is there anything you would change? Is there anything you'd like to look different?

### **Discrimination**

**Do you remember any moments you felt like you were different or treated different because of your EI?**

What was that like for you?

Why do you think that happened to you?

Do you see it happening now?

Are there any other avenues of discrimination?

What does discrimination do to people?

Does anything help you manage that discrimination? Did anything make it worse (ie getting at well-being and link with discrimination and EI)

Does your knowledge of your ethnic identity help or not help you to navigate the challenges of Discrimination?

### **Self-esteem (feeling good about yourself, your well-being)**

What helps you to feel good about yourself or is good for your well-being?

Do you remember ever feeling uncomfortable or unsettled with who you were as a person?

What made it that way?

Why do you think that happened?

What does that look like now?

Is there anything you would change?

Are you happy in yourself?

Do you ever feel like you are not being yourself?

What would it take for you to be happy with yourself?

Where would you like to see yourself say in the future)

How much would your EI / culture be a part of that? if so, how does it help you feel good about yourself?

Any ways it does not help you feel good about yourself?

### **Help seeking**

Leading on from discussion about about feeling good about yourself and your well-being and how EI relates to that, if you were distressed / struggling with not feeling good about yourself then....

What about without your ethnic identity? ( as this is just a prompt I am not sure what you mean here

Does your EI help with managing any distress within yourself or with who you know?

Would you talk to someone with similar heritage or not?

Would you talk to a health professional or not?

Anything else that might help you in this situation? (would your EI help in any way, or might it be unhelpful in any way?

Say you or someone else was distressed .. how would you feel about it?

How would someone else feel about it?

#### Appendix I: Sample - Pilot interview

##### Sample Pilot interview

Riz: I would say the way we eat it's very different to how I grew up with my friends I never used to speak about how we used to eat, I'm not the delay used to be



embarrassed.

Me: Why did you feel embarrassed?

Riz: Because I was the only person who used to eat like that

Me: When you say it like that what do you mean?

Riz: Like we used to eat curry and eat with our hands. But now I tell everyone, I eat with my hands and wash my ass with water. Laughs. I don't care. You get me. That's me. If you accept me you accept me. And if you don't I will persuade you.

Me: Yes, okay so when you were younger. You were doing things that the outside world didn't do and that made you feel embarrassment about it because it was different, but now?

Riz: I don't care because it is something that I have grown up with for long time well like at any age people are baffled, like what I eat with my hands? Like when I was young when I was in my teens, People will be baffled about me eating with my hands. Even now I'm adult people are still baffled. They don't understand.

Me: How do you respond to that when people ask?

Riz: I just say I like to eat with my hands legit. Are some things that don't need explaining. Like that's the way I have been brought up to eat.

Me: So how does it feel to eat with a knife and fork now?

Riz: I have adapted to that way too, with me when I'm around people who are using a knife and fork, I can use a knife and fork I can adjust myself. When I'm with my Asian brothers I eat like my Asian brothers, when I am with my khala(Black) bothers you eat like them. I can chill with anyone. You seen my friends, how diverse are my friends. They're very diverse.  
when people see me and with South African people, Turkish people, it's very diverse.

Me: I'd like to come back to some of your diverse groups, But firstly tell me what you say what parts of you would you say are Bangla?

Riz: Well it's different things, it's a lifestyle. I would say my family by it is very Bengali, even compared to other Bengalis which

Me: What does that mean? what does that look like?

Riz: I grew up here, and the only Bengalis I knew are my family. And I go up thinking that the Bengalis were tight community. I think that's really Bengalis, my family connections.

Me: And how important is that to you?

Riz: Very important when you're growing up here, and you see these other English people, people are not very close to their family. It's a bit saddening, Because you see people haven't talked to their brothers for like 20 years. And they only live around the corner. And I'm seeing how can you live like that? It's crazy

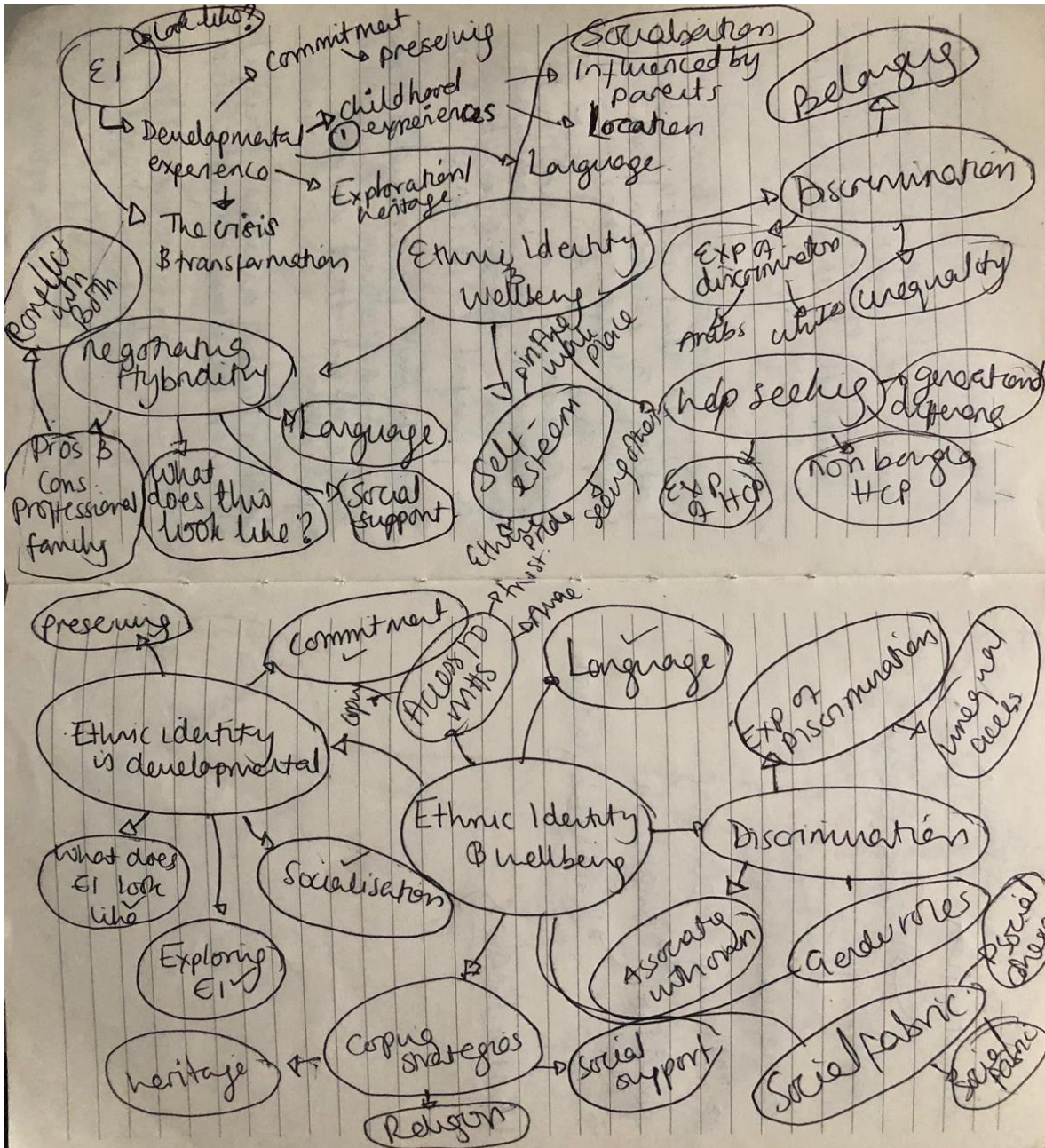
Me: I want to know, What is it, You said your family bond is important to you is that something to talk about to the outside world

Riz: Because my family like, in every corner, my family are doing something with their lives. They are all specialising in there anything, There is a phrase I came across recently, families are like branches of tree they all expand but they all come from the same roots.

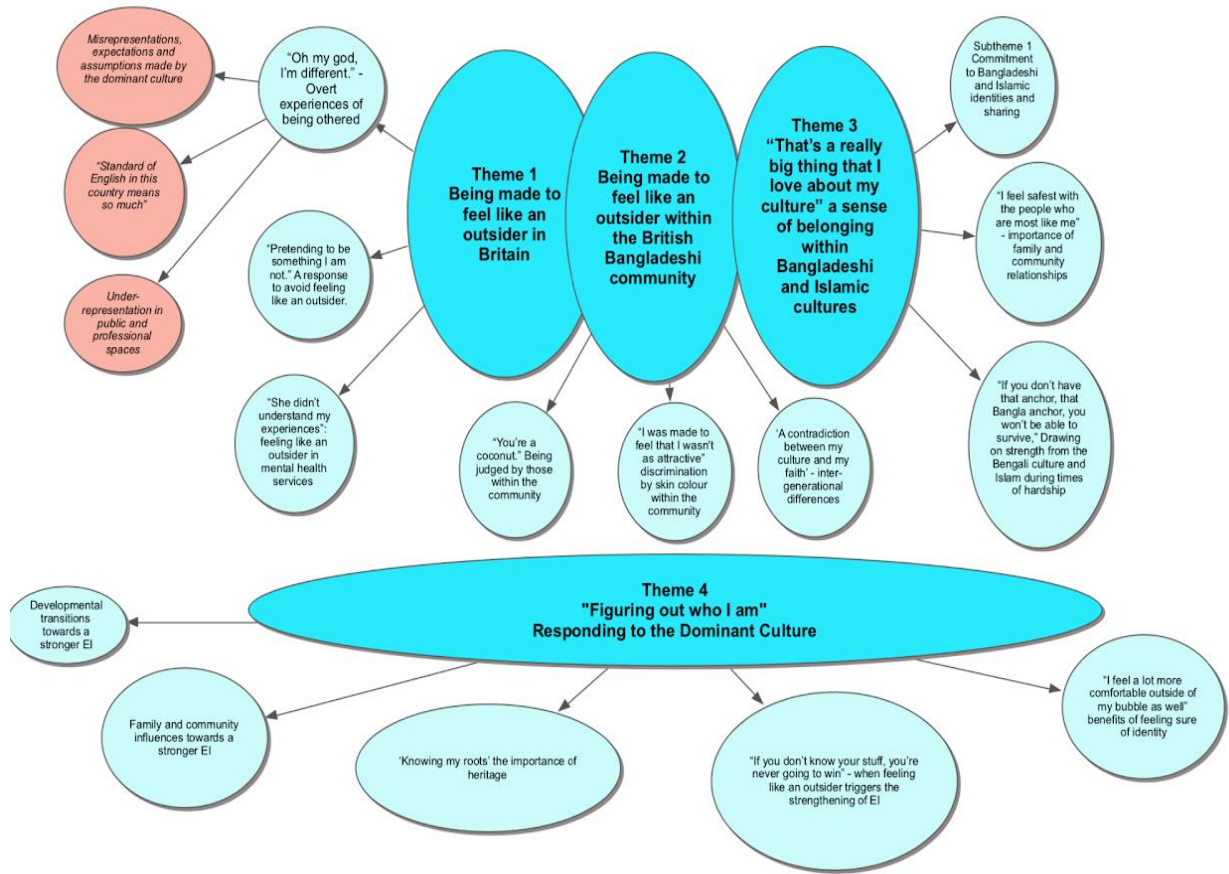
Me: And how does that make you feel?

Riz: Love. Like my cousin(Referring to the cousin that he came with), I shown him to so many Bengali people, and when they meet us they think we're like first cousins. And when I'm like no, we are not first cousins,he is my dads sasagoro bhais (paternal cousin) fua (son), and they get baffed. It's that far connected to you that you're so close.

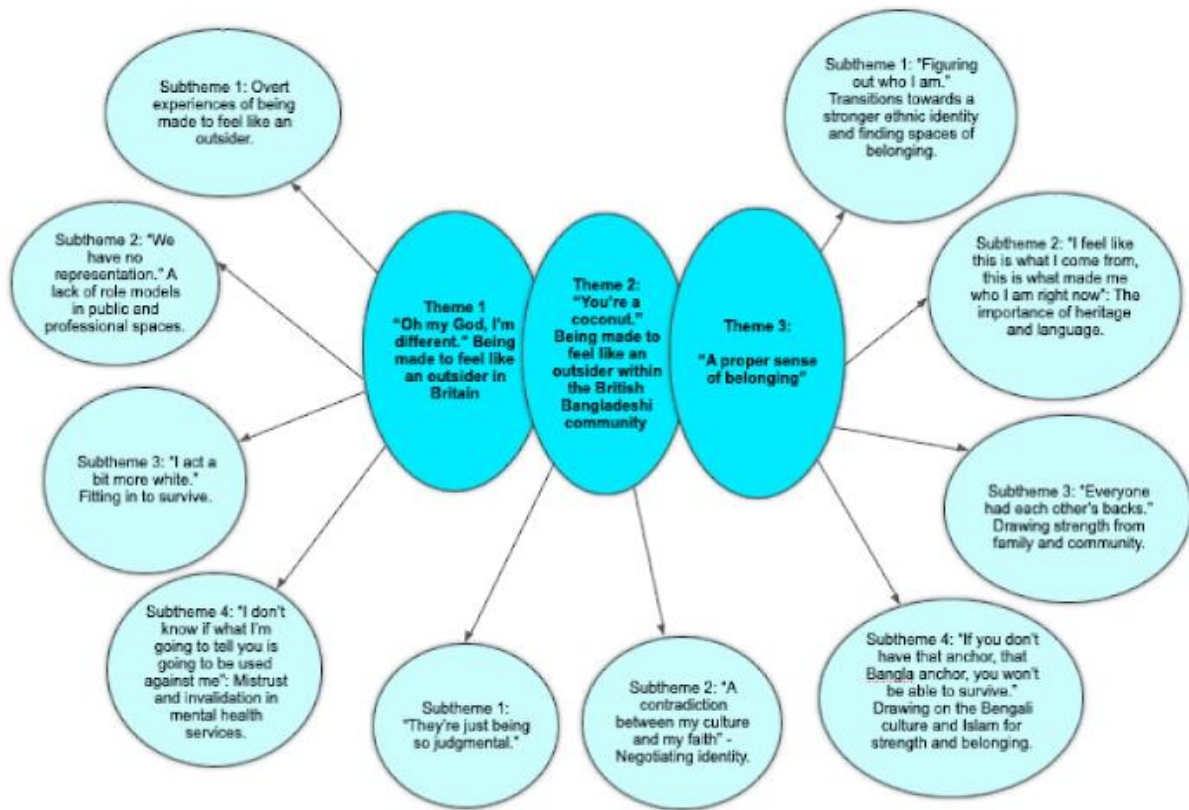
Appendix J: Initial mind maps



Appendix K: Thematic map 1



Appendix L: Final Thematic map



## Appendix M: Sample reflective diary

→ Thought about the times I have felt pressured into performing whiteness - whether I had been able to navigate my own way around systems of people.

→ Thinking about Clinical psychology - being around those that have a very real take on what makes a very good psychologist.

→ I noticed that selecting the quotes was a particularly difficult process - not wanting to lose anyone's voice.

→ How do we privilege some voices over others.

→ Felt connected to some of the women's voices and how I connected with them, and the pressures I felt about representing this 'good migrant' story so not to reinforce the negative stereotypes. I often did this and have recently thought about in depth about how we can make this type of reflection as safe as possible.

My hopes are to see more of these social groups - makes me think about the pressures we put individuals through. The appropriateness of this.

Developmental experience as suggested by Phinney - however one must also consider location with this - which I suppose ties in with the ecological systems theory - how the influences around the child really impact how they feel.

I thought about gender roles how the women in my interviews were married and maybe that is why I got a specific story about the relationship with El & marriage roles.

What I am hearing though clearly is how empowered the young people felt when hearing and learning history made me think about why this was relevant and whether this too was a response to the racism, discrimination. It made me aware of how important it was for us to find people that we identify with. That becomes important.

My Bangladeshi brain tells me to hold on at whatever cost, but my hybrid brain lets me know that

## Appendix N: Data transferred to Nvivo and coded

The screenshot displays the Nvivo software interface with a query titled 'Zahreen'. The main window shows a transcript of a conversation between 'RT' (Researcher) and 'Zahreen'. Several segments of the transcript are highlighted in yellow, indicating they have been coded. On the right side, a vertical list of codes is visible, with some codes highlighted in red to show their application to the text.

**Query: Zahreen**

**RT:** Okay. I want to know what school was like for you? Do you feel it was easy for you to be Bangladeshi at school? What was your experience in this?

**Zahreen:** Because I went to school in Tower Hamlets, it put up the Bengali Asians, it was fine, it wasn't difficult to share things from your culture or anything. Whereas, secondary school is a bit more... it was harder because I was obviously at Brompton and there was less Asians<sup>17</sup> there than confetti primary schools.

So, it was a bit harder in secondary, but primary school was easier. But primary school, the kids, I'm not sure about their opinion or anything, but they wouldn't really express the fact that they are from Bangladesh or anything. It'll be more westernized<sup>18</sup>.

**RT:** Was that in secondary school or primary school?

**Zahreen:** Primary school.

**RT:** Oh, okay. And what was that like for you?

**Zahreen:** It really didn't bother me much.

**RT:** Okay. And what about you, did you feel pressured to being more westernized?

**Zahreen:** No.

**RT:** Okay, that's nice. What gave you so much bravery to just be who you wanted to be?

**Zahreen:** I think it was my mom. She's very independent and she's cultural herself. Although she was born and brought up here, she values culture.<sup>19</sup> So, I think I just got that from her because she still wears shalwar kameez in the gym.

**RT:** Really? What was that like?

**Zahreen:** Yeah, she still wears like gold. You know, how those olden time women wear gold, like covered in gold she's been covered in gold in the gym in the shalwar kameez<sup>20</sup>.

**RT:** What was it like for you to see that?

**Zahreen:** Because from little, I grew up with her doing that, it was normal to me. Like, you could tell people just [unintelligible 00:12:41] and stuff and you could just see them wearing that.

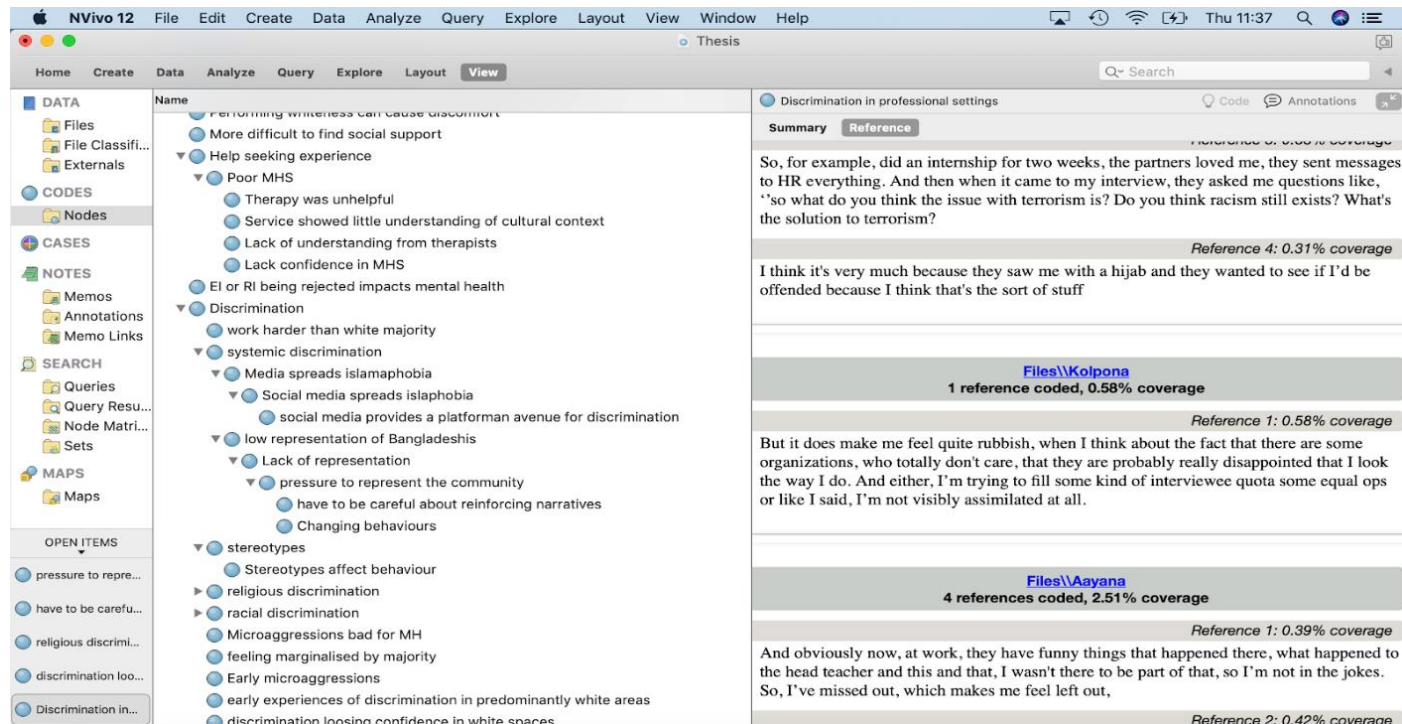
**RT:** How did she respond to that?

**Code List:**

- Performing Whiteness
- feeling proud that ethnic identity is noticed by the British white people.
- religion and cultural conflict
- Microaggressions bad for MH
- Hybrid culture but religion is priority
- Generational differences – more liberal now
- British Bengali children taught to respect their parents
- Hybrid Identity
- Collectivist community in Britain
- religious discrimination
- Coding Density
- parent socialisation into E



Appendix 0: Codes grouped together



Appendix P: Sample of transcript - Stage 1 coding

<p><b>Haroon:</b> From my overall experience, like every person I've listen to, everything comes down to your skin tone really. So, I guess, just race.</p>	<p>Race is important</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> Sure. Do you mean that for you, living in this country, race is the big thing because of the other people that live in the country? Or do you mean race within your own community?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Race to other people, mainly to white people. I was perceived to them.</p>	<p>Race is important in this country</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> So, how would you identify your race?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> If I was to say really simply, just Asian. That's all that really matters to people who ask anyway. Because I always get the same two questions ,but I travel quite a bit, I like to travel and I've stayed in quite a few hostels. And the first few questions I always get from people. And I have a debate with my friend about it all the time, about what's more important. The first question they ask is, where are you from? And I'd say, I'm from London. And then, you can see them looking at you, like you haven't answered the question, it's not enough.</p>	<p>Identified self as Asian</p> <p>Not being British enough Not British because of skin tone.</p>

<p>So, if I was fully white and someone asked that question, no one would ask a second question about it. There would have been no follow-up question. But because I say I'm from London and I've got a British accent, but I don't look white, there's always that question, oh. They don't want to offend you at the same time, but they want to know, why your skin color is not white, so why are you brown. So, I always get the second question or I can see them plucking up the courage to ask, so I just answer it before they ask me the question.</p> <p>But I do like to see the reaction.</p>	<p>Only white people are seen as British. Frequently being asked where from?</p> <p>Being treated differently sometimes humorous.</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> Okay, tell me more about that. What is it like, that people don't just take the London as an answer?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> My friend and I, we have the same debate, so he sees himself as- -so he is Bengali as well, we travel together quite often- -and he sees himself as more British. He tries to assimilate more and he tries to... what's the word, in a nice way. I, on the other hand, try not to, I don't mind that people feel uncomfortable about me having my own views about my culture.</p> <p>So, we always had the debate about, he was saying that if he says that he's from London or he's British, that should be enough. And every time you ask people, like I said, they ask the same question or they have the same look. And they want to know why our skin tone isn't white.</p> <p>So, I told them, it doesn't really matter that you say you're from this country, it matters about your skin tone only. So, if I was to say, I'm from Bangladesh or I'm from Asia, a lot of people don't even know about Bangladesh, they just think I'm Indian or Sri-Lankan or something. If I was to say I'm Indian, no one would ask me again, but if a white person was from India, was to say, I'm Indian, then they wouldn't take that. They would want to know where their ancestors are from really. Because obviously stretch is really, really far back, you can always say that we're all from a different point. So, it's at what point do you start questioning where you're from. That make sense?</p>	<p>Assimilating may make you feel more British</p> <p>Having a strong EI can help to confidently navigate themselves</p> <p>Race can affect how British they are perceived as</p> <p>Skin tone-race most important thing.</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> Yes.</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Because no one's really ethnic to anywhere, are they? No. No one really originated. But moved around for so long that it doesn't really matter. I'm not sure, which period and time, but it's more to do with skin tone and more recent times, where people see other people or where they think they should be from.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> What do you think about your friend who is more, as you said, assimilated? What's your opinion of that?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> I feel quite sad for him. I'm going to say pity, but I don't</p>	<p>Feeling pity for friends who</p>

<p>think it's a good thing because you're almost trying to dilute your religion or your ethnic background to appease other people.</p>	<p>assimilate</p>
<p>My whole view is that, I kind of think that Western society thinks that they're the epitome of the world. Like, their morals and everything are the epitome, everything that they do is good and everyone else's that doesn't do things the way they do, beneath them almost savage. Un-civilized. Like, they don't see them as civilized.</p>	<p>Systemic racism and unacceptance of different cultural norms</p>
<p>I get that feeling more and he tries to appease them, so they'll accept him more.</p>	<p>Assimilating to feel accepted by majority</p>
<p>I don't feel like I need to do that anymore, so I'm quite abrupt about my feelings on certain subjects. I'll be open and I'll speak my mind about it more.</p>	<p>Grown in confidence and does not assimilate anymore</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> What enables you to speak about it more?</p>	
<p><b>Haroon:</b> Well, I was quite like him, when I was younger, when I was in primary school. The fact that, like a little thing, so in primary school,</p>	
<p>everyone would eat with a knife and fork, right? But at home, we eat with our hands. They'd see that has more savage, you're not very civilized.</p>	<p>Tried to assimilate when younger</p>
<p>Obviously, the scientific developments also say that eating with your hand is better for your immune system and stuff like that. But, before that, I had no argument for it, but they would say, "oh, you eat with your hands? Oh, that's disgusting." Blah, blah, blah, all of this stuff.</p>	<p>Discrimination against cultural practices</p>
<p>And I would try to make excuses or I wouldn't mention it or I would shy away from it. So, I was like that when I was younger.</p>	<p>Acquiring cultural and scientific knowledge to counter discrimination.</p>
<p>Then I went to Islamic school, so it's mainly just Bengali people. And I think from there, may be more in college and university, I think that changed my mind quite, it made me more confident about who I am.</p>	<p>Embarrassed of cultural practices when younger</p>
<p><b>RT:</b> Wow. So, it was like, this transition that happened.</p>	<p>Multicultural educational settings strengthen sense of self</p>
<p><b>Haroon:</b> I'm not sure why.</p>	
<p><b>RT:</b> Oh, no, no, that's fine. I mean, what would help is, if we try and think about that a little bit more. So, something happened at college times, college, university times that helped you transition?</p>	
<p><b>Haroon:</b> While I was in primary school, a lot of Bengali kids used to play together... what's the word... sorry, my mind becomes blank a lot.</p>	
<p><b>RT:</b> No, that's alright.</p>	
<p><b>Haroon:</b> Yeah, when you think of other people's approval of the time, so you never really truly going to be happy, never going to be confident with yourself, unless you accept yourself as a whole. So, I think we're all just a sum of our experiences and a culture is a big</p>	

<p>part of that.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> I'm still really interested in this transition that you had in college. I was just wondering, what do you think triggered that off?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> I think may be, it was probably University.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> What triggered it off in University? What happened?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Not sure, it's really difficult to pin-point. So, more recently, I'd say, I've been trying to not care what other people think. And that coming along with that would be part of the culture, like my culture. So, people would say certain things about the culture and I'm quite defensive, but I'm quite argumentative sometimes, so I'd argue back and then looking to my culture a bit more. I think, it was more people talking about their own cultures and stuff that they do. Our university was quite diverse, so then you'd see people talking about their culture, about their food, they're bringing their food with Tupperware something that I had been quite ashamed to do, to begin with. They didn't seem to care about it, didn't really affect them in any way.</p> <p>I learnt about their culture, interests me. So, I thought, why would other people not care about mine or why would they judge me for it.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> I'm wondering, like at the time, seeing all of them do that- -what did it- -like you said, what was that like?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Yeah, it's more empowering, I guess, seeing other people comfortable with their culture, seeing so many different cultures, seeing there's not one right culture.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> So, was it little bit of a- kind of this realization that actually there wasn't just one right.</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Yeah, and becoming more confident in myself just going for university, I'd say coupled with that, those two things.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> In what ways did you start to change?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> So, people asking me questions about it, I would usually have arguments ready. And about certain things that they'd ask, a lot of the stuff was really obviously going to an Islamic school. They asked a few questions, but I think all of those things, just answering questions and talking to people about it and then coming to realization and then, them telling me about their cultures.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> So, do you feel like, if people were to ask you those questions and you didn't have that knowledge, had you ever been in this type of position?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> I feel like probably how my friend does. Like, the whole Islamic thing about having four wives. People just see- -so, in Western culture, being monogamous and having one partner is seen as the right way, anything else is abusive to women in some way or it's bad or frowned upon, but reading about it, learning about Islam, learning about the religion and you understand stuff, so you explain it to them. You see their minds change. I think that helped quiet a</p>	<p>Seeking approval affects MH</p> <p>Growing older and less concerned with others opinions</p> <p>Discrimination triggered exploration of EI</p> <p>Socialising with others who are proud of EI</p> <p>Previously ashamed of EI</p> <p>Socialising with other ethnic minorities triggers own exploration</p> <p>Empowering to see others celebrate their culture</p> <p>University triggered exploration of EI</p> <p>Being prepared with counter-arguments</p>
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lot, learning about my own culture and my own religion.

**RT:** Yeah. I am interested to hear how you manage that one?

**Haroon:** Yeah, it's more practical than anything else, I think. Yeah, but people just see it as men have all the power. It takes a while to explain it to people. And they don't understand the duties that you have, I guess and the requirements, before you can do any of that, which is not something that most men can do. So, they shouldn't be allowed to have four wives, right?

**RT:** Well, ideally.

**Haroon:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**RT:** My next question is about, what is the experience of actually having that knowledge now? You've come out of your way to gain this cultural knowledge, and what's that like for you now?

**Haroon:** I guess, it's a good thing and a bad thing being outspoken about it, not everyone will agree with you. So, in the workplace for example, me talking about, that will probably not be a good idea. Although people will understand my point more, they'll just see someone who's not willing to change or not willing to be like them, so I'd probably get passed up for promotions and stuff.

**RT:** Being viewed as a problematic brown person?

**Haroon:** Yeah, quiet like that or like an angry feminist type person. It's kind of like that.

**RT:** Yeah.

**Haroon:** And I tend not to be too outspoken about it at work. I think, people in general tend not to ask those types of questions too much. A lot of people are curious and when they curious, they do come to me and ask me about it.

Some people have asked those questioning type just to see where you are, where you stand. So, the whole ISIS thing they'd ask about that also, an open-ended question also, how do you feel about that. So, trying to see my view on it. So, they are going to ask another white person about it, but they wanted to know how I feel about it.

**RT:** How does that feel to hear that? How do you feel about being asked these questions?

**Haroon:** That question annoys me quite a bit. It depends on my mood. If I'm in a happy mood, I'll answer the question. But if I'm not, I'll reply, why you asking me? You ask a white person this question. Sometimes, I just say it straight up, depending on my mood.

**RT:** And as you said, people feel comfortable asking you these questions, like that kind of gives you... I don't know... how do you feel about being the person who's asked these questions?

**Haroon:** It all depends on the tone, the way someone asks the

Learning about religious identity helped to manage stereotypes

Taking time to correct cultural misunderstandings.

Having knowledge of EI can have both negative and positive impact

Being outspoken about EI can impact promotions

Having knowledge of EI can have both negative and positive impact

<p>question. You can always tell if someone's actually inquisitive, wants to know and also wants to learn or they're trying to question you, your motives, your agendas, trying to pigeonhole you slightly. So, it all kind of depends on that.</p> <p>Usually, it's after you've already had a dialogue with the person and you've connected with them in some way and then they're comfortable asking you now. In that situation, I'm always happy to answer the questions. But if it's someone who doesn't really know me and then suddenly asks me a question, I'll probably start being the same to them.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> Do you ask controversial questions back?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Yeah, I'll ask some questions back. I wore a Palestinian top once, we had a football match, and I wore that. Obviously, I work in the council, so it's not good to- -no one really talks about their political views or any political views really or really just views that much. So, I didn't realize, this is when I first joined and they wanted to play a football match during the lunch time, so I had that t-shirt on underneath, so I took off my work shirt and I was wearing that underneath. And apparently that caused some controversy. My friend, the one who tries to assimilate more, he came and told me that, you shouldn't wear that anymore, this person was saying this, this, this. So, no one really talks about it too much at work anyway. But It's there.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> What was the demographic of your team?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Yeah, my team is quite Bengali. The team I'm working in, there's quite a few Bengali people. My friends team is more white and they don't really understand the culture too much about the drinking thing especially.</p> <p>So, when we go away, we go away quite often and they'll ask him, did you get drunk blu blah? Or did you have sex a lot? So, they just expect that. And if he says no, they just think, he's lying. They know about the whole, you can't tell anyone, you have to keep it hidden, they've learned that quite a bit, but they think that we all do it, we just don't let anyone know.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> Do you ever confess that?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> Normally, they ask him more, they're more friendly with him. My team's obviously Bengali and they kind of know my background and Islamic school background, so they don't really ask me, did you go drinking, go anything like that. His team ask him quite a lot.</p> <p><b>RT:</b> Right now in your life, would you say, it's more Bangladeshi or would you say, it's more British? How would you categorize it?</p> <p><b>Haroon:</b> I see myself as more Bangladeshi because of the traveling, I think. I met Bangladeshi people while traveling as well. They saw me not as Bangladeshi, which was a little bit weird, but at the same time, Bangladeshis I met were drinking and partying and they were wondering why I wasn't.</p>	<p>Being asked about terrorism</p> <p>Being asked about terrorism is annoying</p> <p>Having to be careful about answering questions because of stereotypes</p> <p>Developing relationships before sharing EI</p> <p>Expectation from dominant culture</p>
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They didn't want to do it around me.

There was a lot of white people there, they had no problem drinking around them. But in front of me, they did have a bit of a problem with it. They thought, I was judging them. They didn't want to really do it. So, it's weird, it's like, you feel kind of halfway, but I feel like I'm more Bangladeshi than British.

The way I see it is, no matter where I go in this country, people will always look at me and I will never really, really belong. But, if I was to go to Bangladesh, they'll accept me as I'm Bangladeshi, no one will say anything.

**RT:** Why do you think you'll be accepted in Bangladesh?

**Haroon:** So, I know you've been to Bangladesh before. [cross-talk] Yeah. You got the whole London thing. [cross-talk] Yes. So you're going to get that for a while, but that's just, again, they're taking the mick. Maybe perhaps is a little bit of jealousy to begin with the village people anyway,

but Bangladesh is quite a forward and liberal right now. The younger generation anyway, they're very western now.

**RT:** Yeah, I agree.

**Haroon:** So, we're quite similar in this. They're actually pretty much like us here. If anything more liberal than us.

**RT:** Yeah. It's interesting that you feel like going back to Bangladesh and you see more potential in being accepted as Bangladeshi in Bangladesh, than being accepted as British in Britain, even though you were born here, and you've lived here your whole life.

**Haroon:** Definitely. It's about how you're perceived, I think. And over there, being brown, I wouldn't stand out, until I've spoken that it is. Here, I would stand out just from them looking at me. Again, like I said, I think it all goes back to skin tone.

**RT:** Do you go to Bangladesh often?

**Haroon:** Not really, I haven't been since I was eight.

**RT:** Oh, so it's been a while.

**Haroon:** Yeah. I don't really have any desire to go back. Because any time anyone ever goes to Bangladesh is to see family. And I wouldn't really want to go there for that. I'd like to see the country though. I know, it's a beautiful country.

**RT:** Yeah, I know, it is.

**Haroon:** I'd like to see it as like a visitor. That would be really good. But, probably not to go see family, which is why most people go.

**RT:** Yeah. What's it like for you to practice? You said that you're more Bangladeshi now, but in what ways are you more Bangladeshi

Variation between Bangladeshis

Bangladeshi peers fear being judged within the community

Fear of being judged within the community

Not a sense of belonging to Britain

Will be accepted in Bangladesh

here is a difference between British- Bangladeshis and Bangladeshis

Bangladesh is more liberal now

now?

**Haroon:** I think I'm just more confident in myself, unapologetic about it, if I'm doing certain things. I mean, there's not really many opportunities to show on Bangladeshi apart from people looking at you and assuming that you are. It's a bit of that and more religion than anything else, because if you're outside, you're going to try and pray. Or halal food, that's another one. That's quite a big issue when you're traveling as well because obviously, not everyone's going to have halal food. So, my friend would just say, we're vegetarian or we're not going to eat meat. He would just say, he's vegetarian. But I would say, I'm Muslim, I don't eat that or I don't drink. They always ask, how come you don't drink? And he never really wants to answer because of that, until he's kind of going to know them and trust them. I'll just say straight up, I'm Muslim, I don't drink.

**RT:** Sure. So, that's like the very spiritual part of it, but I'm just wondering, if there's anything Bangladeshi about you now, like is the language present in your life?

**Haroon:** Yeah, like I said, so many opportunities to express it, just like in daily life, so it's going to be the big things like marriage, at home speaking to your parents. Like, I'll speak to my siblings in English, even to my parents in English sometimes, just to take the mick with my mom, but it's mainly just speaking to them.

I mean, one thing I'm actually worried about is keeping the language alive to my children, passing it on, because I think it's a great language to swear in as well [Laughter]. In general, there's some things you can't explain, some things are just funnier in Bengali.

**RT:** So, the language sort of brings it alive. Is that right?

**Haroon:** Yeah, definitely. Mean, going to another country and then finding a Bengali person. But, usually in restaurants and as soon as they meet you or they find out you're Bengali fellow countrymen, then they get really excited and they treat you better, it's quite nice, you feel at home more.

**RT:** Okay, so is it that when you speak Bangla, you feel at home?

**Haroon:** Yeah, I'd say so. I guess, I can mix with most people, I don't really have a problem

.But being around Bengali people, you just kind of understand certain things about each other's cultures, that you don't really need to question it. Like, they're like, when you're young. That's not something that someone else would really understand, but I can joke about it with anyone else, any other Bengali person about it.

**RT:** So, would you say that the British Bangladeshis culture is its own thing away from British culture and away from just Bangladeshi culture?

**Haroon:** I'd say, well my parents, our parent's generation, they're way more Bangladeshi because they saw both, they grew up there and then they came here.

Race differentiates people in Britain

Different relationship to Bangladesh - not like others

Confident expressing Bangla and religious identity

Differences between peers, in terms of sharing identity

The Bangla language helps strengthen relationships

Wanting to pass the language on



So, for them, it's true that, we're halfway, I think.

Belonging with other  
Bangladeshis abroad

Feeling confident with being  
around people

Other Bangladeshis  
understand

Sharing jokes with other  
British Bangladeshi's

Older generation more  
Bangladeshi

This generation is perceived  
as less Bangladeshi

## Appendix Q: Transcription Contract

University of Hertfordshire


Doctorate in Clinical Psychology  
University of Hertfordshire

Transcription confidentiality/ non-disclosure agreement

This non-disclosure agreement is in reference to the following parties:

~~Somera Toki~~  
And  
~~Samsa Abid~~

The recipient agrees to not divulge any information to a third party with regards to the transcription of audio recordings, as recorded by the discloser. The information shared will therefore remain confidential.

The recipient agrees to stop transcription immediately if they recognise any parties mentioned on the audio recording, and to return the recording to the discloser.

The recipient also agrees to destroy the transcripts as soon as they have been provided to the discloser.

The recipient agrees to return and or destroy any copies of the recordings they were able to access provided by the discloser.

Signed:   
Name: ~~Samsa Abid~~  
Date: 08-01-2019



Major Research Proposal

Student No:  
L

## Appendix R: Glossary of terms

Term	Definition used
Colourism	Colourism has been defined as discriminating another person based on skin colour, this can be present between and within racial groups (Hunter, 2007).
Discrimination	Researchers define the concept of 'discrimination' as follows: taking 'the form of both blatant (e.g., being called a derogatory name) and subtle (e.g., being stared at by security guards while shopping) behaviours that permeate the daily lives of individuals' (Essed, 1991; Feagin, 1991; Feagin & Sikes, 1994; Swim, Cohen & Hyers, 1998, as cited in Sellar and Shelton, 2003, p.1079).
Ethnic Minority	In the UK, ethnic minority populations are defined as 'a group of people of a particular race or nationality living in a country or area where most people are from a different race or nationality' (Cambridge English Dictionary, n.d.).
Institutional oppression	'Institutional oppression occurs when established laws, customs, and practices systematically reflect and produce inequities based on one's membership in targeted social identity groups' (Cheney, LaFrance & Quinteros, 2006, p.1).
Intersectionality	'The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.' Term originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1990) as cited in (Wingfield, 2019)
Micro-aggressions	Micro-aggressions are usually targeted at those who are members of a marginalised group. Micro-aggressions are defined as acts that may occur on an everyday basis and include verbal, nonverbal, environmental lights, snubs or insults. Whether or not these are intentional or unintentional, the impact of this behaviour is that it communicates hostility, it is insulting and sends negative messages to those that it has targeted (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, et al., (2007).
Multiculturalism	'Multiculturalism is a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization or society' (Rosado, 1997, p.2).

Racism	'Individualized definitions are those that centre on a single person's behaviour, such as treating people differently or hating people because of their race. Systemic definitions, on the other hand, will not depend on individual behaviour, and will instead involve affecting people differently based on race and privileging one race over another on a societal level' (Grady, 2015, p.14).
Stereotypes	'Stereotypes are attitudes, beliefs, feelings and assumptions about a target group that are widespread AND socially sanctioned. Can be positive and negative, but all have negative effects. Stereotypes support the maintenance of institutionalized oppression by seemingly validating misinformation or beliefs' (Cheney, LaFrance & Quinteros, 2006, p.1).

## Appendix S: Summary of studies included within the systematic review

S1 received the highest QA score of 1.91 primarily due to having clear aims and, a strong sample of 601 children identified as British Bangladeshi. However, this was across 28 schools in East London, making it difficult to generalise findings for the wider British Bangladeshi population. The methodology and analysis appeared clearly defined and accurately measured. S3 received the second highest score of 1.75, and similarly had clear aims as well as recruiting a large sample of participants over a longer period of time. However, the authors did not consider all important confounding factors amongst other limitations, for example choice of clothing was used as the only indicator of EI. S5 scored 1.41; it offered thought-provoking interpretations of the results, however it was another study with a very small sample of British Bangladeshis (4%), again using teacher ratings for self-esteem. S8 scored 1.4 as the study aims and analysis are clearly described and both focus groups and individual interviews were used to collect data from participants. S4 also received a score of 1.4, its strength being its longitudinal design that recruited at three time points for 215 children. However, the study had a very small sample of Bangladeshis and used teacher ratings of self-esteem which is subject to bias but use of self-esteem is also, as argued in chapter 1, a narrow measure of well-being. S10 scored 1.3 as the qualitative approach was appropriate to the overall aims of the study and a large sample was used for a qualitative study however once again the findings are difficult to generalise to the Bangladeshi population as a diverse range of South Asian participants were recruited. S11 received a score of 1.2, its Strength being that it considered several contextual factors, whilst discussing experiences. Fieldwork has meant that a wide range of participants were recruited over an extended time. However, the researcher's relationship to the study was not considered and analysis also appeared unclear.

S2 scored 1.16; it was one of the few studies to directly investigate the relationship between well-being and cultural identity, and the study aims and methodology were clearly defined. The sample was a mixed South Asian group, attending the same university, again lacking generalisability. S9 scored 1.1; whilst the methods used to elicit data from children appeared ethical and enabled more expression from the participants, they did not seem to specify their method of analysis. S6 scored 1; whilst the researcher used a member from the British Bangladeshi community to conduct interviews to enable a better relationship, how this data was analysed remained unclear. Finally, S7 scored 0.6; it is the only study that goes into depth illustrating four participants' narratives, of the four participants one was from a British Bangladeshi community making it very difficult to generalise the findings.

## Appendix U: Devising the interview schedule

The following five-phase guide was used to develop this study's interview schedule.

**1. Identifying the prerequisites for using semi-structured interviews.** This method of data collection was deemed appropriate for the investigation of this phenomenon.

**2. Retrieving and using previous knowledge.** The process of carrying out a literature search gave me a good opportunity to grasp prior knowledge (Barriball & While, 1994; Krauss et al., 2009). I also consulted with a few experts who had previously investigated EI and acculturation; and developed my understanding of how this may present itself among later generation populations (Krauss et al., 2009; Rabionet, 2011).

**3. Formulating the preliminary semi-structured interview guide.** The structure of the interview schedule was kept very loose (Astedt-Kurki & Heikkinen, 1994; Dearnley, 2005). Questions were short, open-ended (Krueger & Casey, 2000) and flexible (Dearnley, 2005). This was to enable a dialogue between myself and the participant (Whiting, 2008; Cridland, Jones, Caputi & Magee, 2015). As I was aware there would be an overlap between the themes explored, I created opportunities to change the order of the questions (Dearnley 2005) in order to maintain a flow throughout the interview.

**4. Pilot testing the interview guide.** The pilot interviews played a very big role

in adjustments to the interview schedule (Barriball & While, 1994; Chenail 2011) and improved the quality of data I was collecting (Chenail, 2011). First, there was a process of internal testing, where I was able to evaluate my initial interview schedule with my supervisors (Barriball & While, 1994; Chenail, 2011). I considered my own position as a British Bangladeshi, and how this may have created bias and inappropriate leading questions (Barriball & While, 1994).

The field testing was a simulation of the real interview situation (Barriball & While, 1994; Chenail, 2011) and played a major role in guiding me to reflect on questions that were suitable for my study aims (see Appendix G and Appendix H for the changes to interview schedule) (Krauss et al., 2009; Chenail, 2011). Initially, I felt that many of the responses regarding participants' EI were focused around the behaviours present in their lives. Although this was important, I felt I was not asking enough follow-up questions regarding their emotional experiences. By asking them about an earlier memory of being British Bangladeshi, I was able to develop a clearer narrative of their relationship with their EI, rather than just asking about how they identified EI, which sometimes confused them. I became more conscious of time (Chenail, 2011, Cridland et al., 2015) and reflected on collecting data completely necessary to my study (Gibbs et al., 2007).

**5. Presenting the complete semi-structured interview guide.** In a semi-structured interview, it was possible to focus on the issues which were meaningful for the participants, allowing diverse perceptions to be expressed (Cridland et al., 2015).