

**An exploration of Adult Third Culture Kids' experience of transitioning to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology of London Metropolitan University.

by

**Alla Montazer**

Student Identification Number: 16025898

Supervised by Dr Raffaello Antonino

School of Social Sciences and Professions

London Metropolitan University

June 2023

**Declaration**

I hereby declare that the work submitted in this dissertation is fully the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Name: Alla Montazer

Date: June 2023

### **Acknowledgements**

I thank my supervisor, Dr Raffaello Antonino, for the support, encouragement and the feedback provided throughout this process, which allowed me to widen my lens and point of view to capture so much more detail. I am also grateful to Dr Angela Loulopoulou for her consistent support and encouragement throughout this process.

The support of my cohort and friends was invaluable throughout the years and this work would have been a lot more difficult to complete without them being there.

I am also eternally grateful to my parents, without whom this experience would not have happened, and I would not have embarked on this journey of discovering who TCK's are.

My endless thanks go to my husband, without whom I would not have had the opportunity and courage to embark on this journey and get to the end.

## Table of Contents

Title page .....	1
Declaration.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
<i>Table of Contents</i> .....	4
Abstract .....	7
Glossary .....	8
1. Chapter 1: Introduction.....	9
1.1. Reflexive Statement.....	9
1.2. Relevance to Counselling Psychology.....	13
2. Chapter 2: Critical Literature Review.....	17
2.1. Theoretical Framework.....	17
2.2. Definitions .....	17
2.3. Distinguishing characteristics of the TCK definition .....	19
2.4. Characteristics of the TCK experience .....	20
2.5. Advantages of the TCK experience.....	22
2.6. Disadvantages of the TCK experience .....	23
2.6.1. Challenges forming close relationships .....	23
2.6.2. Belonging.....	27
2.6.3. Identity Formation .....	30
2.7. Summary.....	35
2.8. Critique of the TCK concept.....	36
2.8.1. Age of departure .....	36
2.8.2. Differences in cultures .....	38
2.8.3. Summary.....	40
2.9. Gap, Research Aims and Research Question .....	40
3. Chapter 3: Methodology .....	43
3.1. Choice of methodology.....	43
3.2. Ontological and Epistemological positions .....	44
3.3. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis .....	45
3.3.1. Phenomenology.....	45
3.3.2. Idiography .....	46
3.3.3. Hermeneutics .....	46
3.4. Other qualitative methods.....	47

3.4.1. Grounded Theory .....	47
3.4.2. Narrative Analysis .....	48
3.4.3. Discourse Analysis.....	49
3.5. Procedure .....	49
3.5.1. Data Collection and Recruitment.....	49
3.5.2. Inclusion and Exclusion criteria.....	50
3.5.3. Participants.....	50
3.5.4. Interviews.....	52
3.5.5. Data Analysis.....	53
3.5.6. Ethical Considerations .....	54
3.5.7. Informed Consent.....	55
3.5.8. Confidentiality and Data Security.....	55
3.5.9. Sensitivity of Research Topic .....	56
3.5.10. Research Quality .....	56
3.5.11. Methodological Reflexivity .....	58
4. Chapter 4: Results and Analysis .....	62
4.1. Superordinate Theme 1: The creation of me and my home.....	64
4.1.1. Subtheme 1.1: I had a very different story from most people .....	64
4.1.2. Subtheme 1.2: I don't truly belong here .....	67
4.1.3. Subtheme 1.3: A home within myself?.....	71
4.2. Superordinate Theme 2: Meaningful connections.....	74
4.2.1. Subtheme 2.1: The role of family .....	75
4.2.2. Subtheme 2.2: The seesaw of losing and finding friendships .....	78
4.3. Superordinate Theme 3: The turmoil of adolescence and choice.....	82
4.3.1. Subtheme 3.1: Intricacies of choice .....	82
4.3.2. Subtheme 3.2: An important age .....	86
4.3.3. Subtheme 3.3: The undercurrent of emotions.....	88
5. Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion .....	92
5.1. Superordinate Theme 1.....	92
5.1.1. Impact on personal identity formation.....	92
5.1.2. Sense of belonging.....	97
5.1.3. Lack of a physical home .....	99
5.2. Superordinate Theme 2.....	100
5.2.1. Connections with others.....	100
5.2.2. Losses.....	103

5.3. Superordinate Theme 3 .....	105
5.3.1. Role of choice .....	105
5.3.2. Adolescence .....	110
5.3.3. Emotional and Psychological response.....	112
5.4. Implications for practice .....	115
5.5. Limitations of the study .....	117
5.6. Conclusion .....	120
References .....	123
Appendices	
Appendix A – Recruitment flyer .....	145
Appendix B – Social media advertisements .....	146
Appendix C – Participant Information Sheet.....	147
Appendix D – Interview Schedule.....	148
Appendix E – Distress Protocol.....	149
Appendix F – Sample Transcript.....	152
Appendix G – Ethical Approval .....	155
Appendix H – Consent Form.....	180
Appendix I – De-briefing form.....	181
Appendix J – Analysis process .....	182
Appendix K – Excerpt of reflexive journal .....	184
List of tables	
Table 1 Participant information .....	52
Table 2 Results table.....	62
Table 3 Hypothetical formulation of a TCK experience .....	108

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are individuals who spent a significant part of their developmental years outside of their country of origin. They differ from traditional migrants due to the relocation being driven by parents' choice, with a temporary mobility pattern. Research on TCK's suggests that their migratory experience(s) can be linked to challenges with identity development, a lack of belonging and others. There is a lack of consensus on the impact of age at which TCK's experience the relocations and little focus on cultural aspects of home and host countries. This study addresses this gap by looking at the experiences of adult TCK's who came to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 years old from EU countries.

**Design and Method:** Verbatim accounts of six semi-structured interviews from adult TCK's were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

**Findings:** Three superordinate themes emerged: a. The creation of me and my home (referring to the impact on personal identity formation and a lack of belonging); b. Meaningful connections (referring to the impact the move(s) had on significant relationships); c. The turmoil of adolescence and choice (referring to the interaction of adolescence with the impact of the move and the lack of choice in moving).

**Conclusion:** The study's findings echo the findings of published literature on TCK's – there appear to be difficulties with establishing who the individual is, where they belong and relationships with significant others. The study also highlights unique findings that experiencing specific losses (of important people, and personal characteristics such as confidence); as well as identifying that the lack of choice in the move process differentiated these TCK's from their non-TCK counterparts, as well as their parents. Implications of the findings are discussed.

### **Glossary**

**Third Culture Kid (TCK)** – an individual who has left their country of origin before the age of 18 and has spent a significant part of their developmental years abroad.

**Home country** – TCK's country of origin, can also be seen as the birth country.

**Host country** – the country or countries the TCK moves to.

**CoP** – Counselling Psychology

**CP's** – Counselling Psychologists

**IPA** – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis



## Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis will start with a reflexive statement, illustrating my view as an author to provide the reader with an understanding of my personal position, potential biases and the methods utilised to try to minimise these. I will then illustrate the relevance of this topic to CoP prior to delving into a detailed critical literature review.

TCK's are a particular group of immigrants, whose migration pattern separates them from other types of immigrants. The definition of TCK's upon which this research is based refers to individuals who left their country of origin before the age of 18 and have lived abroad for a significant part of their developmental years (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). I will discuss this definition within the critical literature review chapter and distinguish it within the wider pool of immigrants and then I will focus on individual studies that investigate the concept and its unique characteristics as well as application of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), cultural, social and personal identity theories and Culture Shock (Oberg, 1960).

Critique on the theoretical framework and the current studies on TCK's literature will be presented next. I will then present the gap in literature; my research aims to answer the research question of this study: *How do adult TCK's from EU cultures experience their transition to the UK between ages 10 and 17?*

### 1.1 Reflexive Statement

Reflexivity is an important aspect of engaging in research, as it is not possible to separate the observer from the observed in qualitative research, and there is a "reciprocal relationship between the two" (Donati, 2016, p.67). In this section I will illustrate the salient personal relationship I hold with the topic of TCK's and reflect on assumptions and biases that may have impacted this study to illustrate to the reader who the researcher is (Elliott et al., 1999).

**Commented [AM1]:** Initial reference to additional theories covered as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's comments

**Commented [AM2]:** Insertion of Research Question earlier on in the thesis as per Dr Cucchi's report

I chose to research the topic of TCK's because I identify as one. Discovering the identity of TCK's was an important moment in my life as I found a group to which I felt I belonged. Reflexivity and personal therapy helped me see that not knowing where I belong contributed to a lack of confidence in who I was up until that point in my life.

I left my country of origin, Ukraine, at the age of 9 and moved to Cyprus with my parents and sister, where I stayed until the age of 18. At 18, I left Cyprus for University in the UK, this time by myself. For the time being, I am still in the UK, however, neither Cyprus nor UK have ever felt like home to me. UK became a natural next country of choice because I completed a British curriculum school in Cyprus. When I arrived in London, I felt that I would eventually leave and go elsewhere, but for the moment I'm still not sure where that "elsewhere" is. My developmental years were spent between Cyprus and Ukraine, trying to keep in touch with my culture of origin and learn about the culture of Mediterranean Cyprus.

Reading about the challenges that most TCK's face was both difficult and enlightening because I was able to identify with most of them and until learning about them, I was not fully aware that I was experiencing them. For instance, Gilbert (2008) talks about loss of the past that wasn't. I remember numerous times listening to my parents' reminiscing about their school and university life in Ukraine and the culturally specific social encounters they had there. This illustrated how my experiences have been different because of all the travel that were part of my life. This made me feel like I had lost something that other people had the privilege of knowing and left me with a sense of sadness.

Since the start of this research process, a war has broken out in my home country, Ukraine. The war has created a huge amount of uncertainty about whether I would ever be able to return to Ukraine. This shocking event has thrown my identity into question once again, as not only am I a TCK, but now the choice to return to Ukraine has been taken out of my control. I am still processing this event and actively reflecting on how this may have

impacted my research process. When the war started, I was in the process of analysing my transcripts and, due to the shock of the war, I took a break from this process for several weeks.

I believe that in a way, the war has pushed my identity as a TCK to be less prominent, as it forced my home identity to come to the forefront and become stronger. This thus allowed me to potentially see my participants' accounts from a slightly more distanced position, possibly creating a slightly wider lens. Nonetheless, it is important to consider that my identification as a TCK has likely influenced how I approached the design and analysis of this research.

Initially, I may have been more driven to look for studies that supported my experience of being a TCK and disregarded studies that did not illustrate the same experiences. I may have unwittingly wanted to find that my experiences are validated, and shared by others, to normalise my own. Engaging in personal reflexivity (Willig, 2013) has encouraged me to think about the assumptions and biases I may have, be aware of them, so that I can try to minimise them in the research process. For instance, I discovered that I am incredibly close to the concept of TCK's, and after re-reading my work and discussions with my supervisor, I had to go back and revisit the literature I found initially on this topic and look at it again with a critical eye. Similarly, in analysing my participants' interviews, my interpretations initially may have taken a highly personal stance which I was then able to identify and amend through supervision and peer review. It was difficult for me to critique the concept and experiences of TCK's because they had given me a sense of belonging. However, looking at the concept as a theoretical construct, as opposed to something that I want to belong to, allowed me to see several problems that exist in the current studies, which I will discuss in detail next. This also forced me to start looking outside the solitary

confinement of the TCK concept and look more widely at literature on migration and identity.

Pollock & Van Reken (2017) and Storti (2022) highlight the fact that TCK's tend to seek out others who have had similar life experiences. Literature on migration also highlights that immigrants tend to find others to be close to who share fundamental values such as ethnicity or faith/religion (Anthias, 2007). I am married to a TCK who shared a similar life journey to mine and my close group of friends are all internationally mobile TCK's. I don't think that I consciously seek out other TCK's, rather, the similarity of experiences creates a common ground and removes the need to explain some difficult questions – such as “Where are you from?” For someone, who identifies as a TCK, the difficulty of this question highlights the fact that it could be asking “Where do you belong?” A lot of TCK's can experience confusion thinking about where they might belong because of their varied lifestyle, thus what is meant to be a simple question asked as part of small talk can lead to a complicated response associated with negative feelings stemming from inner confusion about belongingness.

Through personal reflexivity (Willig, 2013) I am becoming aware of the fact that I need to bracket my personal experiences and the resulting beliefs to limit their effect on my research (Spinelli, 2005). This involves looking outside the TCK concept and integrate literature on immigration.

Smith et al. (2009) and Milton (2010) illustrate that even through bracketing it is almost impossible to achieve complete objectivity. This is one of the reasons why choosing IPA as an approach is important for me, as it recognises the integral role of the researcher in the research process (Smith, 2007) and thus recognises that obtaining objectivity is not an aim within this research. Through continuous reflection, maintenance of a reflective journal (Kasket, 2013), and discussions with my supervisor, I have aimed for transparency of my

**Commented [AM3]:** Reference to additional theoretical considerations added in as per both reports

**Commented [AM4]:** Reflection on concept of objectivity, which then links to ontological and epistemological positioning, as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's feedback

position throughout the process. In basing my research on the framework of critical realism – underpinned by the ontological assumption that an independent reality exists, independently of our knowledge or understanding of it, and that access to this reality is mediated and interpreted through human perceptions and social constructs (Yucel, 2018), I have submitted myself into a diversity of experiences which are different from my own.

My ontological and epistemological commitments developed and emerged throughout the research process, which is an additional factor that needed to be incorporated within the reflection of how this study was developed. I started off from a position of wanting to be aware of ‘objectivity’ and a fixed reality which I can access fully through research – having spent many of my formative years being educated from a positivistic perspective. I initially started thinking about the TCK concept as an ‘objective reality’ that needed to be studied and tried to incorporate many factors into trying to distance myself from contaminating this. However, through academic discussions, commitment to the research process and deeper understanding of IPA, and the tenets of Counselling Psychology as a discipline, I came to the stance of the TCK concept existing as an experience of reality, which, from the perspective of this study, cannot be wholly removed from my understanding of this reality as the researcher who tries to access it. Thus, critical realism became the fundamental framework to which this study is committed - incorporating within it a reality which is mind-independent, structured, and changing (Yucel, 2018); and our knowledge of it to be relative to the subjective construction of it by the human researcher who is accessing it (Groff, 2004).

The research process has been an interesting and sometimes difficult experience. Being aware of the uncomfortable shifts and changes, journaling and discussing my position has been an important part of reflexively evaluating my biases with the hope that it has allowed me to become a more confident and congruent CP (Garraway, 2016).

## 1.2 Relevance to Counselling Psychology

CoP relies on a humanistic underpinning in ensuring that there is an empathic engagement with the client and a concern with health, not a pathology (Woolfe, 2016). It emphasises the role and subjective standpoint of the individual being, responsible for understanding their own well-being (Woolfe, 2016; Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009).

TCK's are individuals who have experienced a unique experience which may, in some cases lead to experiences of distress including depression and anxiety (Bushong, 2013), and difficulty in identity development due to uncertainty regarding belongingness. The experience of TCK's is becoming more prevalent as the world is getting smaller through globalisation (Sellers, 2011). It is therefore likely that UK CP's, as well as allied professionals, are likely to see TCK's in their services.

Therapy has been put forward as a helpful option for TCK's who experience psychological distress (e.g. Devens, 2005; Klemens, 2008; List 2001; Schulz, 1985) however therapists need to be familiar with the unique challenges of this group to be able to identify them and address them (Mortimer, 2010). There is little guidance in the literature regarding the exact counselling frameworks that can be used with TCK's and no single integrated approach of the few that have been suggested (Melles & Frey, 2014; Sellers, 2011).

CoP is in a unique position to help understand the process that TCK's are going through for several reasons. The focus of CoP is to alleviate the distress and promote well-being of an individual by looking at their idiosyncratic experience but also to take into consideration how the individual interacts with the physical, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of their life (Jones Nielsen & Nicholas, 2016). TCK's do not represent a clinical subgroup of clients who access mental health services, rather they are likely to present as healthy individuals who may be experiencing difficulties at certain points in their lives.

Accordingly, CP's are in an ideal position to be able to work with TCK's, and more so than other mental health professionals, due to the focus of the profession on the "well-being" and the uniqueness of the individual's experience.

CoP is based on a relational principle, meaning that the therapeutic relationship is at the core of the practice while the practitioner adheres to the scientist-practitioner model of professional practice (Corrie & Callahan, 2000). This allows CP's to focus on the process that the TCK may be going through. TCK's are not likely to have a diagnosis prescribed to them, therefore other mental health professionals are less likely to be working with them. In focusing on the process, CP's are more likely to be able to access the individual factors that may have contributed to the TCK's experience that may, at certain points in their lives, lead to distress. With such attention to process, CP's are more likely to be able to tease out the individual aspects of each unique TCK experience.

In our role as scientist-practitioner (Woolfe, 2016; Blair, 2010; Corrie & Callahan, 2000) CP's can contribute to the literature by bridging the gap between research on TCK's and clinical practice. Engaging in such process research as opposed to just outcome research will help take the CoP profession forward (Hemsley, 2013), therefore focusing on the process that occurs between a TCK and a CP is likely to be beneficial to the individual and the profession, and this is what this study looks to do.

CoP is well equipped to work with individuals and groups across the lifespan (Duffy & Duffy, 2007), which allows the CP to take into consideration all TCK's life experiences to date as opposed to looking at only one point in time.

Additionally, one of the distinguishing features of CoP is its commitment to social justice, focusing on realising people's potential in the society in which they live (James, 2016) and multiculturalism, which includes looking at cultural diversity that allows and encourages critique and adaptation of diagnoses, psychometrics and standardised treatments which do not

**Commented [AM5]:** Elaboration on multiculturalism and social justice as per Dr Flothmann's report

typically fit non-majority populations (Moller, 2011). Globally, CoP profession developed to better serve multicultural populations (du Preez et al., 2016; Bantjes et al., 2016). In the UK, CoP is in the process of engaging in social justice with further proactivity emerging through the years (James, 2016). Research on the topic of TCK's will not only inform the professional working with the TCK on how to do this effectively but also help the CoP profession move the social justice and multiculturalism focus forward.



## Chapter 2: Critical Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework – TCK concept

This section will define the concept of TCK's and elaborate on the individual characteristics that it entails as is currently presented in the literature. Pollock and Van Reken's (2001) definition of TCK's will be presented as a starting point of the concept, with further elaboration on individual aspects of the definition – duration of stay abroad and age of departure. I will then discuss three individual characteristics that literature suggests TCK's experience: challenges forming close relationships, effects on sense of belonging and identity formation. Theories of attachment (Bowlby, 1969), social, personal, and cultural identity formation as well as empirical evidence of each of these characteristics will be provided to show how current literature appears to corroborate the findings in line with the concept of TCK's together with individual critique points on each. Section 2.8 of this chapter will then take the original concept further by offering overall critique from a CoP perspective, which serves to create a holistic understanding of the individual across their lifespan (Duffy & Duffy, 2007), leading to a summary, research aims and research question in section 2.9.

### 2.2 Definitions

According to The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) there are 281 million international migrants worldwide, representing 3.6% of the world's population (UN, n.d.). The UN defines long-term international migrants as those who: live outside of their passport country for a period exceeding one year, have migrated voluntarily and expect repatriation to their country of origin (UN, 2013).

The definition criteria used by the UN is like the TCK's definition. This term was first put forward by the American sociologist and anthropologist Dr. Ruth Hill Useem in the 1950's. She referred to "children who accompany parents into another society", by making

**Commented [AM6]:** Reference to additional theoretical frameworks added in as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's feedback.

observations of her own children and the children of her research participants growing up in India while she was doing research there (Useem, 1999, para 6).

Since then, the concept has been researched and developed further by Pollock and Van Reken (2001), who define a TCK as “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside of the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any” (p.19). A further refinement of the definition has been put forward, which streamlines it to refer to “a person who spends a significant part of his or her first 18 years of life accompanying parent(s) into a country or countries that are different from at least one parent's passport country(ies) due to a parent’s choice of work or advanced training” (Pollock et al., 2017). The implications of updating of this definition is discussed and addressed in section 2.3.

Today, the concept of TCK’s deserves attention since globalisation and technological advances have allowed an increase in international mobility for many people, creating more families with children who live away from their country of origin (UN, n.d.). It is therefore inevitable, that many individuals are likely to find themselves falling into the definition of TCK’s, in line with Pollock et al. (2017) definition, as well as a broader definition of Cross Cultural Kids (CCK) which refers to people who have lived or meaningfully interacted with two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during the first eighteen years of their lives (Pollock et al., 2017). Many organisations are likely to send their employees abroad, which includes transferring families with children from country to country.

Culture shock (CS), which is “anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse” (Oberg, 1960, p.177) is often experienced by individuals who find themselves in a new culture. From the perspective of a TCK, the experience of culture shock is complicated by the fact that moving back and forth from one culture to

another happens before they completed the “critical developmental task of forming a sense of their own personal and cultural identity” (Pollock et al., 2017, p.39). It is the interaction of the timing of the move, together with the duration of it, that creates the unique experiences and characteristics of TCK’s.

### **2.3 Distinguishing characteristics of the TCK definition**

Numerous authors (e.g. Pollock et al., 2017, Tan et al., 2021; de Waal & Born, 2021) discuss how individuals who are raised in more than one culture are likely to share many common factors, such as a connection to more than one culture, and often because of that, not necessarily experiencing a “full” sense of belonging to either culture. Those whose lives are cross-cultural because of moving are also likely to share issues of adjustment to new cultures and acculturation struggles. These are similarities that are likely, to some extent, be shared by all subgroups of immigrants – from refugees to second generation immigrant children to those who fall within the definition of a TCK.

However, the particularities of the TCK subgroup are that, due to the relocation being driven by parents’ choice of work or study, or other reasons, the TCK’s mobility pattern is to temporarily move abroad with the expectation of repatriating to their home country; and may include living in one, sometimes many different host countries. As a result, neither the TCK family nor their host country are likely to expect TCK’s to root themselves and belong in the host country. This is unlike the traditional moving pattern of an immigrant family, who are more likely to make one significant move to a new country in which they settle permanently and thus consider this to be a permanent home (Tan et al., 2021).

The temporariness aspect of the move is the streamlined addition which was added in within the TCK definition by Pollock et al. (2017) with the intention of highlighting the difference between this subgroup and other types of temporary migrants and allowing for a common language to emerge when discussing these individual subgroups of migrants.

A systemic review of TCK empirical research (Tan et al., 2021) has found that, to date, whilst there is a widespread interest in psychosocial developmental issues related to TCK's, there is also a lack of programmatic research with a diverse landscape that covers a wide array of topics, but which is scattered amongst publications in the fields of psychology, anthropology, education, theology, and others. This is further complicated by a lack of a standardised definition of TCK's. Most studies highlight two criteria involving (1) an early – life experience before the age of 18 and (2) living in a culture different from their parents' home culture. However, there is lack of agreement on the critical length of time spent outside of one's home culture to be considered a TCK and a lack of agreement behind the reasoning behind the move. One of the aspects that may have contributed to this is that the definition of TCK's was likely to have been designed as a layman term to allow for a narrative to develop around the commonality of issues that are faced by this group of individuals, however it was not initially designed for the purposes of academic research (Tan et al., 2021). To date, whilst there are proposals on how to standardise the definition for the purposes of empirical research (e.g. Tan et al., 2021), there isn't one which is universally accepted and applied by researchers.

Thus, for the purposes of this study, the term TCK is used to describe individuals who individuals who left their country of origin before the age of 18 and have lived abroad for a significant part of their developmental years (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It is considered that this allows for the capturing of the experience of individuals moving to the UK within the age range of 10 and 17, as will be discussed in more detail in section 2.9.

#### 2.4 Characteristics of the TCK experience

TCK's experience a unique creation of an interstitial space, a third culture, that is different to that of their parents (first culture) and that of the host culture (second culture) (Mosanya & Kwiatkowska, 2021; Pollock et al., 2017; Useem & Cottrell, 1996). The third

**Commented [AM7]:** Reference to Third Space Theory as per Dr Cucchi's feedback

culture that is created through such an experience refers to the unique characteristics taken from the internationally mobile lifestyle shared by those falling within the definition of TCK's (Pollock et al, 2017). This could be conceptualised from the perspective of the third space theory (Bhabha, 1994). Using this theory, the third space represents an intermediary non-physical space, not constricted by borders. This allows for two or more cultures to merge into a hybrid that creates the uniqueness of experience for each person. Third space theory suggests that every person is a hybrid of their unique set of identity factors. Conditions and locations of social and cultural exclusion have their reflection in symbolic conditions and locations of cultural exchange, which falls within the descriptions of experiences spoken of by those who define themselves as TCK's and who refer to being in-between worlds, not fully belonging to either (Pollock et al., 2017).

The concept of acculturation, referring to the process of cultural and psychological change that results from the continuing contact between people of different cultural backgrounds (Berry, 2006; Berry & Sam, 2016) is necessary to be considered when thinking about the TCK experience, given that TCK's encounter transitions and contact with numerous cultures. Berry & Sam (2016) theorise that the strategies that are utilised by people when managing the process of such change can be divided into four distinct categories:

- Assimilation: when the individual chooses to not maintain their home cultural identity, instead to seek daily interaction with the host culture;
- Separation: when the individual places value on holding on to the original culture and simultaneously avoid interaction with others of a different culture;
- Integration: when there is an interest in maintaining one's original culture and having daily interactions with other cultural groups in the host society;

**Commented [AM8]:** Elaboration on what acculturation is as per Dr Flothmann's report

- Marginalisation: when there is little interest or possibility of maintenance of home culture and little interest in having relation with host culture (often due to reasons of enforced home cultural loss and exclusion or discrimination within the host culture).

Tan et al. (2021) discuss how the TCK experience does not necessarily fully fit within the acculturation framework of assimilation, acculturation, separation and marginalisation (Berry & Sam, 2016) for several reasons. Firstly, this acculturation strategy is framed from the perspective of intergroup or intercultural contact of existing cultural groups however, TCK's find it difficult to identify with existing cultural groups due to their multinational history. Secondly, existing acculturation models focus on the adult migrant's experience – which is different to a TCK, since an adult migrant is likely to have had an opportunity to develop a personal identity grounded within their home culture prior to the experience of moving. Thirdly, when moving as children due the parent's choice, the voluntary aspect of moving is removed from the young person. This arguably may place this group within an “involuntary immigrant” category, which, from a research perspective mainly looks at experiences of refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. Berry, 2006) whose trajectories and experiences are likely to be very different to those of TCK's.

## 2.5 Advantages of being a TCK

Research has shown that TCK's experience numerous benefits associated with international relocations such as feelings that the family is strengthened through the experience of mobility (McLachlan, 2005); being more comfortable with the experience of travel, have a better understanding of different cultures and languages, and have greater adaptability and flexibility (Fletcher, 1995; Gerner & Perry, 2000; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). High mobility and exposure to different cultures can also enhance intercultural sensitivity and promote an expanded worldview, amongst other social and cognitive skills

**Commented [AM9]:** Focus and additional insertion of advantages TCK's experience as per Dr Cucchi's and Dr Flothmann's feedback

(Fail et al., 2004; Pollock et al., 2017; Straffon, 2003); as well as positive diversity beliefs (de Waal et al., 2020).

## **2.6. Disadvantages of being a TCK**

On the flipside, early displacement into a new culture can lead to several challenges, which research has focused on in greater detail; such as challenges with relationship formation (e.g. Hervey, 2009; Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2018; Choi & Luke 2011; Choi et al., 2013; Bikos et al., 2009), difficulties with finding a sense of belonging (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Nette & Hayden 2007; Moore & Barker, 2012; Bikos et al., 2009; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009; Gilbert, 2008), and difficulties with identity formation (Cranston, 2017; Rounsaville, 2014; Moore & Barker, 2012; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2008) . These challenges are of interest to a CP, as well as allied mental health professionals because they can be deeply integrated with the presenting distress of an individual asking for support (Gaw 2000; Bushong, 2013). These challenges are discussed in detail next.

### **2.6.1 Challenges forming close relationships**

Several studies have found that TCK's are often displaced from their extended families because of their relocation(s) and, as a result, can have little familiarity with their home culture (Fletcher 1995; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Pollock et al., 2017). The authors suggest that this can lead to TCK's becoming more guarded in making close friends, avoid commitment, detach easily from relationships, be cautious of social involvement, and not get fully integrated in any culture. Similarly, de Waal and Born (2021) have found that the TCK's tend to emphasise relationships more than geographical locations in defining their belonging, especially their relationships with immediate family members. The authors suppose that the connections the TCK's are likely to be referring to are the ones with their immediate family members and friends who have also experienced numerous relocations– as these are the constant factors within their highly mobile life. This would suggest a highly

selective process in the formation of close relationships – as it is limited to the immediate family that the TCK belongs to; and the people they then meet who have a similar highly mobile lifestyle to them, which is likely to be smaller than the traditional cultural groups in society.

Choi and Luke (2011) used a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore female TCK's subjective experience of friendships at a university in the USA and found that their participants expressed that they didn't feel that they fit in with the current cultural norms. Their participants found themselves in a university setting unable to form meaningful relationships and reflected on how they developed specific coping strategies to manage the emotional distress experienced due to a lack of friendships they formed. These included the TCK's intentionally trying to remain detached and being selective in what they would self-disclose or using disconnection before the relationships had a chance to develop.

However, the study focused on six participants who all attended the same university in USA and who were all in early adulthood (18-25 y.o.). It is therefore possible that the authors identified characteristics of friendships reflected in this group of people, potentially associated with this stage of life and development, as opposed to being related to the general concept of the TCK experience. Furthermore, these participants all had very different life trajectories, originating from a wide variety of countries and each having multiple transitions, accordingly a large variety of factors may have been contributing to the experiences discussed, such as the variety in their family life, and difference in support systems, as initial examples.

The findings of Choi and Luke (2011) were further elaborated on by Choi et al. (2013) who looked at the distinctive characteristics of TCK's closest relationships using Q methodology which enabled them to distinguish perspectives presented by 82 statements generated by 15 female college TCK's and followed up with interviews to generate



qualitative data. They also found that although many TCK's tend to be socially competent and friendly, they tend to invest less emotion in their friendships, focusing instead on socially-connected friendships (friends who are fun to be around, and easily accessible) and functionally-connected friendships (friends as resources) rather than emotionally invested friendships that focus on forming deeper attachments. The authors presumed that these approaches appeared to cope with the frequent changes TCK's must endure through multiple moves.

Gilbert (2008) also found that some TCK's find themselves emotionally disengaged from their peers and consequently unable to engage in authentic, growth fostering relationships. Gilbert's (2008) study focused on hidden losses, which are losses that are not acknowledged and ones that do not have an open permission or time dedicated to grieving and processing them. These losses may be invisible to people in TCK's life and thus there is likely to be little time or space given to dealing with them. An example is the loss of familiarity of smells, tastes, geography-specific opportunities, and climate which was often cited by the participants of Gilbert's study.

This study used a qualitative approach based on in-depth face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and email correspondence for data collection from 43 participants aged 19-61 who had lived all over the world. It may be difficult to conclude that the findings can be attributed to the general international experience since other important factors such as their different ages at times of relocations, different durations of time in foreign countries, different cultures represented by home and host countries, were not focused on. Considering the dimensions of factors such as age, home, and host cultures, amongst others may add to further understanding this experience better.

The above quoted studies could be considered from the perspective of attachment theory. Bowlby (1969) developed attachment theory after observing the damaging effects that

**Commented [AM10]:** Consideration of Attachment Theory as per Dr Flothmann's report

long term caregiver-child separations had on adolescents. The basic tenet of this theory is that children seek physical and psychological proximity to their attachment figures, in particular when they feel threatened distressed or outside of their safety zone. Bowlby (1969) and more recent research (e.g. Marvin et al, 2016) has shown that the attachment system is activated when humans, in particular children, feel threatened. Threatening events, in turn, can increase the accessibility of internal working models – representations of the world and significant others, based on prior interpersonal experiences (Bretherton & Mulholland, 2008) which may trigger attachment relevant behaviours such as seeking comfort from attachment figures (Fearon & Belsky, 2016) to reduce their experience of distress. This theory therefore explains how people relate to their attachment figures and that this can later on affect the development and functioning of other relationships later in life (Juang et al., 2018).

For TCKs, as well as other migrants, transitioning into a new host culture can represent a stressful situation. Attachment theory therefore can clarify how they may experience such events.

According to Bowlby (1969) when primary caregivers provide sensitive care and support across time, they provide children with three significant critical needs of:

1. proximity maintenance (staying in close contact with children and providing protection in threatening situations)
2. safe haven (providing a child with a sense of refuge, safety and comfort while feeling under threat)
3. secure base (instilling a sense of confidence and efficacy in the child so that they feel safe enough to explore the world around them).

When such needs are provided, the child is given the tools to navigate stressful life situations and promote their emotional development. This affects their ability to form and maintain close relationships into adolescence and adulthood.

The variability of provision of the critical needs described above affects the development of four attachment patterns that tend to develop in children across cultures (Ainsworth et al, 1978; Main & Solomon, 1990; Mesmer et al, 2016): secure, anxious-avoidant, anxious-resistant, and disorganised. The first is typically seen developing when the above-described critical needs are mostly met, while the latter three represent insecure attachment styles that tend to develop when the provision of such needs is inconsistent or not present, and/or in situations where significant traumatic events or abuse may take place.

Migration is accompanied by having to learn and navigate new rules, customs and regulations within the host culture – which can create a stressful situation. This can also be accompanied by a sense of loss of previous role and belonging that they may have had in their home culture. According to Bowlby (1973) leaving behind everything familiar is a natural clue to danger which therefore signifies a potential threat, and therefore encourages activating of attachment patterns whereby the individual tries to interact with people who make them feel safe.

For TCK's this could signify that they may seek extra reliance on their families during the time of migration, relying on these relationships to help them re-establish the feelings of safety. Research by de Waal and Born (2021) supports the notion of reliance on family through their findings that for TCK's in their study, their family relationships were strengthened in the migration experiences of TCK's, suggesting that reliance on these attachments may have been a default coping strategy utilised by these TCK's.

### **2.6.2 Belonging**

The issues of home and belonging have been considered to a great degree within TCK literature. Belonging has been considered to represent a personal feeling of belonging to a certain group, geographical place, or place in society (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend, 1974); while Corrales et al. (2016) have described belonging to represent a core component for

young people to engage in meaning making and identity formation. Baumeister and Leary (1995) describe belonging as a basic human need, specifying that the changes in one's belongingness status, whether real, potential, or imagined, is likely to produce changes in their emotional affect; whereby a feeling of increased belongingness is linked to positive affect; and a decrease in belongingness is linked to negative affect.

The trajectory of TCK's sojourns is likely to affect their connection to their community groups, geographical places, and their place in society due to the numerous changes they are likely to experience when moving from country to country. This therefore is likely to impact the feelings of belonging, which can also manifest in feelings of rootlessness whereby there is a lack of belonging to any specific place or group. This in turn can create a sense of restlessness – the need to keep moving to find a sense of belonging, (Pollock et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have found that the adult TCK participants feel they can fit in with many groups but lack a sense of full belonging to any (e.g. Greenholtz & Kim, 2009; Moore & Barker, 2012; Walter & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

Fail et al. (2004) carried out qualitative research based on a multiple case study which examined the lives of 11 former international school students who attended an international school between 20-50 years prior to the study. They gathered data through postal questionnaires and in-depth interviews to draw out multi-dimensional pictures of their lives. They suggested that 6 of their participants felt like outsiders in the countries in which they are living, even when these countries were their passport countries. For these participants time had not made any difference to the feelings of marginality, and they had no sense of belonging in the communities in which they were living. The remaining 5 participants reported feeling like they belong in multiple places that they lived in throughout their lives, being able to adapt to whatever was necessary. While this study provides some insight into

how the individual trajectories of these individuals shaped their lives, it cannot be said that it is solely their international experience that was responsible for the effects they were describing. Individual life stories, including their relationships with family members and within friendship networks, significant events, experiences of trauma or even individual differences in age and cultural differences between home and host cultures would help in understanding the multiple dimensions of their experiences.

Moore and Barker (2012) investigated the cultural identities of 19 adults who had spent at least three of their developmental years (aged 6-18) outside of their birth country using a qualitative methodology – life story interviewing. Four of their participants were able to adapt and fit into different cultural contexts and environments, but they felt like they didn't truly belong anywhere. Seven of their participants said that they felt they belonged in two or three cultures; and the remaining six, despite being able to shift cultural identities or blend cultures, did not have a sense of belonging to any specific culture and several of them said that they had a strong desire to belong somewhere.

While these findings appear to corroborate the theoretical suppositions regarding the effect of the feelings of belonging, Moore and Barker (2012) acknowledge that socio-economic status, immersion in the host culture, as well as length and age of exposure were not taken into consideration and could contribute to a better understanding of how these experiences could have been shaped. Additionally, it may be worth considering what role, if any, the difference between home and host cultures may have played; as well as to what degree did the entire family integrate within the host culture as these factors could also play a role within how the experience for these TCK's may have played out. de Waal and Born (2021) used a mixed methods approach in combining poetic enquiry with coding and clustering of 20 TCK's stories. They investigated how their cultural identity shifted because of their moves, and whether they described their belonging in terms of personal relationships

or geographical locations. Their findings led them to conclude that the TCK's defined their belonging more in terms of personal relationships, suggesting for them the sense of belonging appears to be more related to the question of "who" I am, rather than "where" I am from.

The nature of the qualitative approach within this study limits the ability to generalise such findings and other aspects, such as differences in cultures, languages spoken or the nature of the TCK's parents work may have played a role in the creation of such feelings.

### 2.6.3 Identity formation

TCK's develop a sense of personal and cultural identity the same way that everyone else does – by catching it from the social environment around them (McCaig, 1996; Pollock et al., 2017). However, TCK's lives are filled with major transitions more frequently than those born and raised in one area (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). As a result, socially, TCK's are given many different social cues, rules, and behaviour from the variety of countries they live in, which can create confusion (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

It is necessary to consider theories of cultural, personal, and social identity formations as a way of conceptualising how TCK's may be presented with extra challenges when faced with the task of establishing their identity and a sense of belonging.

**Cultural Identity.** A culture can be considered to represent knowledge, traditions, ideas, values, beliefs, norms, and practices within a population (Hong et al, 2007). A cultural identity develops from this and can be defined as a part of the individual's self that signals the individual's connection to that culture (Wan & Chew, 2013). The development of such a cultural identity happens through the process of knowledge acquisition about cultural norms and practices. The individual can then attribute to oneself a label relevant to the membership in a given cultural community (Wan & Chew, 2013). For TCK's who transition between more than one culture, the development of a cultural identity may take on a more challenging process, given that they must learn to respond to and adapt to numerous cues and norms from

**Commented [AM11]:** Elaboration and additio to identity theories (including cultural and social identity to the existing discussion on personal identity formation) as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's report

the differential cultures they may find themselves in – at a critical time in their life – when they are developing a personal identity through adolescence. Van Reken (2012) discusses how for individuals such as TCK's who find themselves in obtaining cues from many different, or at times contradictory cultural paradigms, cultural identity may be more difficult to establish.

Multicultural individuals are tasked with trying to cognitively and psychologically integrate and organise the multitude of cultural cues and resulting cultural identities they are then left with. Amiot et al. (2007) and Yampolsky et al. (2016) in utilising the Cognitive Developmental Model of Social Identity Integration focus on identifying the following main stages of identity configuration:

1. Categorisation – referring to identifying with only one cultural group, seeing only one identity as being predominant and excluding other identities from the self.
2. Compartmentalisation – allows the individual to endorse multiple social identities, but they are kept separate from one another. These identities are context dependent and activated depending on social context but are not linked between themselves.
3. Integration – when an individual endorses belonging to different cultural groups, thus organising multiple identities to be equal with one another, enabling the establishment of one coherent supra-identity.

Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2021) study on female TCK's found that integrated cultural identity has been linked to a global mindset and social inclusiveness which were significant positive predictors of life satisfaction for TCK's.

Usborne and de la Sabonniere (2014) found that the clarity and consistency of cultural identity determine the clarity of the self concept and well-being. On the other hand, divergent selves with contradictory meanings proved challenging to identity integrity, causing stress to

self-efficacy and poor well-being. Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2023) also found that internal multicultural identity integration is vital to the positive functioning of TCK's; whereas TCK's with more compartmentalised multicultural identity may have decreased well-being partially because of a reduced sense of self-consistency. Self consistency refers to being the same in time and across situations and is a defining feature of identity (Erikson, 1980; Becker et al, 2018). While self efficacy refers to setting one's goals and acting on them suggesting that it is a context-specific judgement about one's own ability (Bandura, 1989).

**Personal identity.** Erikson's (1980) psychosocial stages of identity development model can be used to better understand how the international experience of TCK's may impact identity development. Erikson's model indicates that individuals go through eight stages of psychosocial development. Successful movement from one stage to the next is achieved by overcoming a crisis in that stage. The fifth stage of identity development, usually occurring in adolescence, involves the individual figuratively asking themselves who they are and figuring out what ideas, thoughts, or objects represent their way of thinking. To be able to answer these questions, the individual relies on the environment they find themselves in to establish their role. If the external environment is such that it creates a sense of threat for that individual, the person would need to prioritise their need for survival, which may take shape in the form of finding a sense of safety within a social group and ensuring that their basic needs are met. This may not leave enough room for the individual to spend time on establishing their exact role within that environment, and the adolescent may not establish their role, be unable to overcome this crisis at this time and, as a result, experience role confusion.

Erikson (1980) posits that the "young adulthood" stage is next, which is where individuals are faced with the task of being able to form intimate relationships with others. If



the previous stage is not successfully resolved, then the individual may have a poor sense of identity which in turn may result in unsuccessful and superficial relationships.

Erikson (1980) suggested that the stages of development discussed above occur from age 12 onwards. This is also the age group that matches the definition of TCK's and thus it can be suggested that there may be an interaction between the psychosocial development of the adolescent and the international experience of the TCK. The TCK may find themselves in the throes of learning about a new culture and trying to fit into it while at the same time trying to resolve the crisis of their individual developmental stage which may complicate things for them and delay their resolution of a crisis.

**Social identity.** Tajfel's (1974) social identity theory posits that an individual's self concept and identity derives from the knowledge of their position and membership within a social group. This creates an emotionally positive significance attached to the sense of membership belonging of that group.

Jarymowicz (2015) introduced the we-concept, associated to different types of social identities which can develop on intermediate and superordinate abstraction levels. The concept connects people, through a focus on the desire for interpersonal attachment and the need for belongingness, as basic human needs. The concept identifies four types of social identity:

1. The group identity – small groups where all members have direct contact with one another (e.g. a family)
2. The categorical identity – representing established social categories with well defined boundaries (e.g. women/men;)
3. The attributive identity – shared interests and activities (e.g. hiking enthusiasts; book lovers)
4. Axiological identity – based on shared values (e.g. animal lovers; climate activists)

Jarymowicz (2015) argues that the latter two identities (attributive and axiological) are more inclusive than the first two categories, allowing a sense of belonging to develop between these group members regardless the group and categorical identities such as family, nationality, gender or profession. However, the categorical and group we-concepts are the ones that are more easily accessible and used predominantly in self-identification. These concepts allow for strong in-group identification, a sense of belonging and therefore positive attitudes. TCK's however are placed into a difficult position where their group and categorical we-concepts can be more difficult to establish – since they may have confusion in fully identifying with just one nationality or one specific social group. This may place them into an out-group category within which they can experience being part of “they” as opposed to “we” (Jarymowicz, 2015), which is a category that can be disfavoured and discriminated against (Bar-Tal, 1996; Jarymowicz, 2015).

Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2021) in their study on female TCK's found that TCK's define social identity based on the we-category of a passport country and the relationship they held with their family and friends (we-group). Their well-being was also found to be positively affected through an integrated multicultural identity and global mindset and social inclusiveness.

Challenges with identity development appears to be corroborated by Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009), who carried out a qualitative phenomenological study exploring how women TCK's develop a sense of identity. They interviewed 8 adult women who had spent their developmental years in multiple cultures, and they found that the transition that was a constant in the lives of these women was a disruption in their identity development because they often had to focus on “surviving and adjusting” rather than gaining a sense of who they really are. The authors also found that their participants found a stronger sense of identity once they were able to form relationships with other TCK's.

While the conclusions drawn by Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) contribute to a better understanding of the characteristics TCK's may experience through their lifestyle, they acknowledge that they interviewed women who were aged 18-23 and therefore it is possible that by virtue of their age, these participants may still have been navigating through their identity formation. Had the participants been older, they may have had a very different sense of identity. This critique is supported by Arnett (2000) who proposes that ages between 18-25 represent "emerging adulthood" and are characterised by individual exploration and further independent role development in western societies.

The Moore and Barker (2012) study described earlier also considered the strategies their participants used for navigating their identities across cultures. They considered whether these TCK's navigate through life holding multiple identities or a single multicultural identity or if they struggle with confused identities. Their findings revealed that those who identified themselves as having multiple identities described feeling accepted in two or more cultures and being able to shift their identities adapting to their environment without much effort. The authors suggest that these individuals may have developed the abilities to fully participate in two different cultures without compromising their sense of identity; however, this came with a cost of not experiencing a strong sense of belonging as described above. Another group of their participants identified as having a single multicultural identity which integrated within itself the different cultures they experienced, and this did not shift when they changed countries. Such findings suggest that there are many factors and complex intricacies within the identity development process of the TCK's, which includes the age at which an individual moves, as well as similarities and differences between host and home cultures.

## **2.7 Summary**

The theoretical underpinnings of the TCK concept were discussed focusing on the definition of TCK's as popularised by Pollock & Van Reken (2001). The individual

characteristics of TCK's – challenges forming close relationships, belonging and identity formation were discussed in further detail with examples of empirical studies and conceptualised using theories focusing on third space, cultural, social and personal identity formation, as well as attachment theory.

**Commented [AM12]:** Reference to additional theoretical frameworks considered as per both examiners feedback

The population of TCK's is a unique opportunity for CP's to study the effects of globalisation on culture and identity, since CoP takes into consideration the issues around life stages development, the impact of culture, and individual experiences. CoP, utilising its pluralistic and interdisciplinary attitude (Jones Nielsen & Nicholas, 2016), and being a profession concerned with multiculturalism and social justice (James, 2016) is in a unique position to study how we could look at cultural diversity and adapt to better serve populations of multicultural backgrounds, that may have needs falling outside pre-defined, standardised protocols (Moller, 2011). This, in turn, will allow us as a profession to move towards enabling and facilitating realisation of people's potential within our society, promoting social justice (James, 2016).

**Commented [AM13]:** Reference to multiculturalism and social justice elaborated as per Dr Flothmann's report

## 2.8 Critique of the Third Culture Kid concept

In this section I will critique the overall concept of TCK's with the aim of illustrating the gap in literature which requires further attention of the CoP profession in the UK. Individual studies will be examined to illustrate that there is currently a lack of consensus regarding the age of departure of individuals classified as TCK's and a lack of attention on the differences and/or similarities in cultures between home and host countries. This will then be summarised and taken through to aims of the research and the research question in Section 2.9.

### 2.8.1 Age of departure

Pollock et al. (2017) definition of TCK's states that individuals must leave their country of origin before the age of 18. However, they don't focus on any differences in the

large range of ages before 18. It is arguable that someone who leaves the country at age five versus someone who leaves at age sixteen would have different experiences, due to the different psychosocial development stages these young people are likely to find themselves in.

Cockburn (2002) states that adolescents are in a period of developmental transition by developing a sense of self and identity, for whom relationships with peers are fundamental and if they find themselves in a culture where the value systems and traditions are different to the ones they grew up with, then this may have a significant impact of the adolescents' development of identity. This notion appears to be supported by literature on adolescent adaptation to immigration. For instance, Güngör and Bornstein (2009) who compared middle adolescents (14-17 y.o) and late adolescents (18-20 y.o.) similarities and differences in acculturation, values, adaptation, and perceived discrimination found that younger adolescents navigate between their social and cultural contexts more fluidly than do older adolescents. The authors supposed that this may be because younger adolescents may be more developmentally flexible and open to new experiences. Kwak (2003) in reviewing intergenerational family relations for immigrant and non-immigrant families' literature suggested that the impact of culture on development tends to be stronger in late adolescence than in earlier years of life because this is when adolescents' lifestyles extend to include the social environment beyond their family.

Huff (2001) did quantitative research on 49 children of Missionaries in the USA. She focused on how parental attachment and perceived social support affect reverse culture shock and adjustment to college when returning to their home country. She found that missionary kids who left the host culture after the age of 15 experienced greater interpersonal distance from their peers in the home culture, compared to those who left the host culture before age 15. This could suggest that significant personal identity development occurs in the years

leading up to the age of 15 and beyond age 15 the increased interaction with the peer group may influence further identity development.

Across the literature there appears to be a lack of consensus regarding the age of departure for TCK's, these can be as wide as 0-18 years (Gilbert, 2008; Mortimer, 2010; Sellers, 2011) or between 8-18 years (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009) or between 5-18 years (Choi & Luke, 2011). Arguably, the inconsistency of age of departure may lead to participants reflecting on and detailing different experiences, depending on which developmental stage they are finding themselves in. This may suggest that focusing on the aspect of age within research on TCK's is likely to add to the betterment of understanding of the TCK experience.

### ***2.8.2 Differences in cultures***

Current studies focusing on the experience of TCKs do not appear to consider the significance of cultural differences between home and host countries. For instance, Choi and Luke (2011) gathered results from participants who identified themselves as Asian, African, European, and European American. Collectively, they had spent significant portions of their developmental years in 12 different countries. The exact culture to culture match for each participant was not illustrated in the study.

Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) interviewed 8 female participants and illustrated in their data analysis the passport and host countries of each. These included participants going from North America to Latin America; from Europe to East Asia; from East Asia to Southeast Asia and from East Asia to South America and Oceania amongst others; indicating a vast difference in cultures experienced by individuals. However, the cultural differences between the home and host cultures as experienced by participants was not a focus of their study.

Bhugra and Becker (2005) argue that an individual who has entered a new culture is likely to experience a sense of alienation if the cultural and social characteristics of that individual differ from those of the surrounding population. On the other hand, a sense of belonging tends to occur if the individual and surrounding populations have similar social and cultural characteristics. Bhugra (2004) has hypothesised that individuals who migrate from predominantly socio-centric, or collectivistic societies (ones that stress cohesiveness, strong ties between individuals and collective identity) into a society that is predominantly egocentric or individualistic (one that stresses independence, liberalism, and self-sufficiency) are likely to have problems adjusting to the new culture, especially if those individuals hold socio-centric beliefs.

Additionally, CS that may play a role in the experience. CS (Oberg, 1960) includes the stress of moving to a new culture, a sense of loss, confusion in role expectations and self-identity, a sense of rejection by the new culture, and resulting anxiety from potentially not being accepted by the new culture (Taft, 1977).

The numerous models of CS (e.g. Lysgaard, 1955; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963; Livingstone, 1960; Thomas & Althern, 1989; Pedersen, 1995; Wilkelman, 1994) all suggest that CS passes through stages and that the time necessary to go through the various stages of CS varies between individuals and can be influenced by the amount of social support available, whether there are language barriers compounding the negative experiences, social and cultural qualities specific to each individual and circumstance (e.g. Bhugra & Becker, 2005; Pantelidou & Craig, 2006; Bhugra et al., 2011).

Uncertainty and vulnerability in a new culture can also be compounded by language problems (Dixon & Hayden, 2008); and the challenge of dealing with a new language can lead to psychological stress that can manifest itself in anxiety (Chen, 1999).

It is plausible to suggest that it's important to consider the impact of the culture-to-culture migration that TCK's experience. As the difference in cultures is likely to play a significant role on the ability and the duration of time it takes the TCK to adapt.

### **2.8.3 Summary**

This section illustrated how present literature on international sojourns of TCK's appears to lack consensus on the impact of the exact age of departure and the impact of cultural differences between home and host countries. It is plausible to suggest that each of these variables can contribute towards a different experience of someone who identifies as a TCK.

CoP focuses on the idiographic experience of an individual, from a humanistic base (Woolfe, 2016), accordingly, research from a CoP perspective would add to a better understanding of how individuals experience transitions between countries within specified cultures when these occur in their developmental stage of adolescence. This is likely to add to literature on TCK's and allow us to understand better the effects of unique international experience variables on individuals who live through them, thereby better equipping CP's with understanding and tools necessary to help with any aspects that may require support to do with this experience.

### **2.9 Gap and Research aims and question**

The studies quoted in this chapter demonstrate that leaving a country before the age of 18 can have several effects on the individual, including challenges with identity formation, challenges forming close relationships and a sense of a lack of belonging (Pollock et al., 2017; Sellers; 2011; Mortimer, 2010; Fail et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2008, Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009, Choi & Luke, 2011). However, there are several avenues that still need to be considered when trying to better understand the experience of someone who identifies as a



TCK such as impact of age, as well as how do the similarities and differences in home and host cultures affect the experience amongst others.

The present study considered some of these aspects by looking at a particular age group coming to UK from EU cultures.

UK was chosen as a host country because it is a multicultural country which in 2017 had 9.4m migrants of which 39% were of European Union (EU) origin; and up to 24% were under age 25 (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2018). It is therefore likely that individuals who fall within the loose definition of TCK will at some point end up in the UK. UK CoP profession is ideally placed to investigate the effects of these sojourns to take forward its agenda of incorporating multiculturalism and social justice (James, 2016).

In this study an age range for arrival in UK of 10 – 17y.o. was chosen as this is the age range which correlates with adolescence (Sawyer et al., 2018), which is one of the factors that differentiates the experience of TCK's to that of other types of immigrants. Adult TCK's were interviewed to provide enough of a reflection period to try and understand the experience of the adolescent moves.

Participants from EU cultures were chosen to be interviewed for the purposes of this study to try to maintain the focus on the experience of migration itself, without the additional barriers and implications of visa challenges taking the focus. It is recognised that individual cultures within Europe, even, at times, within the same country, are different and hold their own unique values and characteristics. However, in choosing to focus on participants coming from the EU to the UK, it was hoped that in addition to visa barriers being taken away from the focus, the magnitude of culture shock itself may have been, to some extent, reduced, due to some studies suggesting that European cultures tend to be individualistic in nature overall (Gobel et al., 2018).

**Commented [AM14]:** Amendment and elaboration on differences between EU cultures and reasoning behind choice as per Dr Cucchi's report

This study therefore considered the following research question: *How do adult TCK's from EU cultures experience their transition to the UK between ages 10 and 17?*

The objectives of this study were to gain a better understanding the impact of the move on the TCK's interpretations of their life events and emotional processing, and their sense of belonging, feelings of restlessness and rootlessness, and identity formation. My aim was to add to literature on this topic, from the holistic lens of Counselling Psychology (Woolfe, 2016).

The study was approached from the framework of critical realism, recognising the existence of an independent reality, accessed through the influence and interpretation of human perceptions and social constructs (Yucel, 2018). Alignment with a phenomenological epistemology allowed me to look at the participants' idiographic experience of being TCK's in the UK through my personal lens as a researcher. IPA, as an approach, permitted this by allowing me to access their reality, through the vision of my own, and considering that my role as a researcher was part of the research process.

It is hoped that this qualitative research will provide further clarity on the concept of TCK's and equip them with a voice to address their unique experience, which is becoming more prevalent in today's world. It would also enable the UK CoP profession to be able to view these individuals from a holistic perspective (Woolfe, 2016) and thus be able to address their subjective needs, which is a core characteristic of CoP (Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009). Mental health workers, educators as well as global organisations sending their employees on international assignments would also be better informed about this group of individuals.

**Commented [AM15]:** Amendment to discussion on ontological and epistemological positioning as per both examiners feedback.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

In this section I will present my choice of methodology, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with a focus on the ontological and epistemological underpinnings that have guided the processes within this study. I will also discuss in detail the recruitment procedures, data collection and the analytic process. I will conclude this section with ethical considerations and personal reflexivity.

#### 3.1 Choice of methodology

The choice of qualitative methodology was driven by the multifaceted complexity of the phenomenon that I wanted to explore within this study. The aim of the present research was to answer the following question:

*How do adult TCK's from EU cultures experience their transition to the UK between ages 10 and 17?*

Qualitative methodology was employed to explore how these participants make sense of their world and how they experience events (Willig, 2013). The interest of study lies within the subjective world of meaning making associated with the personal subjectivity of experiencing a move to the UK at a particular age and developmental stage. Using a qualitative methodology permits access to the complex, subjective world of human interpretations of their experiences, as this methodology looks specifically at qualia. It would therefore not be appropriate to use quantitative methods to address the research question herein, since quantitative methodology seeks to examine objects, events and processes that are thought to exist beyond human knowledge and awareness of them (Power et al., 2018). Quantitative approaches also adopt positivist-empiricist epistemological positions where the goal of research looks to produce objective and unbiased knowledge by employing scientific measures without personal involvement on the part of the researcher (Lyons & Coyle, 2007).

In the next section my ontological and epistemological positions will be addressed, and the method of IPA introduced.

### 3.2 Ontological and Epistemological positions

The current study is based on a critical realist framework. Critical realism, in line with Bhaskar (1975), is based on the premise that there is a mind-independent, structured, and changing reality (Yucel, 2018), thus recognising a realist ontological commitment about what the knowledge is of. This cohesive framework also acknowledges within itself a nuanced form of relativism, in recognising that our understanding of knowledge and reality is socially mediated, and is not independent of those who produce it (Bhaskar, 1975). It acknowledges that our beliefs are socially produced, transient and fallible (Collier, 1994), whilst simultaneously recognising that we can still obtain reliable, albeit imperfect, knowledge about the world (Yucel, 2018).

From an epistemological standpoint, I align with the position of phenomenology, which allows us to know what we know by accessing this through the experiences of those who live this reality. From a phenomenological perspective, the aim of research is to produce knowledge about the subjective experiences of research participants, focusing on the quality and texture of that experience (Willig, 2013). This allows me to enter the world of the participants by stepping into their shoes and looking at the world through their eyes (Willig, 2013).

This is in line with the principles of CoP, which recognises the importance of individuals' subjective experiences within their social contexts (Strawbridge, 2016). In applying this stance to the present study, my ontological and epistemological positioning acknowledges that the experience of transitioning from one country to another exists as an independent reality, and I can access an aspect of this reality through the exploration of the experiences that the research participants may attach to it.

**Commented [AM16]:** Amendment and elaboration to ontological and epistemological positioning as per both examiners feedback.

This approach is in accord with the fundamental principles of CoP, which places individuals to be experts in their own experience and looks to understand how individuals process their own life events (Milton, 2016).

### 3.3 IPA

The qualitative method of analysis that I chose for this study is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived experience (Eatough & Smith, 2017 p.193). It is based upon three pillars – phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography – each of which are discussed in more detail below. IPA aims to capture the individual's experience as expressed on its own terms, not according to a predefined category system, adhering to the principles of phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). IPA recognises that phenomenological inquiry is from the outset an interpretative process, incorporating hermeneutics within its process. Additionally, IPA aims to situate participants in their contexts, exploring their personal perspectives, starting with a detailed examination of each case, before moving on to more general claims – incorporating idiography (Smith et al., 2009).

#### 3.3.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology refers to the way in which we, as human beings, experience the world around us, in specific contexts in particular times, focusing on the occurrences that come up to our awareness during such interactions (Willig, 2013, p.251). Using a phenomenological perspective, we are investigating the structure of an experience from the perspective of the person having that experience and observing how the person creates a meaning from this (Smith et al., 2009).

Husserl promoted to experience things as they are and to bracket off that which we think we may already know about them, thus taking in the diversity and variability of human experiences and to allow for bracketing to lead to the critical examination of one's own

normal ways of knowing about a particular event or occurrence (Willig, 2013, pp.251 – 255). Such an approach enables us to experience the “things themselves” and allows for meanings to emerge from the experience (Crotty, 1998, p.78). CoP draws upon and seeks to develop phenomenological models of practice and enquiry (BPS, 2017), therefore the two approaches fit well together.

### 3.3.2 *Idiography*

*“Idiography is concerned with how to understand the concrete, the particular and the unique whilst maintaining the integrity of the person”* (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p.197). IPA focuses on accessing the individuals’ particular experience, their understanding and relationship with it, which is viewed through the lens of the researcher. IPA focuses on the particular in two ways by ensuring that each individual case is considered uniquely to a great depth; and incorporating the perspective of particular people in that context (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA specifically focuses on beginning with the particular and ensuring that any generalisations are grounded in this (Eatough & Smith, 2017 p.197). One of the aims of CoP is to engage with individual subjectivity (BPS, 2017). In using an idiographic methodology such as IPA, this aim is addressed since we can intensively study the individual through their own understanding of their experience. The study of one experience can then be used as a way of creating a better understanding of the phenomenon itself, and enables practitioners to tailor approaches on how best to facilitate any support that may come from challenges of such an experience.

**Commented [AM17]:** Amendment to blanket statement to avoid tokenism as per Dr Flothmann's report

### 3.3.3 *Hermeneutics*

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009, p.21). IPA aims to gain an understanding, an interpretation, of the individuals’ inner world, however it accepts and incorporates the notion that it is impossible to gain direct access into the inner workings

of the individuals' mind (Willig, 2013 p.260). Instead, it recognises that the researcher's own process of interpreting occurs when they impart on the experience shared by the individual. IPA is therefore based on the concept of a double hermeneutic – in which the participant interprets their own experience, which is then interpreted by the researcher when this experience is enquired about. IPA combines empathic and questioning hermeneutics (Smith & Osborn, 2008); trying to understand where the participant is coming from and how they are giving meaning to the experience.

### 3.4 Other qualitative methods

Other methods of enquiry were considered when looking to gather information for the research question, namely: Grounded Theory (GT), Narrative Analysis (NA) and Discourse Analysis (DA). These methods fall in line with investigating experiences of individuals from a qualitative perspective, however each one doesn't quite fit with the purpose of what the study is aiming to better understand. This is discussed in further detail below. My lens of CoP, as well as my ontological and epistemological positioning recognise that there is no single approach that is better than the other, nor does any one approach give access to a single answer. It is considered that each methodology could add to furthering the understanding of what an experience of being a TCK could be like and thus could be considered for future research exploring the TCK concept.

#### 3.4.1 Grounded Theory

GT (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is an approach that I considered as the most suitable alternative to IPA, as it bears many similarities with IPA and has a longer history in qualitative research. Like IPA, it looks to gain an understanding of a phenomenon that participants experience. The researcher gathers the data from an impartial standpoint, and through constant comparative analysis discerns regularities. These regularities are then filtered together to form a theory that transcends and simplifies the data (Levers, 2013). GT

**Commented [AM18]:** Further explanation regarding consideration of alternative methods considered as per both examiners reports.

requires a larger number of participants compared to IPA and uses this to find a common conceptual framework that addresses the research question (Willig, 2013). In its methodology, GT looks at the processes of developing a conceptual framework. The aim of my research was not to investigate the processes leading to a common conceptual framework, it was to explore the meaning that individual participants give to their idiographic experience.

From epistemological and ontological perspectives, GT (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) is aligned with a post-positivist paradigm which relies on an objectivist epistemology (Levers, 2013). As Levers (2013) describes, this implies that the researcher approaches grounded theory with the understanding that reality exists external to them and the research participants and objectivity results in discovering an emergent theory that simplifies the categories of the data. This approach requires the researcher to approach the data with an impartial mind-set, and be external to the research process, simply acting as an observer rather than a creator or participant.

I think that in the case of this research it is not possible to achieve the “objectivity” that such a paradigm requires, and I was particularly attracted to the notion of recognising that as a researcher, I am part of the process of research, which is enabled through IPA.

#### 3.4.2 Narrative Analysis

Another alternative that was considered was NA. This method looks at the meaning making that narrative surrounding the experience creates (Willig, 2013). This is like what IPA tries to do, in that IPA also looks at narrative as a way that the participants may express and reach a meaning about a particular experience. However, IPA considers the meaning making experience from a broader perspective, incorporating within it the idiographic commitment, situating participants in their contexts, taking into consideration their personal perspectives, and looking at a detailed examination of each case before moving on to more general claims (Smith et al., 2009). It was considered that IPA would be more fitting in

**Commented [AM19]:** Elaboration on alternative methods considered as per both examiners reports



attempting to capture the multicultural aspect of this study and thus give a more nuanced understanding of this experience.

It was also considered that a narrative approach is more closely aligned to the production of social constructionist knowledge, incorporating within it the realisation that different people can tell different stories about the same event, influenced by their context in time and the researcher then looks at how the participant constructs the past and the meaning of their story (Willig, 2013). This is very valuable insight into a particular experience; however, it didn't fully align with the phenomenological production of knowledge that recognises the integral role of the researcher, their interpretation and the need for reflexivity as part of the research methodology, as IPA does (Willig, 2013).

**Commented [AM20]:** Elaboration on alternative methods considered as per both examiners reports

### 3.4.3 Discourse Analysis

DA looks at the way the phenomenon is constructed through language (Willig, 2013). In the case of the present study this would look at how participants may construct their perspective of being a TCK who came to the UK. While this adds an important dimension to how participants may make sense of such an experience, it doesn't fully capture the meaning making process that the participants may go through in trying to make sense of this transition.

Additionally, this approach looks specifically at how particular versions of reality are created through discourse and language, thereby omitting focus on psychological phenomena such as social identity, but rather focusing on how such phenomena are constituted in talk as social action (Willig, 2013). Such a social constructionism paradigm is not fully aligned with the framework of critical realism, which is the framework through which the phenomenon of being a TCK was viewed for the purposes of this research.

**Commented [AM21]:** Elaboration on alternative methods considered as per both examiners reports

## 3.5 Procedure

### 3.5.1 Data Collection and Recruitment

The study involved gathering information from individuals who had moved to the UK from an EU country between the ages of 10 and 17. The recruitment process involved creating a flyer (Appendix A) which was then emailed to Psychology programme leaders at University College London and City, University of London with a view of asking them to disseminate this flyer to their students and their contacts on other Psychology programmes. Additionally, the flyer was emailed to TCKresearch.com, which is a global online community for individuals who identify themselves as TCK's. LinkedIn and Facebook posters were used (Appendix B) and an Instagram account was created (Appendix B) to enable recruitment of a wide pool of participants. Interested parties were invited to make contact via email so that they can get further information about the study. Participants who made contact and showed interest in participating in the study were then sent a participant information sheet (Appendix C).

### 3.5.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

To address the gaps identified in the literature review, the candidates had to meet the following criteria to take part in an interview:

- Be over the age of 18 at the time of the interview – this is because research suggests that the distress faced by TCK's tends to emerge as issues in adulthood as opposed to specifically at the time of moving (Bushong, 2013; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).
- Originate from EU countries – to focus on the experience of being a TCK and removing visa requirement barriers.
- Arrived in the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 – this is the age range that fulfils the concept definition of TCK's (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Pollock et al., 2017)

This purposive sampling is in line with IPA recommendations to create a homogenous sample (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

### 3.5.3 Participants

**Commented [AM22]:** Reference to EU cultures amendment focusing on the reasoning as per Dr Cucchi's report

In line with Smith et al. (2009), I chose participants for the study who would be able to provide insight into the experience of being TCK's with the specific criteria of coming to the UK, from an EU country, at a particular age. This facilitates obtaining a "perspective rather than a population" (Smith et al., 2009, p.49)

The information sheet made the participants aware that the focus of the interviews would be on how their experience of moving from their home country to the UK may have impacted them.

Guidance on IPA (e.g. Smith et al., 2009) does not recommend a specific number of participants for a study, but there is a suggestion to obtain between three and six accounts, with a view against a higher number of participants, because a large number of accounts impedes the amount of time necessary for reflection and dialogue required for successful analysis. There is also an accent on idiography, and a small and situated sample is necessary so that each participant can be attended to before attempting a comparative analysis of participant material (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Similarly, recommendations for professional doctorates suggest that IPA studies look at recruiting between 4 and 10 participants (Noon, 2018). With these recommendations in mind, I aimed to get 6 participants.

As I started the recruitment process, I initially had a stricter age criterion in place, indicating that participants should have come to the UK between ages of 14 and 17. At the time of doing the critical literature review it became apparent that the age range satisfying the definition of TCK's included individuals aged 0 to 18 years old, presenting a large age range to research. I therefore looked at studies that could guide me in establishing an age range to look at (e.g. Gungor & Bornstein, 2009). However, with the criterion of coming to the UK between 14 and 17 years old, only 1 participant satisfying the inclusion criteria came forward. With time, active searching and contacting of further potential recruits, no further participants were found. It became apparent that my inclusion criteria were too stringent and thus

following consultation with my supervisor, I changed the age range of my participants to be 10 years to 17 years old at the time of their arrival in the UK.

The rationale behind this was that the concept of TCK's simply looks at individuals who leave their home culture before the age of 18, and studies researching the concept of TCK's ranging widely in their age specification (e.g. Gilbert, 2008; Mortimer 2010; Sellers, 2011; Choi & Luke, 2011). The expansion of the age criterion allowed me to get 6 participants with their information in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Participant information*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age at time of interview	Age at time of arrival	Country of origin	Other countries lived in
Belka	Female	27	17	Lithuania	France
Aryana	Female	36	17	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Lily	Female	36	17	Austria	Canada, USA
Roxanne	Female	20	13	Italy	none
Eliza	Female	32	10	France	Singapore, Ireland, Italy
Belinda	Female	23	12	Italy	France

### 3.5.4 Interviews

**Schedule.** The interview schedule was agreed in advance in supervision with the research supervisor and is included in Appendix D. The schedule was made up of semi-structured open questions and prompts, in line with Smith et al., (2009). It looked to capture the participants' experience of being a TCK and what impact this may have had on them at the time of the move and on reflection. It also asked the participants to comment on whether any specific challenges may have arisen because of the move and how these may have been dealt with. The interview schedule was drafted with reference to the studies examined within the critical literature review, taking into consideration the research question and the gap that was identified as part of this.

**Procedure.** Appointments were booked for 1 hour to allow time for consent, interview, and de-brief following the interview. Before each interview, the distress protocol

(Appendix E) was discussed. After the interview, the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and to be debriefed. They were also provided with a written debrief document which included details of the research supervisor and information about how the participants' data would be used, held, and subsequently destroyed. The interviews were conducted online, using the Zoom platform and were video recorded within the programme. Afterwards, the interviews were downloaded and stored on my personal computer with a password. The recordings will be destroyed once the research project is complete.

**Transcription.** The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim soon after each interview, including noises such as sighs and laughter, to ensure that an accurate depiction of the interaction was captured (Smith et al., 2009). The recordings were listened to several times to familiarise myself with the data and to be able to capture my own initial reflections on the process. Transcripts were stored separately from the consent forms, and each transcript was anonymised to protect the confidentiality of participants, in line with The BPS Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research (2021) and the BPS Ethics best practice guidance on conducting research with human participants during Covid-19 (2020). A sample of the transcripts can be seen in Appendix F.

### **3.5.5 Data Analysis**

The analysis strategy for IPA proposed by Smith and Eatough (2007) and Smith et al., (2009) was followed when conducting data analysis. Following each interview, my initial thoughts and reflections were noted in my reflective diary. The transcriptions were line coded and wide margins were created for capturing my thoughts and annotations. Each transcript was analysed one-by-one, with initial thoughts noted in the left-hand margin, while re-listening to the interview. The initial notes took an exploratory focus, looking at the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual aspects that were found within the initial reading and

listening to of the transcript. The three areas were differentiated using normal, italic, and bold scripts. This was the start of the interpretation process as driven by me as a researcher.

At the next stage, the initial exploratory comments were re-read for emergent themes to materialise. The emergent themes allowed for the volume of the participant data and the data of the initial notes to be reduced, while maintaining the complexity of the connections and patterns between the exploratory notes. These were noted in the right-hand margin of the transcript.

The emergent themes were then mapped out using abstraction, subsumption, and polarization to allow them to fit together and form super-ordinate themes (Smith et al., 2009). This process was then repeated with each transcript. At this stage of the interpretation, my personal knowledge seeped into my supposition of what the participants were communicating. Whilst I remained as strict as possible in adhering to the participants' words, this is the stage whereby my psychological knowledge and personal interpretations filtered into the creation of the themes.

On completion of the analysis of each individual transcript, the cases were then looked at as a group to understand and illustrate how the individual superordinate themes may fit together into a higher order representation which resonates with the individual accounts, as well as the overall group. This led to the creation of the master table of themes for the group. Throughout the process the transcripts were re-read and referred to in a continuous, circular manner to ensure integrity and grounding in the individual accounts of the participants. Validity was checked through recurrence of themes within the group, with super-ordinate themes being used as findings if they occurred in at least half of the sample.

### ***3.5.6 Ethical Considerations***

The study was carried out in line with the guidelines of London Metropolitan University (LMU) and British Psychological Society (BPS, 2017). Ethical approval from

LMU was obtained (Appendix G) in February 2021. The study did not involve any intentional deception of the participants, or any withholding of information regarding the nature of the study. Further consideration was given to the fact that the study was being conducted during a global pandemic, thus the recruitment and interviews took place via the internet. The BPS Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research (2021b) and the BPS Ethics best practice guidance on conducting research with human participants during Covid-19 (2020) were adhered to throughout.

### ***3.5.7 Informed Consent***

Prior to the interviews, the participants were briefed on all aspects of the interview and given an electronic copy of a consent form to sign (Appendix H) – with the request that a signed version is returned to the researcher. The participants were informed that they can say however much they wish, and space will be provided at the end of the interview for discussion and a de-briefing in case any concerns arose in the process of the interview or to address any questions. Participants were informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study for 4 weeks after the interview. After this time, it would become too difficult to separate the individual participant's responses from the overall analysis. Participants were provided with the researcher's and the research supervisor's contact details for any concerns or complaints about the study in a de-briefing form (Appendix I).

Throughout the interview, participants' levels of distress were monitored through verbal and non-verbal communication. An LMU distress protocol (Appendix E) was continuously considered and would have been followed if a need arose.

### ***3.5.8 Confidentiality and Data Security***

At the recruitment stage participants were briefed on confidentiality and how this will be followed. This information was also included in the information sheet. All identifiable data was removed at the transcription of the interview and pseudonyms used throughout

(Bond, 2015). Summarised and anonymised data was used as part of my thesis submission and any related articles that may be submitted for publication in line with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2021a).

The participants' video-recordings and transcripts were kept in a password protected computer in my home; only I knew the password. The interview material will be retained for 5 years after the completion of the study and all the data was processed in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

### ***3.5.9 Sensitivity of the research topic***

Investigating the experience of TCK's coming to the UK is not considered to be a sensitive topic of discussion. Furthermore, American Psychological Association (APA, 2012) specifies that immigrants are not a clinical population. Participants of this study were not considered to be vulnerable individuals. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that during the interviews the participants were asked to talk about topics that they may have found to be personally sensitive or emotive. No distress arose at the time of interviews, and the LMU distress protocol was kept in mind and followed throughout.

### ***3.5.10 Research Quality***

According to Yardley (2017), good quality qualitative research has 4 essential qualities: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. I will illustrate the adherence to these principles in the current study below.

**Sensitivity to context.** This is demonstrated by the researcher in carrying out a thorough and up to date literature review which ensured that awareness, understanding and application of the current research study to the theoretical context provided by the previous empirical work in the field of the TCK concept. It also required careful consideration of how the field of CoP and the vantage point of this profession is placed in a position to be able to



help understand and contribute towards the betterment of the emotional and mental challenges that this population of immigrants may face.

I was also sensitive to how my own identification of being an adult TCK may influence data collection, interview process and findings and referred to this throughout the reflective practice of the research method, as well as within the data analysis portion of the study.

**Commitment and rigour.** These qualities were demonstrated through the thoroughness in the process of data collection and analysis, as well as the prolonged engagement in the topic – throughout the duration of the doctorate programme, as well as the personal experience of being a TCK and investigation of this concept and its impact. Careful attention was paid to the verbal and non-verbal communication provided by the participants to ensure that this was accurately reflected within the analysis and the subsequent findings. Additionally, in line with Finlay (2008), to improve the validity of the research, the participants were given the opportunity to be sent the summary of the findings for review and comment of the interpretations. Only one of the participants took up this option and fed back that they felt that the interpretations were in line with what they were saying.

**Transparency and coherence.** Detailed steps of how the process of interviews and data analysis were carried out is included as part of this thesis and was continuously discussed in research supervision. Participants were given as much detailed information as was requested with no intention of holding back to ensure transparency. Coherence is also adhered to by ensuring that there is a fit between the IPA methodology utilised, the philosophical vantage point of critical realism, and the research question focusing on the interpretation of the participants' own reality of their experience of being TCK's.

**Impact and importance.** The impact and importance of this study is looked at by considering how it contributes to the existing theory, research, and literature in the field, as

well as the contribution this process and findings are making to the wider field of CoP. It is considered that this study is a useful addition to the diverse field of CoP which equips CP's with the information to better understand the idiosyncratic TCK experience and its impacts, as such an experience is becoming more and more common in today's world.

### ***3.5.11 Methodological reflexivity***

**Distancing myself from my participants.** I identify as a TCK, and some of the challenges that have been highlighted in previous empirical work on this topic have resonated greatly in me. From the start I had to be mindful of my personal experience potentially overshadowing the analytical stance of the researcher. In IPA, the researcher plays an active role in analysing and interpreting the data (Smith et al., 2009), thus I had to be aware of being influenced by my own values, beliefs, and assumptions. This led me to distance and bracket (Fischer, 2009) my own experience from the very first stage of writing the research proposal for this study. It's argued that bracketing is a necessary method to mitigate the potentially deleterious effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process (Tufford & Newman, 2012). However, the specific steps for achieving the distance proposed by bracketing are not clearly defined (Fischer, 2009). In taking the initial steps of participant recruitment I attempted to ensure that there was adequate distance between myself and the potential candidates in listing out a series of criteria for which there was a gap in literature, that my personal experience would not fulfil, thus creating a difference between myself and the participants. Thus, the list for participants' inclusion criteria became quite specific and, prior to the recruitment stage, included an additional factor – that the UK would be the only host country of the participant TCK's. This was identified as a factor that was not previously looked upon in other research studies. However, it became clear to me that in applying a strict inclusion criterion for my participants, was also inadvertently excluding a large pool of potential participants. On reflection and further literature review it was considered that the

criterion of participants having only the UK as their host country was not a prerequisite from the perspective of gathering data for the purposes of answering the research question and of addressing the gap identified in literature, rather it served only as a distancing measure for the purposes of bracketing. On discussion with my research supervisor, this criterion was removed, subsequently opening a further pool of potential participants.

During the recruitment process, it became apparent that it was difficult to find an adequate number of participants, thus on discussion in supervision, it was considered appropriate to increase the age range during which the individuals came to the UK, as discussed previously.

To mitigate the negative effects of over-identifying with the participants' experience, I ensured to keep a reflective diary and have continuous discussions in supervision about how my preconceptions may impact the data collection and analysis processes.

Furthermore, I had to remain reflective in how and why I needed to distance myself as a researcher from the topic of TCK's. Over time, I came to the realisation that it was difficult for me to shake off an idea of a full access to an "objective" reality that may have been left over from the influence of positivistic theoretical position that was present in my earlier schoolings. Instead, I came to realise that it may have been uncomfortable to permit myself to only have subjective access to reality, and in time fully allowing myself to submerge within the critical realism framework. However, this novelty and discomfort signified growth within the theoretical mindset for myself as a researcher and CP.

**Commented [AM23]:** Reflection and amendment to idea of objectivity as per Dr Flothmann's report

**Definition update.** The definition used by Pollock et al. (2017) for identification of TCK's was updated whilst I was in the process of interviewing my participants. The update included the mention of individuals moving to another country due to the parent(s)' choice of work or advanced training; whilst the older definition simply looked at individuals spending a significant part of their developmental years (before age 18) outside of their parents' culture,

without the specification that this had to be for the purposes of the parent(s)' work or training. Inclusion of this specification created a sense of uncertainty for me, as the parent's work requirement was not part of my recruitment criteria and by this stage, I had already recruited all my participants and had interviewed most of them.

Upon discussions in supervision, as well as further research into published studies on the topic, it became apparent that the updating of the definition and indeed the inconsistency of its utilisation within published research suggests that the definition itself is a matter of convention, that has been updated over time in an arbitrary and abstract manner. It is possible that some people may have found themselves falling within the definition before the addition of the detail that the move must have occurred due to the parent(s)' choice of work or study, but then no longer "qualified" because they went abroad because it made sense for them to obtain education in a boarding school and they intended to return on completion, as one possible example. Would they then no longer qualify as TCK's?

The updating of the definition doesn't take away the experiences that they shared within their narratives which are analysed and written up as part of this study. Hypothetically, they would qualify as TCK's prior to updating of the definition, but, potentially, not after – however their experiences and the effects of their migration are still present irrespective of how the definition is changed. This therefore suggests that conceptualisation of the definition is a matter of convention which requires thought and contribution from the academic community to facilitate research processes, however this is still a work in progress. Furthermore, if the impact on the practice of CP's is considered, as well as wider educational institutions and international organisations, it is unlikely that the group of people who consider themselves to be TCK's would be impacted in terms of the kind of services they could access. Similarly, it is unlikely that CP's would work differently with TCK's depending on which definition they fall into – as one of the foundational aspects of CoP is to

treat each individual as unique, and consider how they individually interact with the physical, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of their life (Jones Nielsen & Nicholas, 2016).

Finally, using a qualitative lens of IPA to carry out this study allowed me to look at each person from an idiographic perspective, respecting their individual, unique experience and hearing their story (Smith et al., 2009).

#### Part 4: Results and Analysis

In this chapter, I will present the themes emerging from the in-depth analysis of the six interviews. I present the findings in the Table 2 below, with a detailed discussion of each of the superordinate themes following this. A focus on the research question was held in mind throughout the analysis process, which enabled the in-depth analysis of the large volume of data collected. The results are organised into three superordinate themes: 1. The creation of me and my home – this is referring to the impact on personal identity formation and a lack of belonging emotionally and physically; 2. Meaningful connections, which is referring to the impact the move(s) had on significant relationships and the losses experienced; 3. The turmoil of adolescence and choice, referring to the interaction of adolescent development with the impact of the move and the lack of choice within the decision-making process.

**Table 2**

*Results table*

Superordinate theme	Sub Themes	Illustrative quotes
1. The creation of me and my home	1.1 I had a very different story from most people	<i>“it felt a bit strange because I certainly knew that I had a very different story from most of the people in the office, but it somehow was ignored” (Belka, 4/71-73)</i>
	1.2 I don’t truly belong here	<i>On the challenging side, obviously, very, very difficult to feel a sense of belonging, or finding a place, or a community where you feel like you belong. And I think my whole life, I’ve been looking for a community and, you know, a group to which I can feel like I belong.” (Eliza, 8/228-231)</i>
	1.3 A home within myself?	<i>I’m still trying to find a middle ground between travelling and experiencing different lives, but also having that home. And I think maybe it’s just a case of I need to find a home within myself. (Belinda, 13/323-325)</i>

2. Meaningful connections	2.1 The role of family	<p><i>“But it was mainly like, my parents, my brother and I are so tight, because my parents have purposefully created that as a safe space and as a safety net, for us wherever we went” (Eliza, 17/525-527)</i></p>
	2.2 The seesaw of losing and findings friendships	<p><i>“And such kind of losses probably are less experienced by people who never moved and stayed and let's say in the city where they grew up, which is also beautiful as I think retaining childhood connections and taking them through life, this is something I didn't get the chance to. Ummmm, well, perhaps a few, but I understand that they're less serious than anyone I met here (Belka, 13/282-288)”</i></p>
3. The turmoil of adolescence and choice	3.1 Intricacies of choice	<p><i>“well I kinda just got told “we're moving” ... And then it happened. Yeah. Yeah. That was it.” (Roxanne, 5/116-117)</i></p>
	3.2 An important age	<p><i>“Yeah, I think it's obviously moving here. It was not just the only factor, but also the fact that you're going through adolescence. So it's also a big transition in your body and in your brain. And all of it is very, very intense when it's put together.” (Belinda, 4/102-105)</i></p>
	3.3 The undercurrent of emotions	<p><i>“Apart from the fact that I ate my own weight in ice cream and crisps and junk food because food is comfort. Ummmm, I'd created an alternative world in my head... (Aryana, 6/159-161)”</i></p>

#### **4.1 Superordinate theme 1: The creation of me and my home**

All participants referred to the experience of moving in adolescence as being a unique life event which became an integral part of their identity, that differentiated them from their peers. This, together with the leaving behind of a physical home pushed them to reflect on their sense of identity and belongingness creating 3 subthemes - focusing on how the participants' individual journeys are different to their peers; how their sense of belongingness is impacted and how the idea of a traditional home is challenged.

##### ***4.1.1 Subtheme 1: I had a very different story from most people***

Participants identified how, their experiences of moving differentiated them from others and gave them a unique story. This contributed to the formation of their sense of self. For instance, Belka illustrates this in the following quote:

*"later on I found myself, well years, years later , for example when I joined my first job it was almost never asked "where did they come from and where my accent is from?" no one was interested in that story, and it felt a bit strange because I certainly knew that I had a very different story from most of the people in the office, but it somehow was ignored"* (Belka, 4/67-73)

For Belka, the realisation that her story is different from that of her peers became apparent once she found herself entering the adult world of UK society, when she realised that there was a lack of recognition that her individual story was different. The fact that others were not asking her about her background seems to force this into a spotlight for her suggesting that it may be an important part of her identity which she may still be in the process of fully integrating within her sense of self. It may also highlight the fact that Belka's journey was different to the norm which forces it to naturally be an obvious and significant aspect of who Belka is, yet somehow it is mostly left invisible to others. This would suggest



that Belka's experience leads to a two-fold identity – the one on the inside which incorporates her unique journey and the one on the outside where she finds herself in everyday UK society that doesn't necessarily expect or leave much room for the uniqueness of her journey. It thus suggests that bridging may be necessary to connect her inner and outer worlds.

Aryana and Eliza also explicitly identify the weight of their experience on their sense of identity:

*“Ummmm, because I'm finally very happy with where I am and who I am. And I don't think I would be the person that I am without that experience. And without the learning that came from it.” (Aryana, 11/319-322)*

*“but it's definitely forged who I am today, and it actually is...umm... very strongly linked to what I... the activity I do today as well” (Eliza, 7/197-198)*

Both Aryana and Eliza explicitly show the link between the experience of moving and the impact of that on their present identity. Eliza seems to suggest that in “forging” her identity, this experience essentially moulded and shaped her, suggesting that it's not a straightforward process. She extends this to further elicit that this part of her drives what she now does as her occupation, suggesting that the indentation of this experience was powerful and created a deep-rooted anchor within her sense of self.

Aryana gives the impression of reaching acceptance from the learning that came with the experience of moving and suggests that this challenge has shaped her to become the person that she is today. In other parts of her transcript, she makes references to how difficult this experience was for her, and thus with identifying that she is happy with the person that she is today, she is arguably alluding to the fact that she reached contentment and integrated the impact of this experience on how she feels about herself today.

Lily's interview demonstrated the way her moving was integrally linked to her academic goals, as illustrated in the following quote:

*"I probably made myself stand out a lot more than a bog...uhhh, you know, bog standard medical school applicant, because I had an international experience" (Lily, 4/107-109)*

Through her use of "I", Lily seems to reveal a strong sense of ownership over her experience suggesting that she used the experience as a way of differentiating herself from others and allowing herself to stand out, as opposed to the other participants who seem to suggest that the experience was the driving force behind the identity formation that they experienced. Unlike the other participants, Lily's interview focuses on her experiences as a singular journey rather than that which is part of her nuclear family, as she doesn't reflect too much on her relationship with her family. This brings out a sense of ownership of this experience placing her in full control of this move to the UK. This dominant stance seems to suggest that her experience is swallowed up by her as a person, as opposed to allowing it to shape her per se, which could in essence suggest that she took an active role in not allowing the significance of it overshadow the purpose of what she was trying to achieve, which was to get into medical school. It's as though she identifies the significance of her experience of moving but she doesn't let it define her other than in aspects that serve to her advantage. Like other participants, Lily's account creates a sense of her journey differentiating her from her peers thus making her story unique.

In a similar vein, Roxanne reflects on her feelings:

*"Yeah, I think I had a very different experience from people I went to Uni with. Especially with like the small school idea and uhhhh, I don't know, just being in two cultures"*

*and like speaking Italian at home but then going to school speaking English all that time so” (Roxanne, 3/52-55)*

Roxanne’s words create the impression that she felt significantly different to her peers whom she went to university with. It appears she had to navigate through underlying aspects between home and school in that she says she was stepping in between cultures as she moved between the two. This appears to be something that she would have had to do almost automatically – to be in one culture and speak one language at home, then be a different way when at school and university. In other parts of her transcript Roxanne reflects on how her journey between cultures was a very difficult one that may have contributed towards her experiencing depression and anxiety which is explored in more detail as part of Superordinate theme 3, suggesting that she may have felt a significant difficulty in having to step between the two worlds.

#### ***4.1.2 Subtheme 2: I don’t truly belong here***

In exploring the shaping of the participants’ identities, it became clear that with the new formation of themselves they also seemed to have discovered that their new selves didn’t have a concrete anchor to a physical community or place, leading to reflections on their sense of belongingness.

Belka illustrates this below:

*“Ummmm, I may be meeting with some of them when I come, but they understand that I am no more belonging to that circle, which might be upsetting to an extent.” (Belka, 13/298-301)*

Belka makes a reference to visiting her home country where she meets her childhood friends. Through these meetings she appears to interpret that this friendship group has now had a realisation that Belka is no longer a member of it and seems to express a controlled

sadness that comes from this. She seems to limit the level of sorrow that comes from this realisation by making references in other parts of her transcript to the fact that the move has brought many advantages to her life, it therefore appears that such advantages curtail the level of sadness she can feel because of losing the sense of belonging to the original group of childhood friends. For Belka, the sense of belonging to the childhood friend group appears to be driven by the group itself severing her connection to it, given in how she describes that “they understand that I am no more belonging to that circle” – as opposed to Belka being the active agent in this process. This suggests that Belka’s journey led to her being removed from this group, once again isolating her within the space of her experience and differentiating her from her peers. Belka says that the severing of the belonging is “upsetting to an extent”, suggesting that the sadness is curtailed and controlled, and proposing that she may be in the process of accepting this as part of her journey and adapting it within her sense of self, as though this anchor has been removed through her move to the UK, and now she has adapted to be without this rooting aspect. This may translate to a sense of having severed her sense of belonging.

The sense of sadness and sorrow seems more evident in the other participants’ expressions of how their sense of belonging has been impacted by the move. For instance, Aryana says:

*“the not belonging... that is something that I still feel to this day ummmm especially since 2016. And being told that, you know, if you're not British you need to leave, ummmm. It's, it's that ...is really, they... they got me... it's the sense of you don't belong here. You're not part of this group. You're not part of this society. You're an outsider.” (Aryana, 9/266-267)*

Aryana appears to communicate feelings of very strong rejection from the UK culture. In other parts of her transcript, she reveals that she has now been part of the UK culture for 20 years and thus it appears to be a painful and jarring experience to still not belong to it after all this time. She gives the impression that her sense of belonging to this culture has been missing from the beginning and has deepened in 2016, when the EU membership referendum took place. It appears there is an in-group and out-group comparison within her statement in that she seems to recognise that others see her as non-British, and that is enough for her to be cast outside of the in-group. It almost leaves an impression of lost hope for this feeling to ever come about, suggesting a sense of rejection and failure at being cast outside. This communicates a broader issue of a lack of belonging. In Aryana's example this becomes apparent through her feelings of not belonging to the UK society as an in-group member – thus she is cast outside. For Belka, the lack of belonging to a group is communicated through her sense of no longer belonging to the group of her childhood friends, also leaving her cast outside of an in-group.

Belinda's experience is similar and can be seen in the following:

*“For me, I haven't been able to find that feeling of I truly belong here. Even though it's true that I made this place home. But I will not say that I 100% belong here. And I can't even say that I will stay here forever” (7/192-194)*

Belinda appears to illustrate a sense of disappointment and loss over not being able to find a sense of belonging by alluding to not being able to identify an anchor within a feeling of belonging. She gives the impression that she has tried to do so by making the UK her home, however this does not appear to be enough to create a sense of full belonging for her. There is something about wanting a complete immersion of fitting in – through her reference of 100% - which doesn't appear to be present. There also appears to be a suggestion of a

potential continued search by making a reference to her saying that she doesn't know whether she will stay in the UK forever. This continued search for a home may suggest that despite wanting to, there may never come a time where Belinda feels like she belongs to any one particularly group fully, suggesting continued feelings of rootlessness and restlessness. Rootlessness comes about through not getting to the 100% feeling of belonging anywhere; whilst restlessness comes about from wanting to keep searching and trying, leaving a sense of unfulfillment and disappointment.

Eliza further elucidates this point in saying:

*“On the challenging side, obviously, very, very difficult to feel a sense of belonging, or finding a place, or a community where you feel like you belong. And I think my whole life, I've been looking for a community and, you know, a group to which I can feel like I belong.” (Eliza, 8/228-231)*

In this quote, Eliza is reflecting on how her moves have affected her overall, taking into consideration any positives and negatives that may have come about from these experiences. Like the other participants, she referred to the difficulty in finding a sense of belonging as one of the negatives that has come out from the experience.

She creates the impression that to be able to attain the sense of belonging is a truly monumental challenge, which she has explored through looking for either a place or a community to immerse herself in. Eliza says “obviously” in her description of the difficulty this has presented her with – this obviousness appears to come retrospectively after she has attempted to find that sense of belonging and found it difficult. The sense of a monumental challenge is further supported by Eliza's reference to her looking for this her “whole life”. Like with Belinda this creates a sense of continued restlessness and rootlessness through her searching for the sense of belonging and seeming to feel a sense of disappointment when she

doesn't find it. She creates the impression of relentlessly trying to find an anchor through a sense of belonging to a group and finding this incredibly challenging, suggesting the immense need to belong that may be behind this, that is not found.

#### **4.1.3 Subtheme 3: A home within myself?**

The participants differentiated between the internal feeling coming from a lack of a sense of belonging and an external physical home. Most of them made references to the meaning of a home to them and how they can conceptualise it in their lives today.

For instance, Lily said:

*“My home are the people that I call my friends ... Knowing that I have friends like that who are like satellites everywhere, all over the world, gives me that feeling of home and stability. And I think that is why I feel so able to up and move a lot. Because I've... I have a safety net in almost every country. Because they are my home. (Lily 8/186-192)”*

Lily appears to clearly communicate how rather than a physical home, her definition for this anchor is her friendship network. She seems to be able to recognise that the relationships she forms with people are what provides her with a sense of a stable base that she can access wherever she finds herself. She seems to suggest that in extrapolating herself away from a physical anchor of a tangible home, she can easily transcend physical barriers presented by relocations and travel. She alludes to the importance of these friendships in her life through making the reference that these friends are a “safety net” which appear to give her the strength and confidence to be wherever she finds herself. This appears to ground her within a stable base of roots that are her friends, wherever they are in the world. Knowing that they are there and that she can access them wherever she finds herself provides her with the support and emotional stability to be able to progress through life, falling back on these

friendship satellites when she needs to – in a similar way that traditionally someone may rely on a physical home to be a base of stability that they can rely on if the need arises.

Belinda also makes a reference to a non-physical home in her quote:

*“I’m still trying to find a middle ground between travelling and experiencing different lives, but also having that home. And I think maybe it’s just a case of I need to find a home within myself.” (Belinda, 13/323-325)*

She appears to make a significant observation that one of the consequences of traveling and experiencing a new culture, includes noticing that in gaining the experience of travel and creation of a new life, one tends to lose the sense of an anchor within a traditional physical home. This is not something that may be obvious from the beginning and Belinda appears to be reflecting on recognising the dichotomy of this loss and gain. It’s almost as though she must make a choice between the experience of traveling and having a home, which appears to create a conflict for her. Belinda seems to be in the process of bridging the gap between the two and establishing how she may be able to gain a sense of stability and stillness and how she can simultaneously access the dynamics of continuous movement.

Both Eliza and Roxanne make references to their parents when thinking about the idea of home. Eliza says:

*“Because not only have I moved around a lot, but also my parents have kept moving after I have and so there’s no, there was never a fixed place that stayed the same. That was a home. Like there... I had never like in the last 10 years, I’ve never had a place where I really can go back to where my parents were there and waiting for me. And so yeah, all this instability is very challenging.” (Eliza, 8/237-243)*

Eliza seems to highlight that, on the one hand a home needs to be a fixed place that is connected to where her parents are. In having her parents move around continuously she



seems to not have this now and not to have had this for a long time, through her use of “never” and specifically referring to not having a place to go back to in the last “10 years”. Her quote creates a sense of loss, due to the matter-of-fact way in which Eliza states that she never had a home, and because she then goes on to specify how there was no one waiting for her, creating a sense of loneliness. She clearly communicates how difficult she finds this situation to be, which further adds to the sense of sadness that this creates. She appears to try to resolve this through trying to recreate a sense of a home by herself and spends some time in her interview reflecting her involvement in different occupations and projects that she hopes to create a sense of an abstract home for her. Like Belinda, Eliza appears to fall back on an idea of creating a non-traditional home that is not tied to a tangible place, but rather through finding connections in her occupations.

Roxanne says:

*“I don't think there is one [a home]... Just because of my relationship with my parents ... I don't really have a home up there and I stopped seeing my London house as my home ... a while ago” (Roxanne, 17/379-382)*

In reflecting on where Roxanne feels her home may be, a strong sense of sadness and loss was evoked in me. Her reflection on not having a home created an image of a young person struggling through difficult challenges completely by herself, against her will, and being removed from any support in doing so. Despite Roxanne not being a child when doing this interview, I was left with a sense of speaking to a very young person who was trying to find her way out of a difficult situation she did not want to find herself in. Other participants also reflected on similar challenges, however Roxanne’s interview clearly communicated to me that going to the UK was not her choice and she hated this experience, and she suffered

for it consequently. The way she communicates this in very straightforward manner created a great sense of sadness in me, leaving me in a place of wanting to help her.

It's difficult to separate the sadness that is created in me through this interview, from the sadness that is communicated by Roxanne and other participants in articulating the challenges they experience because of not having a home. However, her description reveals in a straightforward manner that through experiencing difficulties in her relationship with her parents, she has also experienced a loss of her home. In other parts of her transcript, she reveals that she felt that she moved against her will, which negatively impacted her relationship with her parents. This appears to have led to a further consequence of her being unable to now identify a secure base that would traditionally be referred to as a home.

Roxanne's quote appears to further illustrate a transitional nature of her links to the UK – in referring to the fact that she stopped seeing her London house as a home some time ago, she appears to be severing links with the physical place. This may be a repetition of a pattern since her links with her home culture were severed when she originally moved. This may be a further representation of a sense of restlessness and rootlessness that is also illustrated in other participants' quotes, suggesting that Roxanne may feel the need to move again, now that she has identified that there is no sense of home in the UK due to an inner need to belong.

#### **4.2 Superordinate theme 2: Meaningful connections**

This theme highlights the significant role the participants' nuclear family structures have had on their experience of moving to the UK at a young age and how the experience itself threw these relationships into focus. It also focuses on the trajectory of losing and gaining connections with peers and how the participants experienced this in their journeys and the impact this has had on them.

#### **4.2.1 Subtheme 1: The role of family**

Most participants reflected on the importance of familial connections and how these were impacted and the role these played in the experience of moving to the UK. For instance, Belka said:

*“I felt, since I wasn't living with my parents since quite an early age. And I always was valuing a lot, any meeting I had with my parents or my relatives or my family, because they were always far away. And they feel that strange enough, our connection is much stronger than of some of the friends who stayed as they were always there, and that's kind of a given”* (Belka, 12-13/270-276)

Belka reflected that the distance that was created between her and her parents due to them living in separate countries seemed to have an overall effect of strengthening the connections between them. She realised that the distance that was the norm between her and her family members emphasised the importance of the meetings they had. She seems to recognise the paradox of the situation in that the fact that being away from her family is the driving force behind her valuing the time that she spent with them, in contrast to her peers, to whom she alludes that the connections they may have with their family members is not necessarily as strong due to the fact that their meetings are likely to be more predictable. This may suggest that the experience of moving and living away from some of her family, has created a shift in how she values these relationships, almost transporting them to a place of higher priority for her. This may also suggest that there is some underlying need to spend time with family that she recognises the benefit of, something that may not be so apparent when the geographical distance is not an issue.

Eliza reflected on the support and connections of her nuclear family system and how these were impacted by their experience of living in another country:

*“But it was mainly like, my parents, my brother and I are so tight, because my parents have purposefully created that as a safe space and as a safety net, for us wherever we went”*  
(Eliza, 17/525-527)

Eliza seems to create an impression of a strong familial unit in which she and her brother are purposefully embedded within the safety of said unit, suggesting a strong sense of support coming from within. She alludes to her parents’ intentionally creating a safe space for her, and in other parts of her transcript speaks of them being there for one another throughout the transitional periods of physical moves. Later in the interview Eliza also draws a contrast in how she felt this support diminish once the children had grown up and the parents focus shifted away from them, creating a sense of loss and resentment for her. Her experience would suggest that her parents were mindful of the difficulties that may arise with the transition to a different country at her age and had focused on providing an airbag for her as she tumbled through the challenges. This may suggest that she was provided with an opportunity to grow skills of self awareness that enabled her to identify what led to her to stand out from her peers. In turn it's likely that such an environment may have facilitated her creating helpful coping strategies and resilience in the face of adversity and challenges.

Belinda’s reflection on moving focuses on the challenges and the support she experienced:

*“And I think also being thrown in an environment you don’t know and having to, obviously I had the support of my family, which is really important. But you are kind of on your own and making it work is really empowering.”* (Belinda, 9/236-238)

She appears to identify that her experience of being placed in a new environment happened without much choice from her, as she reflects that she is “thrown” into a new environment, creating an image of almost being thrown into a deep end of the pool in which she must learn to swim. She seems to value the support of her family in this experience and

deems it as an important aspect. However, after the initial lack of control over the move, she seems to place herself in the driver's seat in managing this experience as she reflects how despite the support from her family, she is doing this on her own. Once she establishes how to manoeuvre through this challenge, she seems to identify a sense of empowerment and achievement.

In a similar fashion, Roxanne's experience of moving created an impact on her familial relationships as she says:

*"In terms of just like how it affected my relationships and quite a few negatives with my parents cos like, I didn't want to, and then I was forced to ... so that definitely messed that up for a long time" (Roxanne, 11/252-254)*

Roxanne reflects on the impact of the move on her relationship with her parents in response to thinking about the positives and the negatives this experience has had on her life. Like Belinda, she picks up on the fact that she had little power over the choice to move, and quite clearly expresses that she was against this idea but was forced to do it nonetheless. She seems to create a sense of being taken against her will into a new environment, which in other part of her transcript she describes as being a very difficult. It seems that in being forced to move, her connection with her parents was badly impacted putting a strain on their relationship for a long time. This could suggest that Roxanne experienced a significant power imbalance with her parents which may have led to a break in trust in having to endure something that she didn't choose and yet had to go forward with. In other parts of her interview, she alludes to having to put up with a lot of challenges because of the move, and this may suggest that a sense of resentment or blame may have been created through this forced transition. This appears to still linger for her through the above quote suggesting that it is unknown how long it will take to fix such a rupture. This in turn may suggest that the process of acceptance of one's experiences and challenges is ongoing.

#### **4.2.2 Subtheme 2: The seesaw of losing and finding friendships**

All participants reflected on their experience of making and losing friends and how this changed shape before and after the move. For instance, Aryana, Belinda and Roxanne were able to clearly express some of the challenges they experienced in the aftermath of their move. Aryana said:

*“I struggle with making ... making connections with British people, especially British people that have not had experience with European cultures in same way that some people in Oxford might have.” (Aryana, 3/78-81)*

Aryana seems to express the difficulty she experiences forming close relationships within the local host community after her move to the UK, especially with those who have not had any experience with other European cultures. Within this statement, as well as in other parts of her transcript, Aryana seems to express a lack of belongingness and feeling left out from the local community, partially due to her origins being different. This may be due to a feeling of being unwanted because of being different, as suggested by other quotes in her interview in particular with reference to experiencing feelings of being unwelcome after the EU referendum. There also appears to be a sense of disappointment and loss associated with this which can be felt through her indicating that it is a “struggle” making these connections, seeming to imply that she must try hard to do this and is often not successful. This quote, together with the other quotes discussed in Superordinate theme 1, seem to create a sense of experiencing a mix of disappointment, loss, and sadness at having to face this struggle.

Belinda seems to relate to this in describing her experience as follows:

*“Whereas before that, I was, yeah, I was very shy with people I didn't know but I had my, as I said before I had my pack of people that I could be myself with, and I didn't really find anything like that when I came here, so that did make me get back into my shell a little bit.” (Belinda, 11/291-294)*

In this quote, Belinda seems to reflect on being shy with strangers in her home country prior to finding her “pack” of friends. She elaborates on the idea of a pack in another part of her transcript and describes how this is a group of friends at school in her home country with whom she was very close. She seems to have lost the protection of this pack when she came to the UK, and this seems to have caused her shyness to come out. This may suggest that she is responding to a stressful new environment. This may create a subconscious response to revert to her natural predisposition of experiencing feelings of shyness, protecting herself from exposure to uncertainty. She appears to express disappointment at not being able to form the closeness of connections she had with her “pack”, expressed through the failure of not being able to find one in the UK, suggesting that she may not be finding a sense of security by continuing to have to operate without a pack. This may take away her capacity at this stage to establish strong connections and a sense of belonging, as she is having to concentrate on how to cope with not feeling secure. This creates a sense of a similar struggle described by Aryana just above – both participants appear to be faced by an additional challenge presented by a stressful environmental factor of being foreign in a new country. This may require them to concentrate on and react to this stressor as a primary aspect, prior to establishing strong connections. In a sense, this suggests that both participants are learning to live and survive, rather than flourish in this point in time, as the environmental stressors they are faced with seem to leave them with a sense of threat they are naturally finding themselves reacting to.

In a similar vein, Roxanne expresses her difficulties:

*“And that I feel like the first couple of years because I didn't really speak the language, and maybe, and then generally just felt a bit out of place. I kind of [pauses] struggled making friends (Roxanne, 4/82-84)”*

Roxanne illustrates the difficulty she experienced initially on the transition to the UK, putting this down to not speaking the language. She then also makes, what seems like, a reluctant reference to the fact that she struggled to make friends. Like Aryana, Roxanne uses the word “struggle” suggesting that it was a challenging time for her in which she attempted or perhaps expected to make connections that would result in friendships, but experienced failure. Once again this appears to point towards a lack of belonging within the host environment of the UK, and like Belinda and Aryana, focusing her energies on facing the environmental stressor of a new place which may have taken priority to forming connections. Within her quote, Roxanne seems to be communicating a sense of discomfort and pain, evident through the hesitation within her statement and the pauses she took to express the struggle of making friends. This may be representative of her inner emotional turmoil which may now be slowly coming out.

Belka and Eliza talk about their experiences of forming connections through a slightly different lens. Belka says:

*“And such kind of losses probably are less experienced by people who never moved and stayed and let's say in the city where they grew up, which is also beautiful as I think retaining childhood connections and taking them through life, this is something I didn't get the chance to. Ummmm, well, perhaps a few, but I understand that they're less serious than anyone I met here” (Belka, 13/282-288)*

In comparing her experience to that of her peers who didn't relocate, Belka notices that for her peers who may have remained in their home cultures, they may have experienced the longevity and continuity of friendships and connections that start from childhood and last into later life. She seems to clearly identify that having that experience is something that is to be treasured, which she illustrated through describing them as “beautiful”. She also seems to clearly identify that she did not experience that, alluding to the loss of a “chance” of retaining



these connections. In other parts of her transcript, she makes a reference to it being a painful experience to realise that she no longer belongs to her childhood circle of friends. Belka concludes by diverting away from the sense of loss of the childhood connections to saying that the new connections she made after leaving her home country are deeper rooted than the connections she initially had and now lost. This appears to suggest that she experienced a loss which was then replaced by a deeper gain, perhaps indicating that she is describing a further step in her journey, given that her reflection on this journey appears to come with a sense of contentment and peace. As though the realisation that the loss of childhood connections also meant that she gained something deeper that couldn't be experienced without the experience of relocating. Belka's comparison seems to create a sense of balance and equilibrium compared to the descriptions shared by Aryana, Belinda, and Roxanne, suggesting that she is perhaps at a different stage of the process of her experience.

Similarly, Eliza says:

*“So we would speak like English and French, but still like the, yeah, the people I was meeting, the friends I made, who are still my friends today. So I think, yeah, being at that time, like building those relationships are still, you know, the ones that I have today, and we were talking about it recently with some friends that we met, like, on my first day at school, or I remember them, you know, from their first day in the year after.” (Eliza, 3/67-68)*

In describing what it was like for Eliza when she first moved to London, she highlights how she seemed to make strong connections with her peers in the UK community and those friendships are still present in her life today. She seems to refer to still being friends with people she met in the UK on her first day of school. Through the neat summary, Eliza seems to create the impression of a balanced overview of how her experience of transitioning to the UK has led to her forming connections with people that have lasted a significant period and have reached a significant depth. Considering that in other parts of her transcript she also

alluded to difficulties she experienced as part of her moves, her summary within this quote creates the impression that she has reached a sense of acceptance, fully embracing the advantage of being able to create the connections she has once she moved to London. She also appears to suggest that the connections she has formed here are with others who may have similar backgrounds as her through her description of them using multiple languages when communicating, suggesting that potentially there was a sense of commonality that may have permitted the development of a long-lasting connection. Like Belka, this may suggest that Eliza's internal processing of her experiences may be at a further stage compared to other participants, because she is taking stock of what the experience has left her with and creates a sense of fulfilment of having this as part of her life.

### **4.3 Superordinate theme 3: The turmoil of adolescence and choice**

This superordinate theme examined the participants' reflections on how moving in adolescence played a significant role in their lives – due to the interaction of the move with the developmental stage of youth. It explored how participants noticed that significant emotions appear to be originating around this time. It also explores the concept of power and choice and how the lack of the latter can impact the experience of the young person.

#### **4.3.1 Subtheme 1: Intricacies of choice**

All participants identified that the choice of the move to the UK was not within their individual control – it was typically chosen for them as part of their families. The lack of power within this choice affected individuals differently and left a variety of effects. For instance, Roxanne states:

*“well I kinda just got told “we're moving” ... And then it happened. Yeah. Yeah. That was it.” (Roxanne, 5/116-117)*

In response to how Roxanne feels about developing feelings of depression, she seems to make a focused and direct link to the powerlessness she experienced when she was moved from South Europe to the UK. She seems to be very clearly identifying that 100% of the power of the choice lay outside of her control, creating an impression that this was almost done to her. She refers to the move as an “it” that happened, and “that was it”, creating the impression that once that was done, the case was closed and there was no gradual transition from one to the other; she was simply transported to the other side. When I then asked her how this left her feeling she said:

*“Oh, I..uhh..I hated it [laughs]. For I think the first year... yeah (Roxanne, 5/119)”*

Roxanne reflects on experiencing this with a strong emotion of “hate”, creating a sense that she was very much against being forced to move and suffered the consequences for this. The language and descriptions she uses create an impression of a very black and white recollection of a before and after; with a very strong emotion of hate being associated with it. The brevity of both statements in answers to my questions also appear to communicate the sharpness and directness of the emotion she appears to associate with this move – she did not choose it, and she hated it when it happened. She talks in other parts of her interview of how her relationship with her parents was significantly badly affected because of the powerlessness she experienced in this choice. Roxanne’s choice of the word “hate” elicits a sense of a powerful reaction to the situation she found herself forced into. Taking this together with the negative effect on her relationship with her parents discussed in the second superordinate theme, this may suggest a sense of resentment that may have been incepted from the lack of choice she experienced at this stage.

Eliza makes a similar observation in terms of her role within the choice of relocating:

*"I've spoken about this a lot with people during COVID, because I had these conversations around Third Culture kids adapting to, to the situation, you know, in different ways. Because, yeah, my world has always been challenged, or, like what I took for granted has been taken away from me so many times, whereas people who've never had to move, like, they've never experienced, like, something so powerful happening to them against their own will (Eliza, 7-8/219-225)"*

On reflecting on how the experience of moving affected Eliza in comparison to her peers who didn't have such experiences, she elaborates on how moving is something that is very powerful, presumably due to the loss of everything that she had been taking for granted up to this point, and specifies that that was something that was done against her will, creating an impression that she, like Roxanne, was forced into this choice. She appears to make a comparison to the Covid-19 pandemic and likens the adaptability she appears to have learnt through her experiences of moving to the sheer power of the pandemic and how this too may have led her to lose things that she may have taken for granted before. Such a comparison creates the impression that the powerlessness that Eliza experienced within the moves were, to her, of a truly global scale.

Belinda was also able to reflect on how she was left feeling following the moves and the role she played in it:

*"I think the fact that I was very shy as a child, and kind of pushed into these situations where I'd have to potentially, let's say make a fool of myself, by speaking a language I didn't really know. Maybe that wasn't, that was definitely not very easy. And I think I'm a person who is not very outgoing. So making friends is not really something that comes naturally for me and being torn apart from different friendship groups and having to form new ones, was also a big challenge." (Belinda, 10/275-281)*

Belinda seems to reflect on how she may have immediately been at a disadvantage experiencing shyness as a child and then having to find herself in situations where she appears to have felt like a “fool” due to not being able to speak the language of the host country. This seems to create an impression that she was faced with noticeable challenges when she moved. She then appears to suggest that once again, there may have been an almost forced removal from her friendship groups in the way that she expresses being “torn apart” from her group of friends and of being “pushed into these situations”, creating the impression that the choice to go into the host country, the UK, was not her choice but rather something that she was forced into.

Lily and Belka appear to reflect on their experiences using a longer lens which appears to incorporate a wider timeframe. Lily says:

*“I was so focused on my end goal that.... it was ...uh... a necessary evil kinda thing”*  
(Lily, 4/90-91)

Lily elaborates in her interview that her end goal was to get into a medical school in the UK, which is something that she aspired to from an early age. She thus seems to create an image of a determined series of steps that must be taken to get her to this goal. In referring to her move to the UK as a “necessary evil” she creates the impression that was not a pleasant experience, nor necessarily an experience she would choose out of her own accord. Rather, she creates the impression that the choice to get into medical school is what determined her move, and thus any difficulties or obstacles that come with it came as a package deal that she had to get through.

Belka reflected:

*"I think it was only after graduating University that I started realising "Oh well....so....[laugh] how did it happen .. the UK... I never chose it... I just came to [college name]" (Belka, 6/122-125)*

Belka appears to reflect on coming to the realisation that she somehow ended up in the UK as a retrospect which seems to have stayed unnoticed until after she finished University. She makes a clear reference to the fact that she never chose the country – she simply came to a specific college to do her studies. It seems that in “just” coming to a college, the significance of the choice of the country is somehow diminished which is what may have allowed it to stay unnoticed for so many years. Belka appears to recognise that she was not an active agent in the choice of the country that she ended up in. Her primary emotion appears to be that of surprise of making a choice without making a choice, suggesting that even a passive role is likely to lead to active considerations later.

#### **4.3.2 Subtheme 2: An important age**

Most participants reflected on how experiencing adolescence, when they moved to the UK interacted with how they felt about the move and its consequences.

Eliza reflected as follows:

*"10 to 15 also I guess is the years here you really develop as a young adult and you your personality develops and things and that formative time was in the UK. So it's I built my big part of my identity in those years and in this environment" (Eliza, 17/510-513)*

Eliza reflects on the fact that she found herself in the UK at a critical time in her life when she feels she was developing as a young adult with her identity and personality forming. She appears to absorb her experience of those years into her identity today and thus creates the impression that it's an integral part of her. In other parts of her transcript, she talks about her occupation being linked to her identity as a TCK, further suggesting a long-term

impact and a full integration of the experience within her sense of self. She appears to suggest that the age at which she experienced the move to the UK plays a significant role in the deep-rooted integration of this experience within her personal identity.

Belinda also makes a connection between the age at which the move is experienced and its ultimate impact in saying the following:

*“Yeah, I think it's obviously moving here. It was not just the only factor, but also the fact that you're going through adolescence. So it's also a big transition in your body and in your brain. And all of it is very, very intense when it's put together.” (Belinda, 4/102-105)*

Belinda talked about experiencing feelings of depression and on reflecting when this may have begun for her, she discusses the impact of the move. She appears to identify the move as a significant contributor towards how she found herself experiencing depression later, and she appears to make a very distinct connection between experiencing the move whilst in adolescence which may have created a very powerful combination due to the significant changes that occur in the brain and the body which are then combined with the social challenges stemming from moving countries in that age.

Belka appears to reflect on how that age at which she found herself moving to the UK impacted her connections with others and says:

*“Second is that most of my close friends till this day come from the international college rather than from my home country. It happened that there was this shift, maybe it was because this was quite an important age, 17- 19, ummm and I felt that they were closer connections than earlier or later” (Belka, 6-7/99-104)*

Belka was reflecting on how the move to the UK had impacted her life and she appears to recognise that due to the age that she found herself in the UK, which she puts down to being between 17 and 19, she made particularly strong connections with her peers

resulting in friendships that are closer than others. She appears to have identified a shift that may have happened during that age, suggesting that there may have been an internal change that she experienced at that time, perhaps due to the internal developmental shifts occurring for her combined with her environment. Her surroundings may have created the right opportunity to develop significant relationships with her peers in this setting. This appears to be in line with Eliza's and Belinda's comments above which make references to the combination of adolescence and the experience of moving being quite powerful.

Aryana says:

*"Ummm, so yeah, I think it's the continuity versus the lack of continuity of that age, when you're just sort of cut off and moved somewhere else, I think it can be really jarring. And it can, depending on the sort of circumstances in the environment around the move, ummm, it can also be quite painful to get through, and it can be quite harmful ...ummm...in the long term."* (8/219-223)

Aryana reflects on how moving at the age of the 17 may have impacted her overall, especially in comparison to her peers who did not have that experience. She seems to identify that the interaction of the person's age with the experience of being cut off from the familiarity of the environment in which they have found themselves up to that point is very challenging. She appears to allude to a sense of roughness and shock in using the descriptor "jarring", suggesting a significant turning point for that stage in life. She also seems to highlight the significance of the effects of this in specifying that the experience could be painful and have long term harmful effects. Like the others, she seems to point towards the age at which such a move is experienced as being a significant factor for how this experience affects a young person.

#### **4.3.3 Subtheme 3: The undercurrent of emotions**



Four of the participants identified in their interviews significant underlying emotions that they were able to link to the experience of moving at the age that they did. They appeared to reflect on the fact that the emotions they experienced may have not been obvious from the start, but in retrospect may have become easier to label.

For instance, Aryana creates a poignant illustration of how the experience of the move manifested for her:

*“Apart from the fact that I ate my own weight in ice cream and crisps and junk food because food is comfort. Ummmm, I’d created an alternative world in my head... (Aryana, 6/159-161)”*

With this quote Aryana is illustrating how the challenges she experienced when she moved to the UK manifested for her in everyday life. She appears to allude to seeking comfort at this time and finding this in food, suggesting that she found herself in an emotionally challenging place. She creates the impression that she was going through something very difficult for which there was little guidance that she could access and thus she comforted herself through food. She further elaborates that she dealt with the challenges she felt through creating a vivid alternative world in her mind within which she would seek refuge. This creates the impression that she was experiencing significant pain, however this may have not been immediately obvious to her, as she reflects in other parts of her transcript how it was only in retrospect that she was able to reflect on what she was experiencing at the time and how this was pain that she was trying to manage.

Similarly, Belinda seems to have identified a link between how she was feeling and the emotional experiences she has had:

*“So I struggle with episodes of depression, and think that some of it could be related to just my experience of moving to different places, which is something that I did like and*

*even I sought out but it's always a bit I don't know a bit traumatic. Maybe that's a strong word, but it is." (Belinda, 4/92-95)*

Belinda seems to paint a dichotomous picture of seeking out and enjoying moving around with the trauma of this experience. She creates a link between episodes of depression she experiences with these experiences of moving and clearly specifies that her experience of the moves were that of "trauma". She almost excuses using such a strong descriptor for what on the surface may not be expected to create such an emotionally strong effect but seems to bravely admit that for her the experience of moving was powerful and that it may be linked to her experiencing depressive episodes, perhaps due to the significant changes in her environment and the associated challenges this presented her with. This creates a sense of enormity of the experience of moving at her age, which seems to have long lasting effects.

Similarly, Roxanne says:

*"I think when I moved is kind of when I can pinpoint starting to struggle with like anxiety and depression, so I feel like that definitely had a big part in it." (Roxanne, 4/80-82)*

Roxanne appears to make a very clear connection between her experience of moving to the UK with developing feelings of anxiety and depression. She seems to paint a definitive stance that suggests an almost causal relationship between moving with the subsequent emotions she finds herself struggling with. In the brevity of this quote Roxanne seems to create an impression of enormity of the burden she appears to be carrying because of her experience of moving and of the pain that it may have created for her. Like for Belinda, this may be due to the significant challenges she found herself facing due to the changes in the external stressors she experienced.

Eliza's reflections seem to focus less on identifying specific consequences on her emotional wellbeing, but more on the connections and reflections she made in retrospect. She says:

*"part of me also has always, in the past used to be a bit resentful towards my parents for underlying, obviously, not directly because we're very tightly knit. But always a bit of like, ugh why did we have to move around so much." (Eliza, 9/255-259)*

Eliza reflects on identifying feelings of resentment towards her parents for making her move. She speaks of her lack of choice in these matters in other parts of her interview, leading to an impression that the reflection of resentment may have been retrospective. She describes in her interview the challenges she experienced when finding herself in the UK and within this quote she seems to identify the underlying emotion – resentment – that may have allowed her to potentially place blame and find somewhat of an explanation for the difficulties she may have been experiencing. She interestingly makes a reference to the emotion of resentment being "underlying" because they are a closely knit family, creating an impression that such an emotion may not have been allowed out in the open. This suggests that it may have been an internal emotional battle Eliza went through on her own, without the close-knit support of her immediate family. At the end of her interview, she also makes a reference to exploring this resentment with professional help, further suggesting that this was a significant underlying emotion that may have manifested because of the move.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of the research in relation to the original aims and objectives set out and how these are linked to existing research, organised through the discussion of each superordinate theme. I will then discuss the implications of these findings for theory, research, and clinical practice. I will incorporate personal and methodological reflexivity throughout and conclude with the limitations of this research and a conclusion.

### **5.1 Superordinate Theme 1: The creation of me and my home**

#### ***5.1.1 Impact on personal identity formation***

All participants reflected on how the experience of coming to the UK during their developmental years had an impact on their sense of self. The process of such an integration was different for each participant, suggesting that they may have been at different stages of this journey. The participants' reflections on the difficulties presented through their experiences of moving and the associated challenges this came with appear to be like those in the published research on this topic. For instance, Walters and Auton-Cuff (2009) found that the experience of transitioning between cultures led to their female participants experiencing the feeling of being different from others in their social milieu. In their biographical phenomenological study, their female participants spoke of generally feeling different from other people regardless of where they were living. They also spoke of typically discovering who they are not, prior to discovering who they were. This appears to be like how Belka referred to being different to her peers, and how Lily discussed how her experience of transitioning allowed her to stand out from her peers as though this was an automatic component of moving. Their stories were different to their non-TCK counterparts and that

created an immediate point of differentiation that required time, effort, and consideration as to how to overcome it.

In a similar vein, the participants within this study made strong links to how the move to the UK affected their identity, something that has been reported in other studies. For instance, within the Moore and Barker (2012) study, some of their TCK's appeared to integrate the experience of moving within their sense of self, developing multicultural identities that allowed them to fit in within many different cultures. Other participants within the same study spoke of having multiple identities that allowed them to feel accepted in two or more cultures and being able to adapt and shift identities, depending on the circumstances they found themselves in. Regardless of the strategy used, participants also reflected on struggling with finding a strong sense of belonging to any single culture.

It may be suggested that the process of identity formation is a delicate and intricate one, and one that is likely to be dynamic in nature. Therefore, when Belka spoke of being surprised at how her peers didn't appear to recognise how her story was different, this may have been an expression of how she had to find a way of integrating her identity as a TCK with that of a young female finding her way in life in the UK. She thereby may have been in the process of establishing a multicultural identity that allowed her to fit in with her host environment, at the same time as integrating the uniqueness of her story.

Similarly, Roxanne and Eliza reflected on having to adjust between home and school – at home they spoke one language, at school another. Roxanne created the impression that she was in the process of figuring out how to adjust to these frequent cultural transitions and how to integrate them within herself. This may suggest that adjustment to such cultural transitions created an extra step within the process of identity development for Roxanne. This is like what Walters & Auton-Cuff (2009) found within the experience of their participants,

who appeared to be responding to how they needed to act and behave in the present moment, which is something that was a changing factor when they needed to adapt to the environments, they were finding themselves in. This may have taken precedence over identity development with their participants as the need to respond to the environment was more pressing.

It could suggest also that the participants were at different stages of the process of building a multicultural identity and a global mindset, as the participants Mosanya and Kwiatkowska (2021) study suggests. This would suggest that with time and successful integration of multicultural identities, these individuals could be placed at achieving better well-being (Mosanya & Kwiatkowska, 2023) and a global mindset – permitting them to reap the advantages of having multicultural experiences such as enhanced cognitive skills of intercultural sensitivity and an expanded worldview (Fail et al, 2004; Pollock et al., 2017; Straffon, 2003).

Tajfel (1981, 1982) developed the theory of social identity within which the social self is defined as an “aspect of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p.255). Accordingly, our cultural identity incorporates the idea that membership within a particular group is part of that person’s identity. Therefore, it may be considered that not knowing which cultural group one belongs to can lead to an obstacle in the development of the personal identity.

Within the narratives of the participants in this study, they all referred to stepping in between cultures. It is therefore plausible that through these constant transitions, the participants are likely to have found difficulty in establishing a solid personal and cultural identity. Rezzoug et al. (2011) and Weise (2010) helpfully discuss how migrant children face

**Commented [AM24]:** Consideration of additional theories added in CLR and how these can help conceptualise the advantages of the TCK experience, as per both examiners reports.

the challenge of having to create splittings on a topographical, temporal, spatial and ontological levels – referring to separation of family and school relationships (topographical), life before and life after the migration they experienced (temporal), how they behave in one place such as home, versus how they act with friends (spatial), and context within different cultural backgrounds at home and outside world (ontological). These splittings are needed to enable the young person to move between separate cultural worlds they are inhabiting but they can, at times, create confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety for the young person, as they may become mechanisms for psychological functioning in the form of ego splitting.

Evolutionary psychology tells us that we are driven by social motives that include forming alliances, cooperating, and belonging to groups or tribes (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Buss, 2015; Cassidy & Shaver, 2018; Gilbert, 1989, 1992, 2017, 2019; Neel et al., 2016). Social rank theory (Gilbert, 1989, 1992, 2005, 2015; Gilbert & Allan, 1998) tells us that when we find ourselves experiencing stresses such as social criticism, rejection, and putdowns that we cannot get away from, we may find ourselves demobilised into a depressive state as a form of an evolved strategy and solution. Social mentality theory (Gilbert, 2015) discusses how when human relating needs are thwarted this can lead to emotional and behavioural difficulties (Gilbert, 2015; Siegel, 2020; Slavich & Cole, 2013). It can therefore be considered that in the situation whereby our needs to belong to a group are threatened, this is likely to take precedence above other psychological developments, thus slowing down the process of personal identity development and requiring the individual to respond to the immediate threat of survival. It is possible that participants such as Roxanne and Belinda, who referred in their narratives of having trouble stepping in between cultures between home and school, may have been in the throes of responding to an immediate environmental threat of not knowing what group they belong to, or what their social reference point may be. This is likely to have taken precedence to discovering of who they are at this

point and impacting the development of their personal identities and the emotional turmoil that came out as being linked to these.

On a personal level I was able to identify easily with the accounts that the participants shared with the need to step in between different worlds – as this is something that I experienced as a young person and still do today as I step between conversations with my parents or distant family members and the conversations with my husband and child or friends and colleagues. I therefore considered how I was likely to respond with selective attention to the narratives of the participants who shared their story with me. It's likely that in hearing similarities in their stories to mine, I was potentially applying more significance to those that resonated with the feelings of identity struggles that I experienced and potentially applied more weight to these than others. This illustrates that in the process of this study it is impossible to separate my closeness with the topic and shows how my subjectivity and inter-subjectivity with the participants may have impacted the findings of this study in placing me in the position of the researcher, a CP and a TCK myself (Gil-Rodriguez & Kasket, 2011). To establish as much bracketing as possible (Smith et al., 2009; Milton, 2010) and improve the validity of the study, I relied on supervision review, as well as peer review to check in regarding my findings.

I also had to recognise that I often saw the challenges of the experiences that were shared by the participants, in advance of noticing the advantages. This is likely to have been driven by my own personal need for validation and normalisation of a seemingly positive TCK experience presenting with challenges that were hard to identify. Challenges of the TCK experience are also given more focus within published research on this topic (e.g. Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009; Moore & Barker, 2012; Pollock et al., 2017) whilst the advantages of the experience, whilst often mentioned, are not usually given as much space. Accordingly, on

**Commented [AM25]:** Reflection on how advantages of the experience were not originally seen as per both examiners reports.



final reflection of research I had to recognise that my stance was also skewed and particularly alert to notice the challenges ahead of the advantages of the experience.

### *5.1.2 Sense of belonging*

Five of the six participants made explicit references to feeling as though they didn't belong which they linked to the experience of moving to the UK. For some participants, like Belka, there was a very clear identification of being cut away from an original group of childhood friends, that she was removed from by virtue of having moved to the UK. For others, like Aryana, there was a clear reflection on how she felt cast as an outsider from a majority in-group of the host culture despite living here now for a significant period.

Within existing literature, a sense of belonging can be considered from several aspects. From a social mentality perspective, we can gather that humans require to share and operate in cooperative groups and relationships, coordinate their behaviours and work together for common goals – giving rise to a sense of belonging (Gilbert 2015; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). A sense of belonging can be defined from several perspectives and includes a sense that comes about from building long term, stable and predominantly positive interpersonal relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Antonisch (2010) separates two parameters of belonging, one that refers to place-belongingness - referring to a “personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place” and politics of belonging which is a “discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion” (p.645).

The narratives within this study appear to accentuate that participants tried and struggled to make meaningful connections to physical places and to people to establish an inner felt sense of belonging. Belka, Lily and Aryana explicitly pointed out the difficulty they experienced with finding a sense of belonging with the geographical location of the UK. This

seems to be suggestive of how Antonisch (2010) discusses the sense of belonging indicating that at least an initial attempt is made by these participants to establish a sense of belonging with the geographical place and the discursive social construction of a socio-spatial inclusion by the host community (UK). de Waal & Born (2021) found that their TCK's defined their belonging more in terms of personal relationships than in terms of geographical locations. This echoes what was explicitly referred to by Aryana, who talked of surrounding herself with friends who had similarly international stories to hers; and by Lily who talked of her friends around the world becoming "satellites" (7/189) whom she could fall back on at all times and this is what may have allowed her to feel "home" (7/190,197) wherever she went.

Belka was able to specifically identify a cutting off a sense of belonging from her childhood friends when she returned to her home country and met up with them, reminiscent of narratives within the studies of Bikos et al. (2009) whereby their repatriated missionary kid respondents associated home with friends and the comfort in their host country rather than original home cultures.

Similarly, the studies of Greenholtz and Kim (2009), Moore and Barker (2012), Walter & Auton-Cuff (2009) showed that their adult respondents found themselves being able to fit in with groups of people but didn't feel a full sense of belonging to any; rather they found it easier to find a sense of belonging with other TCK's.

The difficulty with finding a sense of belonging led to four out of six participants explicitly mentioning the need to seek out continuous transitions, to find and solidify a sense of belonging, but often finding this difficult. For instance, Belinda spoke to seeking out moving around but simultaneously experiencing each transition as "traumatic" (4/95). This appears to validate the extensive discussion by Pollock et al., (2017) on the feelings of restlessness and rootlessness which appears to be pervasive within the population of TCK's,

presenting further evidence in this case to suggest that such feelings of restlessness and rootlessness may be enmeshed with a lack of belonging that seems to have a relationship with transitions that TCK's experience.

### ***5.1.3 Lack of a physical home***

In attempting to overcome a sense of not having the stability provided by a constant physical home, participants referred to looking to establish alternatives to this. Belinda spoke of looking to creating a home within herself, and Eliza mentioned attempting to compensate for not having a stable family home by trying to recreate this in her adult life through her work. Roxanne, spoke of not really having a home anymore because of her numerous transitions.

These descriptions are like what has been reported in studies on the experiences of TCK's. Nette and Hayden (2007) found within their study of 9–11-year-old children who experienced a globally mobile childhood that they had a sense of belonging but struggled with identifying a specific place of belonging. de Waal & Born (2021) also identified within their study that their participants translated their understanding of home into their significant relationships, especially those with their family members, rather than a physical place.

From a TCK perspective this appears to make sense, given that TCK's are likely to experience many transitions in their life, thus it may become difficult to create a strong sense of connection to a physical 'home'. Instead, often, the constancy in their lives is the relationships they have, often with their immediate family members. This therefore suggests that the previous findings on this topic are further corroborated with the narratives shared by the participants within this study, implying that within the trajectories of TCK's there is an important emphasis on the relationships that are formed as part of their transitions, since these compensate for a loss of a constant physical home.

## 5.2 Superordinate Theme 2: Meaningful connections

### 5.2.1 Connections with others

Participants made specific references to the impact on the move on their relationships with their family members, as well as with friends. Each aspect is considered.

**Family.** Five out of six participants spoke of how their move to the UK impacted their relationships with their families. They reflected on how the familial support they felt during the move(s) from their families was very important. Eliza made specific references to her family as a strong support unit; and Belka and Aryana specifically noticed how their relationships with their parents strengthened because of the moves they experienced. This corroborates the findings published from other studies on this topic who found similar themes emerging within their TCK participants. For instance, de Waal and Born (2021) found within the accounts of TCK's who took part in their study that they tended to relate the idea of belonging to a strengthened relationship with their immediate family members, potentially due to the constancy that their family presented being there as they transitioned through geographical locations. Similarly, Bikos et al. (2009) found that the strength of family relationships became one of the most important factors of support for their participants when these went through repatriation experiences. The takeaway from this suggests that the nuclear family can be strengthened through an experience of moving, however it appears that the nuclear family needs to be there as a support system with intention, as specifically referred to within Eliza's description of her family – *“because my parents have purposefully created that as a safe space and as a safety net, for us wherever we went”* (Eliza, 17/526-527).

This is in line with attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973) which suggests that when we leave things that are familiar to us, this is a natural clue to danger which can activate attachment patterns that encourage us to interact with people who make us feel safe (Juang et

**Commented [AM26]:** Application of attachment theory to the interpretations of the interviews and how this could be an advantageous trait of the experience as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's reports.

al., 2018). Accordingly, in the case of the Eliza, Belka and Aryana it seems that they reached out to their family, suggesting that these are the secure relationships they have in their lives, which in turn allowed them to feel safe during a potentially stressful time. This could indicate that despite the difficulties of a stressful experience, these individuals were able to rely on and strengthen their secure attachments, which in turn can have a positive effect on their future relationships (Juang et al., 2018).

**Friendships.** Another aspect that became evident in the narratives of my participants was that of the friendships that were formed with others. Belka reflected on how the connections she made after the move to the UK, within the international college that she found herself in, were stronger in power and duration than the friendships she had before that. Similarly, Eliza remarked that the friendships she formed after the move to the UK lasted to the present day indicating the longevity and depth of the connection. In both instances, these friendships were formed within an international community, suggesting that they were created with individuals with similar life stories to those experienced by Eliza and Belka. Choi and Luke (2011) found that their participants struggled to make friends with non-TCK's but found it easier to make connections with TCK's. Kwon (2019) found that TCK's prefer to build relationships with others from similar backgrounds to them. Studies on TCK's conducted by Firmin et al., (2006), Lijadi and van Schalkwyk (2014), Smith and Kearney (2016) also support that idea that for individuals who identify as TCK's forming relationships with other TCK's may be easier than with non-TCK's.

Roxanne, Belinda and Aryana all eloquently expressed that they struggled with the ability to make friends. This is similar to what has been reported in other studies on TCK's struggling with forming friendships (e.g. Choi & Luke, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009)

From a biological perspective, we are physiologically set up to create social connections to thrive (Crosier et al., 2012; Hostiner et al., 2014) and thus it makes sense that when these connections are not formed, individuals are likely to express unhappiness because of that.

Belinda and Roxanne also spoke specifically of experiencing feelings of shyness in conjunction with narratives on forming friendships, creating a sense in my interpretation that this inherent quality of their personality may have been forced out because of the difficult environment they found themselves in. This can be formulated in line with the diathesis-stress model (Monroe & Simons, 1991; Zuckerman, 1999) that suggests that some individuals due to a vulnerability in their behavioural and/or temperamental physiological make-up may be disproportionately more likely to be affected adversely by an environmental stressor, such as a difficult life event. It may be considered that the move to the UK created a challenging environment for the participants, thereby creating a negative environment, which may have led to a natural predisposition to experience feelings of shyness to come out in a way that may have been hindering when attempting to make social connections. It is therefore necessary to consider the importance of such an impact on the trajectories of TCK's when planning for or assessing such transitions. Whilst we cannot generalise the findings from the experiences of these TCK's to all individuals who have such transitions, it is nonetheless important to consider and plan for the potential negative impact that may arise because of having an environmental stressor such as an international transition at a specific time in life. This is because such a life event may interact with an underlying predisposition for an expression that may impact that individual in a negative way. Being prepared for this is likely to create accessible opportunities for safe space of expression of such emotions and/or behaviours, their validation and normalisation, which are likely to be helpful tools in overcoming such difficulties.

### 5.2.3 Losses

The participants appeared to experience losses that felt highly significant to them, but which they noticed were not likely to have been experienced by their non-TCK counterparts. Specifically, Belka identified that she lost her childhood connections and reflected on how it seems like a “*beautiful*” (13/285) thing to be able to carry such a connection through life. Eliza made specific remarks at being taken out of an environment she was used to and have everything she knew taken away from her; and Belinda spoke openly about the loss of her pack of friends, which she did not find again after the move. Roxanne made a painful reflection on losing a relationship with her parents and a family home because of the move to the UK.

Hidden losses are somewhat referred to in existing literature (Gilbert 2008; Smith & Kearney, 2016) and range in very individual experiences from losing material possessions that cannot be taken on the move, to losing pets and human connections. Unprocessed grief, and lack of validation and identification of such a process is something that can lead to understandable emotional pain and confusion. Participants made references to spending time reading about the topic of TCK’s which allowed them to consider and reflect their own processes and may have been an example of validation and a process of grief coming into effect.

In analysing Roxanne’s transcript, I felt a deep sense of sadness which was not as apparent with other participants. At a certain point within the interview Roxanne made references to experiencing depression and anxiety and seeking psychological help; and of experiencing great sadness because of a broken relationship with her parents. She made a reference within the interview at being left alone for a few weeks when her parents made a decision to move back to their home country after coming to the UK, but Roxanne decided

not to go with them and was, in my interpretation, left behind. This created a sense of panic and unease within me as I felt myself switch into therapist mode and mentally began to assess risk and any past safeguarding concerns. I was aware that the interview was at risk of turning into a therapy session, but also found it impossible to ignore my therapeutic skills and intuition, highlighting my own confluence of being a researcher and a practitioner. In engaging in personal reflexivity (Willig, 2013) after the interview and during the write-up process and keeping a reflective journal (Kasket, 2013) allowed me to process what may have sparked a stronger emotional response to Roxanne's story compared to the others. Roxanne shared that while she appreciated the positives that came out of her experience of transitioning between countries, she felt that overall, the experience was a negative one for her and I interpreted that she was likely to have felt like she would have had an easier time if she had not moved. This is a conclusion that I have pondered for myself many times, which is something that may have connected me to her story and allowed me to interpret and feel the sadness in her words. While my own conclusions and assessments of my story is an ongoing process, the process of this research has allowed me to see that my identity as a TCK is enriched by my identity as a CP, which enables me to introduce clinical skills of formulation, analysis, and interpretation to arrive at a more nuanced standpoint.

There is an implication for CoP as a profession to recognise the importance of the life stories of TCK's, as the 'simple' process of speaking about the experience appears to have created a significant moment for these six individuals to reflect and assess their own life stories, and potentially start the process of validating their feelings and losses. I do also acknowledge that in agreeing to take part in this study, these participants may have seen the interview as an ability to talk about something that there may have been little other opportunity to do so, therefore loosely engaging with a psychological process. This highlights how their motivation to participate influenced the nature of this sample and the findings.



Taking into consideration the impact that speaking of their life stories has created for the participants in this study, it is important for us to consider as a profession that a life event such as a move, especially at a particular stage in life (e.g. adolescence), may have a multifaceted impact on that individual from the perspective of the hidden losses that they experienced, as shown in this study and in others (e.g. Gilbert 2008; Smith & Kearney, 2016). This suggests that being aware of this creates an opportunity to provide spaces for individuals to recognise and acknowledge such events in their lives and create a space of processing these.

It is also important to acknowledge that there isn't currently a large pool of published research that has found themes around the notion of hidden losses as part of transitions in the journeys of TCK's, it is therefore an avenue that is worth studying further, given that loss is closely intertwined with grief – a process that may need to be considered and addressed as part of a journey of an individual who identifies as a TCK through the safe space of normalisation and validation.

### **5.3 Superordinate theme 3: The turmoil of adolescence and choice**

Within this superordinate theme the impact on the emotional and psychological effects on the participants became apparent. This was significantly influenced by the effect of choice that the participants felt they didn't have within the decision-making process of whether to undertake the move, as well as timing of it coinciding with the experience of adolescence. These factors are intrinsically intertwined, but equally important and are discussed below individually.

#### **5.3.1 Role of choice**

Five of the six participants made explicit references to not choosing the move the UK, but rather being forced into it by virtue of familial situations. Roxanne's voice was the

strongest when it came to articulating the lack of choice she experienced when moving to the UK, in that she explicitly stated that she was told her family was moving and then it just happened, creating an impression that her role within this process was minimal. She very succinctly described hating being forced to come to the UK and revealed that her relationship with her parents broke down because of this.

These narratives support the idea that as children or young people, TCK's are involuntary migrants, however they are not in the same category as child refugees or asylum seekers – who are the traditional target groups looked at in research on involuntary migration. The involuntary aspect of their transition differentiates them from other migrants as well as from their parents undergoing the same transition, since the parent(s) choose the move. This places them into a category of their own, where, once again, they don't fully fit into any standard model. However, the importance of choice is something that requires to be considered as the power imbalance that is created through the absence of this volition is something that is likely to contribute to how these individuals feel. Literature on forced migration, which focuses on migrating for safety and addresses the plights of refugee and asylum seekers, suggests that the lack of choice within situations where the migration becomes involuntary can be equated to increasing the acculturative stress that may be experienced during this time referring to many stressors resulting from cultural, social and psychological changes (Berry et al., 1987; Weiss, 2010). Specific literature on TCK's doesn't appear to address the role of choice within the experiences and trajectories of TCK's yet this has come out as a salient factor within the experiences of the participants who took part in this study.

It may be considered that the lack of choice arising from the move(s) that TCK's experience may be something that could contribute to a phenomenon that may be akin to trauma in particular circumstances. Belinda specifically described that each move that she

experienced was “*a bit traumatic*” (4/95), and while the nature of a qualitative methodology such as IPA doesn’t translate into generalising the emergence of this theme to a wider population, it does create a starting point at looking at the aspect of choice within the trajectories of TCK’s. It could be considered that in experiencing the stress of the move that is without their choice, these young people may experience increased vulnerability – referring to the state of least resistance to harm and aggression (Weise, 2010) which may impact that person’s psychological functioning in that developmental stage. Literature on forced migration, especially in traumatic circumstances, suggests that increased vulnerability because of trauma may increase the risk of psychological disorders throughout life (Rezzoug et al., 2011; Weise, 2010).

From the perspective of forced migration, Vingevoel and Verelst (2020) discuss how the forced migration process involves, sometimes repeatedly, altered settings, frameworks of reference, role expectations and living conditions, which instil disequilibrium and necessitate adaptation. There is likely to be an impact on the individuals’ sense of self, personal identity, and sense of belonging. There is also an aspect of unpredictability and uncertainty (Schiltz, 2018) as life for forced migrants becomes spatially and temporally undetermined. The lack of choice is likely to also add to the destabilisation resulting from the normal processes of development and come at a time when the young person essentially experiences the loss and overt or covert need to process the passing childhood and the loss of the home country (Volkan, 2017).

Younger people tend to be more flexible to adjustment, however, are also at a higher risk of developing mental health disorders (Bhugra, 2004). This presents a risk of relational struggles caused by intergenerational gaps, different integration speeds and changing family roles (Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Hynie et al., 2013; McCleary, 2017). Because of the

disconnection, dissonance and adaptation involved in the passage over different societies, transition may be a distressing events and lead to mental health disturbances (Schiltz, 2018).

The trajectories encountered by forced migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers are not the same as those of TCK's, however, the literature on forced migration creates a starting point for formulating the hypothetical experiences of TCK's. In utilising the biopsychosocial model, which incorporates biological, psychological, and social perspectives of the individual's experience, together with the 4P's model, which looks at chronology and aetiology based on predisposing, precipitating, perpetuating, and protective factors, it is possible to start creating a nuanced conceptualisation of the TCK experience (Henderson & Martin, 2014). An example of such a formulation can be seen in Table 3 below.

**Table 3**

*A hypothetical formulation of a TCK experience*

"P" characteristic	Biological	Psychological	Social
<i>Predisposing</i> "Why at risk?"	Familial history of mental health disorders; predisposition to increased stress experience	Temporary separation from familiar figures, settings and close relationships (e.g. school, friends, family members)	Removed from home culture, network, and society
<i>Precipitating</i> "Why now?"	Limited biological resources due to increased stress and developmental changes occurring naturally	Grieving loss of all things familiar. Experiencing distress at being "forced" to move	Acculturation stress, starting new school
<i>Perpetuating</i> "Why still?"	Focus on social adaptations, lack of focus on biological needs	Coping skills limited due to lack of acknowledgement of experience, external social factors needing immediate attention and taking focus away	Difficulties with establishing social networks, feeling "different", difficulties with language
<i>Protective</i> "What to rely on?"	Now aware of accessible resources and personal	Access to resources to improve adaptive coping skills	Familial support, community support

---

motivation for  
follow up

---

*Note* – Adapted from *IACAPAP Textbook of Child and Adolescent Mental Health* (Henderson & Martin, 2014).

Creating such a formulation presents a starting point to bringing into awareness the complexities of the experiences that TCK's may have and how this may impact them. This allows us to create a resource for a quicker adaptation process and a lessening of the possible acculturative stress experienced by some TCK's.

The consideration of how TCK's are impacted also leaves an implication for CoP as a profession to consider the significance of choice within the life stories of young people, as this is something, in the narratives of these participants, that played a role within how they interpreted their life events, and equally there will be other aspects in life where a young person has little or no choice in a significant decision – how do we, as a profession, then consider the impact of this on them as a person?

TCKs' unique trajectory places them in a category whereby they experience being 'different' to both their peers and their families – as their position within the family didn't allow them to choose their trajectory. This therefore echoes the findings of existing research on the experiences of TCK's whereby they voice feeling different and articulate the effects of this which includes struggles with forming their identity, difficulty in establishing lasting friendships or establishing a sense of belonging (e.g. Bikos et al., 2009; Choi & Luke, 2011; Cranston, 2017; Moore & Barker, 2012; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

My interpretation and reaction to the lack of choice expressed by the participants changed throughout the analysis process. Initially, the idea that these individuals didn't choose to move was not at a forefront of my awareness – it was a given that as children – these individuals, and myself, did not make the decision to move countries, this was made by

the parents. Now, at the end of the research process, this power imbalance feels a lot more apparent. I also find myself reflecting on my own story which, now, differentiates me from my participants. My choice to go back to my home country is currently being taken away from me – by war. It thus creates a stronger connection to my experience as a young person who did not choose if or where to go, and a stronger connection to my participants' accounts on their reflections regarding choice. Undoubtedly, this likely impacted the subjectivity of the research process, which is why the suitability of IPA as a method of analysis is once again highlighted since it recognises the integral role of the researcher in the process of analysis and required transparency and personal reflection of the process (Smith et al., 2009).

### **5.3.2 Adolescence**

Five out of six participants reflected specifically on the significance of experiencing adolescence at a time when they found themselves transitioning to the UK. The narratives indicate the interaction of the physiological and emotional changes occurring in the age of adolescence creates a particularly stressful environment to an internal challenging process of change.

Adolescence is, in its nature, a significant developmental stage which involves physical and psychological changes (Hettich et al., 2020). From the perspective of Erikson's developmental model, it makes sense that a transition to a new country and culture would have an impact on the internal development of the individual, since in adolescence peer relationships begin to have more significance during this stage while the salient ties to families still retain their importance (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018). In the case of TCK's, they find themselves within a new environment with new peer relationships as well as altered familial ties due to parents also going through a transition and likely separation from more distant family members.

Migration literature shows that the acculturation stage (Berry et al., 1987; Weise, 2010) is a complex process, it can be assumed that such a process for adolescents and children can be even more complicated as it is compounded by the internal psychological development occurring at the same time which could arguably make them more vulnerable to the external environmental changes taking place (Weise, 2010). It is therefore plausible to suggest that cultural and geographical transitions during this time can significantly affect personal psychological development of that individual. Immigration literature on children also helpfully points out how migrant children face the challenge of building a bridge between their parent's home culture and the host culture and find a way of processing this and communicating this with their family members (Weise, 2010). One of the founding characteristics of TCK's is the concept of such a 'bridge' – the interstitial third culture that is created within the experience of that individual (Pollock et al., 2017).

All participants identified how the effects of their transitions were something that impacted them long after they occurred, often forming significant aspects of their meanings of self and identity. This too is in line with findings within migration literature that tells us that the consequences of moves – voluntary or involuntary can manifest long after the events and can affect the entire family (Weise, 2010). Roxanne specifically referred in her account to the lasting effect of the move to the UK on the relationship with her parents – she didn't feel like she had a home and felt that her relationship had changed for the worse with no indication of a change. This is somewhat reminiscent of the findings of Long (2020), who, in her study found that TCK's can often grow up with a disrupted sense of temporality – not sharing the same sense of time as family members, and not having the same continuity as their peers, siblings or parents due to their numerous transitions and immersions into different worlds while in the process of developing in the age of childhood and adolescence.

It is therefore necessary to consider how we can better support and prepare people who experience the combination of external environment stressors created by a move with the internal process of change presented by adolescence. Acknowledging that this can be a stressful combination is an important first step, as well as educating health care providers and others the potential negative effects that such a combination can have is necessary. This is likely to better prepare and provide the required support to the individuals who experience such transitions and who may then find themselves experiencing any negative effects that may be linked to this.

### ***5.3.3 Emotional and psychological response***

The interaction of adolescence with the lack of choice when deciding to move as well as the other factors within an act of transition create a melting pot of emotional and psychological responses that all participants spoke about. Aryana spoke of turning to food for comfort and dramatically increasing her intake of this without realising the connection to the emotional pain she was experiencing until much later. Belinda and Roxanne made specific connections to experiences of depression and anxiety with when they moved to the UK; and Eliza referred to feelings of resentment towards her parents that built up in her over time for which she later sought psychological support with.

Literature on TCK's suggests that emotional responses linked to the moves can range significantly in their expression, giving examples ranging from low self-esteem, (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011) to depression (Davis et al., 2010; Hervey, 2009; Smith & Kerney, 2016) to feelings of suicidality (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

Theoretically, we have seen that when individuals seek but are unable to form lasting positive relationships with others, they can become vulnerable to high levels of distress and mental health problems (Hostinar et al., 2014). As discussed in this chapter, and referred to



throughout the analysis chapter, participants within this study referred to struggles with making friends and became aware of losing connections to friendship groups they already had.

Wesselmann et al. (2013) have shown that even in instances when individuals are 'left out' of computer games this can lead to changes in mood and self-esteem. Gilbert (2015) discusses how considerable research has shown that when individuals feel disconnected from their groups and networks, they can experience a sense of isolation and loneliness leading to emotional and mental distress. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) reviewed a vast literature on what they called 'the human need for connectedness' and to demonstrate how loneliness can be associated with a wide range of emotional and mental health problems. Participants in this study referred to feeling different and isolated within their experience and struggling with feelings of not belonging as well as uncertainty in personal identity, which can all contribute towards feelings of emotional distress.

Further, research on migrant children has shown that because of migration, children can experience increased levels of psychological distress (Lavik et al., 1996; Mollica et al., 1993; Resnick et al., 1993; Vrana & Lauterbach, 1994). It is therefore understandable that experiences shared by these participants demonstrate the emotional pain they experienced and, while from the idiographic standpoint of IPA this cannot be generalised, it nonetheless creates a platform from which we can consider further research on the mental and emotional impact of these moves on young people.

It also important to consider advantages that may arise because of and following the difficulties expressed and interpreted by me within the accounts of these individuals. Recognition of challenges that were interpreted by me within the sample of these TCK's is an important first step in understanding, normalising, and validating the experiences of these

**Commented [AM27]:** Consideration of advantages of the TCK experience, as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's feedback.

individuals. It is also an important building block from which it could be hypothesised that upon resolution of the identified stressors and challenges, it is possible and, in some cases, likely, that post traumatic growth can happen and likely create a new skill set, as well as an expanded global mindset for some TCK's. Post traumatic growth is defined as "positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances" (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p.6). The positive changes that are referred to within this definition are: improved closeness in relationships; awareness of new possibilities in life; a sense of increasing personal strength; positive spiritual change; and increased appreciation of life (Acar et al., 2021). Research on immigrants and refugees has shown that such psychological changes have been observed within these groups of people (e.g. Kira et al., 2013; Hussain & Bhushan, 2011). Furthermore, research on TCK's has shown that the TCK lifestyle does lead to many advantages which include positive diversity beliefs (de Waal et al, 2020); and intercultural literacy, adaptability, and flexibility (Stokke, 2013). Previously mentioned research by Mosanya & Kwiatkowska (2021, 2023) also shows how the advantages stemming from the global mindset that can be linked to the TCK lifestyle can be linked to improved well-being and an integrated multicultural identity. Participants such as Lily readily identified how they are able to feel connected to many friends across the world and made a reference to having "satellites" (7/189) of friends all over the world, suggesting that she may have been at the stage of reaping the benefits of her unique experience and lifestyle.

On a personal reflection, I did not readily interpret the advantages that my TCK participants may have been alluding to when retelling their stories. This may have been because of an internal drive to shine a light on initial challenges they, and I, may have experienced. I think I was driven to give attention and space to challenges that may be typically overshadowed by the seemingly positive situation whereby people are presented

with a positive opportunity to live and work in a new country. I recognise also that I may have been influenced by the trauma of war that was, and is still, taking place in my home country. This naturally alerted my threat system to be on guard and view examples of being taken away from a home culture as a potentially difficult event. With time and further reflection, I can put a little distance between myself and the negatively skewed interpretations that may have surfaced at the time. This demonstrates the constant dynamic in the process of understanding how people's experience shape their reality and hopefully allows me to become a more congruent CP.

#### **5.4 Implications for practice**

This study highlighted the intensity of the experiences undergone by these participants and found support for other studies on the subject area of TCK's. It also pointed out how there is little academic literature on the aspects of choice and losses that TCK's may experience.

At present, there is no structured approach to consider what is the importance of the migration pattern combined with the life stage of the individual when a client enters a therapy room with a mental health professional. It is therefore important to bring awareness to the wider community of mental health, business, and educational professionals how a life trajectory of someone who identifies as a TCK may impact them from an emotional and psychological perspective. It should also be considered what preparative steps can be taken to provide individuals who undergo this experience with support to integrate and process in a beneficial manner. Education and awareness of the concept, and the impact of the trajectories and the acculturative stress that may result should be brought into awareness through educational seminars and open forums created by schools, universities and business organisations that host many international families. General Practitioners should be made

aware of the potential stress and associated emotional upheavals recent TCK's may experience so that they can represent a first contact, a source of information, providing a point of help that TCK's can access and ask for support in processing such an experience. This would hasten the process of acceptance and integration and improve the likelihood of TCK's asking for help.

Additionally, mental health professionals should be made aware of the possible challenges that TCK's may experience which would enable them to consider the type of therapeutic support that may be beneficial in such cases. A hypothetical formulation as suggested earlier (e.g. integration of the 4P's and the biopsychosocial model, adapted from Henderson & Martin, 2014) can help facilitate the understanding of what the process the TCK's may be facing. Focus on loss and grief is likely to be helpful in creating open lines of communication and allow for processing of grief (e.g. Ferow, 2019). TCK's are also likely to benefit from cognitive restructuring techniques aimed at increasing their perception of control in certain situations. This may promote TCK's to adopt problem-focused coping strategies (Keeton et al., 2008).

It is also important to consider that alongside the challenges there are numerous advantages experienced by TCK's, such as, for instance having an integrated multicultural identity and global mindset (Mosanya & Kwiatkowska, 2021); increased tolerance (Gerner et al, 1992) and reduced racial prejudice (Viser 1986). It is also possible that suitable recognition, normalisation, and validation of the challenging side of the experiences TCK's have can then serve as a building block to build and create post traumatic growth leading to further enhanced coping strategies.

Further research is necessary to consider more clear-cut aspects that play a role within the trajectory of a TCK or anyone who loosely falls into this or similar category. Such as:

**Commented [AM28]:** Reflection on clinical implication of findings to take into consideration initial blind spots and advantages of the experience as per Dr Cucchi's report.

- what is the impact of choice within the life story of someone who has a life trajectory that falls within the definition of a TCK?
  - Would there be any links to their emotional and psychological health?
- What aspects of grief and loss are evident within the experience of TCK's?

Additionally, it is necessary to consider the robustness of the definition and its suitability for the purpose of academic research. The definition of who is a TCK was updated by Pollock et al. (2017) as discussed earlier. However, the implications of this update have not been considered as for those individuals who may have self-identified as TCK's in line with the older definition, but do not fall within the new definition, this identity has been taken away in an abstract fashion – without their choice. The arbitrary change to a definition does little, at this stage, to standardise the sampling procedures from an academic perspective and it needs to be considered how this may be improved to create consistency within this research.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The findings of this study are limited by several factors. Firstly, all participants recruited were female, no male experience was captured. While the qualitative lens of IPA is not one suited to generalisation, and therefore is it not intended nor possible to extend the findings of this group to all individuals falling within the definition of TCK's, it would nonetheless have been a valuable addition to the study to capture an experience from someone who identifies with a non-female gender. This may have been an interesting addition that could add an extra layer to the conceptualisation of the experience, given that research tends to suggest that males and females have different prevalence rates of mental health disorders and expressions of how adjustment to migration is exhibited (e.g. Bhugra, 2004).

Secondly, self-selecting nature of participants means that they volunteered to speak about their experiences, while having no obligation to do so. This may suggest that the experiences captured within this study may have attracted participants who felt the need to think and speak about their identity, and who may have already registered the concept of TCK's whilst on a personal journey of self-discovery. This is further supported by the fact that the advertisements used for the study used the term "third culture kid", thus suggests that the participants were likely to be familiar with it. It may suggest that this may have been a group of people who did indeed experience struggles that they were able to connect to their experiences of moving, or at least registered their experience of moving as a significant event in their life. The study therefore may not be reflective of experiences of TCK's who didn't struggle with their migration patterns and who mainly experienced advantages resulting from their experience. This may therefore skew the representation of how the experience of moving during developmental age may affect an individual, for instance if the individual's takeaway from the experience was primarily positive or not significant enough to register as one worth reflecting over. This may have also added to the general tendency to notice more challenging aspects of the experience within this study in favour of the advantages that the participants may have experienced. It is worth considering this when working therapeutically with TCK's - the therapist needs to be aware of there being both challenges and advantages potentially being present as part of this migratory experience; and, that the challenges may need to be worked through to then fully embrace the advantages that may come about.

Thirdly, as discussed in the Critical Literature Review chapter of this thesis, the definition of TCK's that this study relied on looked at individuals who came to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 and spent a significant part of their developmental years outside their country of birth, however there was no strict criteria in place to say that individuals must have done so in line with their parents' choice of work or study; and there

**Commented [AM29]:** Additional reflection on not seeing advantages and having a skewed view as per Dr Flothmann's and Dr Cucchi's reports.

was no strict criteria as to how long they must have spent abroad. It would be beneficial in future research to consider how the standardisation of the TCK definition would help with the research process on this topic and interesting to consider whether there is an impact on such an experience if it comes about because of a parent(s)' choice of work or study rather than any another reason – this angle of the experience was not part of the interview schedule in this study and no specific questions were asked about the reasons as to why the parents chose to move, thus this could be an aspect that may be worth exploring in future research to further build a more nuanced conceptualisation of the experience since this could give a better understanding of the familial systems and how the individual TCK's experience of the move may be impacted through the parent(s)' choice.

It should also be considered that the age at which the participants gave their interviews varied (ranging from age 20 when their move happened at age 13; to age 36 when their move happened at age 17). It may therefore be considered that the individual process for making sense of their experiences and integrating them within their identity was likely to have been at a different stage, suggesting that only snippets of such a process were likely to have been captured for everyone. Accumulation of research on this topic is likely to help identify and unravel what individual factors may contribute to understanding this experience more, since it is documented in literature how the effects of migration can come out long after the move(s) occurs (e.g. Bhugra, 2004; Weise, 2010; Vindevogel & Verest, 2020).

As referred to throughout this thesis, the closeness of the topic to my personal identity as TCK was continuously considered, to bracket and limit as much as possible my personal bias against the experience narrated by the participants. It's possible that my choice of topic for this research may have been driven by my personal process of identity development and may have attracted me for the same reasons that my participants may have volunteered to speak about their experience. Continuously reflecting on this, keeping a research diary, and

discussing my analysis and findings with my research supervisor as well as peers has allowed me to maintain a distance to the topic and recognise and reflect on the biases that may come up in the process, whilst keeping in mind that complete objectivity is not possible nor aimed for. Additionally, obtaining input on my analysis from one of the participants who verified the findings and found them to be consistent with their experience helped maintain the validity of the study.

Finally, the interview process and part of the write-up process took place during the Covid-19 pandemic whilst in total and partial lockdown. The impact of this unusual social state was not directly addressed in the interview schedule; however, it is possible that it may have played a role in how participants reflected on and shared their experiences. One of the participants made a specific reference and a comparison between the transitory nature in the life of a TCK with going through the pandemic, it would thus be interesting to consider in future research the impact and interactions of the pandemic on the lives of TCK's for whom global travel is a very integral part of their lives and identity. I carried out my interviews online because of the lockdowns, which was not the original intention. This may be the logistical process easier, as scheduling interviews was much simpler, however there's also a possibility that I was only able to capture a particular or a limited aspect of the participants' reflections which may have been different had we met in person.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This study serves as a way of adding to the literature on TCK's, from the standpoint of CoP as a profession and the UK as the host country. The experiences interpreted in this study looked to answer the research question of how adult TCK's from EU countries experience their transition to the UK between the ages 10 to 17 and the interpretations of the experiences captured within the narratives of the participants met the objectives of the study,



which were to better understand the impact of the move on the TCK's interpretations of their life events and emotional processing, and their sense of belonging, feelings of restlessness and rootlessness, and identity formation.

It was established that the study's findings echo the findings of published literature on TCK's – there appear to be difficulties with establishing who the individual is, where they belong and how their relationships with others are impacted because of the move. The study also highlights unique findings that experiencing specific losses (of important people, and personal characteristics such as confidence); as well as identifying that the lack of choice in the move process differentiated these TCK's from their non-TCK counterparts, as well as their parents. These are aspects that have not been looked at in much detail in published research on this topic. The lack of choice within the moving process places these TCK's within a unique group of forced migrants who do not fit into a standardised model since research on forced migration focuses primarily on refugees and asylum seekers, and TCK's do not fall within this category. Nonetheless, research on forced migration, in particular the effect of this on children and adolescents, serves as a helpful starting point from which a conceptualisation of a TCK experience can start to be built, and further research on this area can help to develop.

CoP is an ideal position of bridging the gap between the unique experience of the TCK individual and empirical research on this topic, as the profession has a focus on the idiographic process that individuals experience (Woolfe, 2016), and can therefore provide a clinically informed platform from which to enrich the literature base on TCK's. The focus on the lifespan of the individual (Duffy & Duffy, 2007) is another important factor that places CP's in a good position to further research and consider the implications for individuals who are forced into the involuntary migrant category, yet who do not fall into the traditional groups of refugees and asylum seekers. Multiculturalism and social justice are pillars of CoP

(Moller, 2011) which enable CP's to consider how growing globalisation and multi-cultural transitions impact individuals in their youths and later life and how this therefore impacts our society as a whole. Introduction of the concept of TCK's within the mental health profession, as well as educational and entrepreneurial organisations is likely to allow us to better understand and treat any individual who presents with such a migratory pattern in their story, as well as allowing CoP as a profession in the UK to move forward significant agendas on multiculturalism and social justice.

### References

- Acar, B., Acar, İ. H., Alhiraki, O. A., Fahham, O., Erim, Y., & Acarturk, C. (2021). The Role of Coping Strategies in Post-Traumatic Growth among Syrian Refugees: A Structural Equation Model. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(16), <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18168829>
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., Blehar, M. C., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the strange situation. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- American Psychological Association (2012). Crossroads: The psychology of immigration in the new century. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/topics/immigration/report.aspx>
- Amiot, C. E., de la Sablonnière, R., Terry, D. J., & Smith, J. R. (2007). Integration of social identities in the self: Toward a cognitive-developmental model. *Personality and Social Psychology Review: An Official Journal of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Inc*, *11*(4), 364–388. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868307304091>
- Anthias, F. (2007). Ethnic Ties: Social Capital and the Question of Mobilisability. *The Sociological Review*, *55*(4), 788–805. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2007.00752.x>
- Antonsich, M. (2010). Meanings of place and aspects of the Self: An interdisciplinary and empirical account. *GeoJournal*, *75*(1), 119–132. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-009-9290-9>
- Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 469–480. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469>
- Bantjes, J., Kagee, A., & Young, C. (2016). Counselling psychology in South Africa. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(2), 171–183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2015.1128401>
- Batista-Pinto Wiese, E. (2010). Culture and Migration: Psychological Trauma in Children and Adolescents. *Traumatology*, *16*(4), 142–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534765610388304>
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497–529.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497>Bar-Tal, D. (1996). Development of social categories and stereotypes in early childhood: The case of “The Arab” concept formation, stereotype and attitudes by Jewish children in Israel. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 20(3), 341–370.

[https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(96\)00023-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(96)00023-5)

Bhabha, H. K. (2012). *The location of culture*. Routledge.

Bhaskar, R. (1975). *A realist theory of science*. (1st ed. Leeds Books, 2nd edition with new Postscript 1978, Reprinted as Verso Classic 1997.) Harvester Press.

Belsky, J., & Pluess, M. (2009). Beyond diathesis stress: Differential susceptibility to environmental influences. *Psychological Bulletin*, 135(6), 885–908. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017376>

Berry, J. W. (2006). Contexts of acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (1st ed., pp. 27–42). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511489891.006>

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative Studies of Acculturative Stress. *The International Migration Review*, 21(3), 491–511. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2546607>

Berry, J. W., & Sam, D. L. (2016). Theoretical perspectives. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 11–29). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316219218.003>

Bhugra, D. (2004). Migration, distress and cultural identity. *British Medical Bulletin*, 69(1), 129–141. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bmb/ldh007>

Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. A. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement, and cultural identity. *World Psychiatry*, 4(1), 18–24.

Bhugra, D., Wojcik, W., & Gupta, S. (2011). Cultural Bereavement, culture shock and culture conflict: adjustments and reactions. In Bhugra, D., & Gupta, S. (Ed.). *Migration and Mental Health* (pp. 139-148). Retrieved from <https://www.cambridge.org/core>

- Bikos, L. H., Kocheleva, J., King, D., Chang, G. C., McKenzie, A., Roenicke, C., Campbell, V., & Eckard, K. (2009). A consensual qualitative investigation into the repatriation experiences of young adult, missionary kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 12*(7), 735–754.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903032637>
- Blair, L. (2010). A critical review of the scientist-practitioner model for counselling psychology. *Counselling Psychology Review, 25*, 19–30.
- Bond, T. N. (2015). *Standards and ethics for counselling in action*. (4th ed.). Sage.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and Loss: Vol. 1, Attachment*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss: Vol. 2, Separation: Anxiety and anger*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Bretherton, I., & Mulholland, K. A. (2008). Internal working models in attachment relationships: Elaborating a central construct in attachment theory. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 102–127). New York, NY: Guilford Press
- British Psychological Society (2017). *Practice Guidelines* (3rd ed; PDF File) Retrieved from:  
<https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/BPS%20Practice%20Guidelines%20%28Third%20Edition%29.pdf>
- British Psychological Society (2020). *Ethics best practice guidance on conducting research with human participants during Covid-19*. The British Psychological Society. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Conducting%20research%20with%20human%20participants%20during%20Covid-19.pdf>
- British Psychological Society (2021a). *BPS code of human research ethics* (5th ed.). The British Psychological Society. Retrieved from: <https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics%20%281%29.pdf>

- British Psychological Society. (2021b). *Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research*. The British Psychological Society. Retrieved from: [https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-mediated%20Research\\_0.pdf](https://cms.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-mediated%20Research_0.pdf)
- Bushong, L. J. (2013). *Belonging everywhere & nowhere: Insights into counseling the globally mobile*. Mango Tree Intercultural Services.
- Buss, D. M. (2015). The great struggles of life: Darwin and the emergence of evolutionary psychology. *American Psychologist*, 64, 140–148. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013207>
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection* (pp. xiv, 317). W. W. Norton & Co.
- Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (2018). *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (Third edition). Guilford Press.
- Chen, C. P. (1999). Professional Issues: Common Stressors Among International College Students: Research and Counseling Implications. *Journal of College Counseling*, 2(1), 49–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.1999.tb00142.x>
- Choi, K. M., Bernard, J. M., & Luke, M. (2013). Characteristics of friends of female college third culture kids. *Asia Pacific Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 4(2), 125–136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21507686.2013.779931>
- Choi, K. M., & Luke, M. (2011). A Phenomenological Approach to Understanding Early Adult Friendships of Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling*, 1(1), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.18401/2011.1.1.4>
- Cockburn, L. (2002). Children and Young People Living in Changing Worlds: The Process of Assessing and Understanding the ‘Third Culture Kid’. *School Psychology International*, 23(4), 475–485. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034302234008>
- Collier, A. (1994). Critical realism: an introduction to Roy Bhaskar’s philosophy. Verso.

- Corrales, T., Waterford, M., Goodwin-Smith, I., Wood, L., Yourell, T., & Ho, C. (2016). Childhood adversity, sense of belonging and psychosocial outcomes in emerging adulthood: A test of mediated pathways. *Children and Youth Services Review, 63*, 110–119.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.02.021>
- Corrie, S., & Callahan, M. M. (2000). Special Section, Counselling Psychology: A review of the scientist-practitioner model: Reflections on its potential contribution to counselling psychology within the context of current health care trends. *British Journal of Medical Psychology, 73*(3), 413–427. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000711200160507>
- Cranston, S. (2017). Self-help and the surfacing of identity: Producing the Third Culture Kid. *Emotion, Space and Society, 24*, 27–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2017.07.006>
- Crosier, B. S., Webster, G. D., & Dillon, H. M. (2012). Wired to Connect: Evolutionary Psychology and Social Networks. *Review of General Psychology, 16*(2), 230–239.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027919>
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage Publications.
- Davis, P., Headley, K., Bazemore, T., Cervo, J., Sickinger, P., Windham, M., & Rehfuss, M. (2010). Evaluating Impact of Transition Seminars on Missionary Kids' Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Well-Being. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 38*(3), 186–194.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711003800303>
- de Waal, M. F., Born, M. Ph., Brinkmann, U., & Frasch, J. J. F. (2020). Third Culture Kids, their diversity beliefs and their intercultural competences. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 79*, 177–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.09.002>
- de Waal, M. F., & Born, M. Ph. (2021). Where I'm from? Third Culture Kids about their cultural identity shifts and belonging. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 83*, 67–83.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.04.004>

- Deng, S. A., & Marlowe, J. M. (2013). Refugee Resettlement and Parenting in a Different Context. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 11(4), 416–430.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2013.793441>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1–32). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Devens, J.A. (2005). *Depression rates among third culture kids in an international school setting* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 316168)
- Dixon, P., & Hayden, M. (2008). ‘On the move’: Primary age children in transition. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 38(4), 483–496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640802489418>
- Dohrenwend, B. S., & Dohrenwend, B. P. (Eds.). (1974). *Stressful life events: Their nature and effects* (pp. xi, 340). John Wiley & Sons.
- Donati, M. (2016). Becoming a reflective practitioner. In Douglas, B, Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (4th ed. pp 55-73). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Douglas, B., Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). (2016). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (Fourth Edition). SAGE.
- Duffy, M., & Duffy, C.M. (2007). Letter from America: A view of counselling psychology in the UK. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 22(3), 62–64.
- du Preez, E., Feather, J., & Farrell, B. (2016). Counselling psychology in New Zealand. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 29(2), 163–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2015.1128397>
- Eatough, V., & Smith, J. (2017). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555>



- Elliott, R., Fischer, C. T., & Rennie, D. L. (1999). Evolving guidelines for publication of qualitative research studies in psychology and related fields. *The British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 38(3), 215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466599162782>
- Erikson, E.H. (1980). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Fade, S. (2004). Using interpretative phenomenological analysis for public health nutrition and dietetic research: A practical guide. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63(4), 647-653.  
doi:10.1079/PNS2004398
- Fail, H., Thompson, J., & Walker, G. (2004). Belonging, identity and Third Culture Kids: Life histories of former international school students. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 3(3), 319–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240904047358>
- Fearon, R. M. P., & Belsky, J. (2016). Precursors of attachment security. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 291–313). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Ferow, A. (2019). Childhood Grief and Loss. *European Journal of Educational Sciences. Spec. Ed.* 1-13. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1236723>
- Finlay, Linda (2008). Reflecting on ‘Reflective practice’. Practice-based Professional Learning Paper 52, The Open University. Retrieved from: <https://oro.open.ac.uk/68945/1/Finlay-%282008%29-Reflecting-on-reflective-practice-PBPL-paper-52.pdf>
- Firmin, M., Warner, S., & Lowe, A. (2006). Social Adjustment Among Students Growing Up in Foreign Mission-Field Contexts. *Christian Higher Education*, 5(2), 115–124.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15363750500182711>
- Fischer, C. T. (2009). Bracketing in qualitative research: Conceptual and practical matters. *Psychotherapy Research: Journal of the Society for Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4–5), 583–590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503300902798375>

- Fletcher, A. (1995). *Lifestyles of third-culture kids*. Retrieved 23 Apr 2019, from <http://www.centerforyouth.org/62253.ihtml>
- Garraway, H. (2016). 'Free to be me': Introducing an holistic approach to cognitive behaviour therapy. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 280, 27-33.
- Gaw, K. F. (2000). Reverse culture shock in students returning from overseas. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24(1), 83–104. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(99\)00024-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00024-3)
- Gemer, M. E. & Perry, F. (2000). Gender differences in cultural acceptance and career orientation among internationally mobile and non-internationally mobile adolescents. *School Psychology Review*, 29, 267-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02796015.2000.12086014>
- Gerner, M., Perry, F., Moselle, M. A., & Archbold, M. (1992). Characteristics of internationally mobile adolescents. *Journal of School Psychology*, 30(2), 197–214. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-4405\(92\)90031-Y](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-4405(92)90031-Y)
- Gilbert, K. R. (2008). Loss and Grief between and Among Cultures: The Experience of Third Culture Kids. *Illness, Crisis & Loss*, 16(2), 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.2190/IL.16.2.a>
- Gilbert, P. (1982). *Human nature and suffering* (Classic edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Gilbert, P. (1992). *Depression: The evolution of powerlessness* (Classic edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Gilbert, P. (2005). Social Mentalities: A Biopsychosocial and Evolutionary Approach to Social Relationships. In *Interpersonal cognition* (pp. 299–333). Guilford Press.
- Gilbert, P. (2006). A biopsychosocial and evolutionary approach to formulation with a special focus on shame. In *Case formulation in cognitive behaviour therapy: The treatment of challenging and complex cases* (pp. 81–112). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Gilbert, P. (2015). Affiliative and prosocial motives and emotions in mental health. *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*, 17(4), 381. <https://doi.org/10.31887/DCNS.2015.17.4/pgilbert>

- Gilbert, P. (2017). Compassion as a social mentality: An evolutionary approach. In *Compassion: Concepts, research and applications* (pp. 31–68). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315564296-3>
- Gilbert, P. (2019). Psychotherapy for the 21st century: An integrative, evolutionary, contextual, biopsychosocial approach. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 92(2), 164–189.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12226>
- Gilbert, P., & Allan, S. (1998). The role of defeat and entrapment (arrested flight) in depression: An exploration of an evolutionary view. *Psychological Medicine*, 28(3), 585–598.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0033291798006710>
- Gil-Rodriguez, E., & Kasket, E. (2011). The identity crisis in Counselling Psychology research. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 26(4), Article 4.
- Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Aldine.
- Gobel, M. S., Benet-Martinez, V., Mesquita, B., & Uskul, A. K. (2018). Europe’s Culture(s): Negotiating Cultural Meanings, Values, and Identities in the European Context. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 49(6), 858–867. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022118779144>
- Greenholtz, J., & Kim, J. (2009). The cultural hybridity of Lena: A multi-method case study of a third culture kid. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 33(5), 391–398.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.05.004>
- Groff, R. (2004). *Critical Realism, Post-positivism and the Possibility of Knowledge* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203417270>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 191–215). Sage Publications Ltd.

- Gullahorn, J. T., & Gullahorn, J. E. (1963). An Extension of the U-Curve Hypothesis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 19(3), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1963.tb00447.x>
- Güngör, D., & Bornstein, M. H. (2009). Gender, Development, Values, Adaptation, and Discrimination in Acculturating Adolescents: The Case of Turk Heritage Youth Born and Living in Belgium. *Sex Roles*, 60(7–8), 537–548. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9531-2>
- Hemsley, C. (2013). An enquiry into how counseling psychology in the UK is constructed as a profession within discipline-orientated publications. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 28(1), 8–23.
- Hervey, E. G. (2009). *Cultural Transitions During Childhood and Adjustment to College: (649172007-001)* [Data set]. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e649172007-001>
- Henderson, S. W., & Martin A. (2014) Case formulation and integration of information in child and adolescent mental health. In: Rey J. M., (Ed.). *IACAPAP e-textbook of child and adolescent mental health*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from [https://iacapap.org/\\_Resources/Persistent/1a43985cf8505be8bf57f13f90ceeddf3d281fa/A.10-CASE-FORMULATION-2014.pdf](https://iacapap.org/_Resources/Persistent/1a43985cf8505be8bf57f13f90ceeddf3d281fa/A.10-CASE-FORMULATION-2014.pdf)
- Hettich, N., Seidel, F. A., & Stuhmann, L. Y. (2020). Psychosocial Interventions for Newly Arrived Adolescent Refugees: A Systematic Review. *Adolescent Research Review*, 5(2), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-020-00134-1>
- Hoersting, R. C., & Jenkins, S. R. (2011). No place to call home: Cultural homelessness, self-esteem and cross-cultural identities. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(1), 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2010.11.005>
- Hong, Y.-y., Wan, C., No, S., & Chiu, C.-y. (2007). Multicultural identities. In S. Kitayama, & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of cultural psychology* (pp. 323–345). New York, London: Guilford Press.

- Hostinar, C. E., Sullivan, R. M., & Gunnar, M. R. (2014). Psychobiological mechanisms underlying the social buffering of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical axis: A review of animal models and human studies across development. *Psychological Bulletin*, *140*(1), 256–282. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032671>
- Huff, J. L. (2001). Parental Attachment, Reverse Culture Shock, Perceived Social Support, and College Adjustment of Missionary Children. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *29*(3), 246–264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710102900307>
- Hussain, D., & Bhushan, B. (2011). Posttraumatic stress and growth among Tibetan refugees: The mediating role of cognitive-emotional regulation strategies. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *67*(7), 720–735. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20801>
- Hynie, M., Guruge, S., & Shakya, Y. B. (2013). Family Relationships of Afghan, Karen and Sudanese Refugee Youth. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, *44*(3), 11–28. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2013.0011>
- James, P. (2016). Counselling psychology and its international dimensions. In Douglas, B, Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (4th ed. pp 399-414). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Jarymowicz, M. (2015). Mental Barriers and Links Connecting People of Different Cultures: Experiential vs. Conceptual Bases of Different Types of the WE-Concepts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01950>
- Jones Nielsen, J. D., & Nicholas, H. (2016). Counselling psychology in the United Kingdom. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *29*(2), 206–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070.2015.1127210>
- Juang, L. P., Simpson, J. A., Lee, R. M., Rothman, A. J., Titzmann, P. F., Schachner, M. K., Korn, L., Heinemeier, D., & Betsch, C. (2018). Using attachment and relational perspectives to understand adaptation and resilience among immigrant and refugee youth. *American*

- Psychologist*, 73(6), 797–811. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000286>Kasket, E. (2013). The counselling psychologist researcher. In G. C. Davey (Ed.). *Applied Psychology*. London, England: BPS Wiley-Blackwell.
- Keeton, C. P., Perry-Jenkins, M., & Sayer, A. G. (2008). Sense of control predicts depressive and anxious symptoms across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(2), 212–221. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.22.2.212>
- Kerpelman, J. L., & Pittman, J. F. (2018). Erikson and the Relational Context of Identity: Strengthening Connections With Attachment Theory. *Identity*, 18(4), 306–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15283488.2018.1523726>
- Kira, I. A., Aboumediene, S., Ashby, J. S., Odenat, L., Mohanesh, J., & Alamia, H. (2013). The Dynamics of Posttraumatic Growth Across Different Trauma Types in a Palestinian Sample. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 18(2), 120–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2012.679129>
- Klemens, M.J. (2008). *Psychological Well-Being, Ethnic Identity, and Social Adaptation in College Aged Missionary Kids* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 3313326).
- Kwak, K. (2003). Adolescents and Their Parents: A Review of Intergenerational Family Relations for Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Families. *Human Development*, 46(2–3), 115–136. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000068581>
- Kwon, J. (2019). Third Culture Kids: Growing up with mobility and cross-cultural transitions. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, 13(2), 113–122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2018.1490718>
- Lavik, N. J., Christie, H., Solberg, O., & Varvin, S. (1996). A Refugee Protest Action in a Host Country: Possibilities and Limitations of an Intervention by a Mental Health Unit. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 9(1), 73–88. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/9.1.73>

- Levers, M.-J. D. (2013). Philosophical Paradigms, Grounded Theory, and Perspectives on Emergence. *SAGE Open*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244013517243>
- Lijadi, A. A., & van Schalkwyk, G. J. (2018). “The international schools are not so international after all”: The educational experiences of Third Culture Kids. *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, 6(1), 50–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2016.1261056>
- List, E.A. (2001) *A critical analysis of “missionary kid” literature: Past, present and future implication*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3079182)
- Livingstone, A. S. (1960). *The Overseas Student in Britain*. Manchester University Press.
- Long, K. (2020). Fractured Stories: Self-Experiences of Third Culture Kids. *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, 19(2), 134–147. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15289168.2020.1756030>
- Lyons, E., & Coyle, A. (2007). *Analysing qualitative data in psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Lysgaard, S. (1955). Adjustment in a foreign society: Norwegian Fulbright grantees visiting the United States. *Acta Psychologica*, (11), 189-190. doi:10.1016/S0001-6918(55)80082-0Main,
- M., & Solomon, J. (1990). Procedures for identifying disorganized/ disoriented infants during the Ainsworth strange situation. In M. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti, & M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years* (pp. 121–160). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Marvin, R. S., Britner, P. A., & Russell, B. S. (2016). Normative development. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 273–289). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Mesmer, van IJendoorn, & Sagi-Schwartz. (2016). Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: Universal and contextual dimensions. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 790–815). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

- Milton, M. (2016). Forming a relationship: A phenomenological encounter. In Douglas, B, Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (4th ed. pp 184-197). Sage Publications.
- McCaig, N. M. (1996). Understanding global nomads. In C. D. Smith (Ed.) *Strangers at home* (pp. 99-120). Bayside, NY: Aletheia.
- McCleary, J. (2017). The impact of resettlement on Karen refugee family relationships: A qualitative exploration. *Child & Family Social Work*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12368>
- McLachlan, D. A. (2005). *The Impact of Globalization on Internationally Mobile Families: A Grounded Theory Analysis - ProQuest*.  
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/90e3a167fa7be9c38f7df745190f6bec/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=11511>
- Melles, E. A., & Frey, L. L. (2014). "Here, Everybody Moves": Using Relational Cultural Therapy with Adult Third-Culture Kids. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 36(3), 348–358. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10447-014-9211-6>
- Milton, M. (Ed.). (2010). *Therapy and beyond: Counselling psychology contributions to therapeutic and social issues*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Moller, N. (2011). The identity of counselling psychology in Britain is parochial, rigid and irrelevant but diversity offers a solution. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 26(2), 8–16.
- Mollica, R. F., Donelan, K., Tor, S., Lavelle, J., Elias, C., Frankel, M., & Blendon, R. J. (1993). The Effect of Trauma and Confinement on Functional Health and Mental Health Status of Cambodians Living in Thailand-Cambodia Border Camps. *JAMA*, 270(5), 581–586.  
<https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.1993.03510050047025>
- Monroe, S. M., & Simons, A. D. (1991). Diathesis-stress theories in the context of life stress research: Implications for the depressive disorders. *Psychological Bulletin*, 110(3), 406–425.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.110.3.406>



- Moore, A. M., & Barker, G. G. (2012). Confused or multicultural: Third culture individuals' cultural identity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36(4), 553–562.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.11.002>
- Mortimer, M. (2010). *Adult third culture kids: Common themes, relational struggles and therapeutic experiences* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 3428760)
- Mosanya, M., & Kwiatkowska, A. (2021). Complex but integrated: Exploring social and cultural identities of women Third Culture Kids (TCK) and factors predicting life satisfaction. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 84, 65–78.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.07.001>
- Mosanya, M., & Kwiatkowska, A. (2023). New Ecological Paradigm and third culture kids: Multicultural identity configurations, global mindset and values as predictors of environmental worldviews. *International Journal of Psychology*, 58(2), 103–115.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12887>
- Moskal, M., & Sime, D. (2022). Young Europeans in Brexit Britain: Unsettling identities. *Global Networks*, 22(2), 183–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12338>
- Neel, R., Kenrick, D. T., White, A. E., & Neuberg, S. L. (2016). Individual differences in fundamental social motives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 110, 887–907.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000068>
- Nette, J., & Hayden, M. (2007). Globally mobile children: The sense of belonging. *Educational Studies*, 33(4), 435–444. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055690701423614>
- Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: An Appropriate Methodology for Educational Research? *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6(1), 75–83.  
<https://doi.org/10.14297/jpaap.v6i1.304>

- Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural Shock: Adjustment to New Cultural Environments. *Practical Anthropology*, *os-7*(4), 177–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009182966000700405>
- Orlans, V., & Van Scoyoc, S. (2009). *A short introduction to counselling psychology*. SAGE.
- Pantelidou, S., & Craig, T. K. J. (2006). Culture shock and social support: A survey in Greek migrant students. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *41*(10), 777–781. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-006-0096-5>
- Pedersen, P. (1995). *The five stages of culture shock: Critical incidents around the world*. Greenwood Press/Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (2001). *Third culture kids: The experience of growing up among worlds*. Intercultural Press.
- Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (2006). *Third culture kids: The experience of growing up among worlds* (Revised edition). Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Pollock, D. C., Van Reken, R. E., & Pollock, M. V. (2017). *Third culture kids: Growing up among worlds* (Third edition). Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Power, S. A., Velez, G., Qadafi, A., & Tennant, J. (2018). The SAGE Model of Social Psychological Research. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *13*(3), 359–372. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691617734863>
- Resnick, H. S., Kilpatrick, D. G., Dansky, B. S., Saunders, B. E., & Best, C. L. (1993). Prevalence of civilian trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in a representative national sample of women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *61*(6), 984–991. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-006x.61.6.984>
- Rezzoug, D., Baubet, T., & Moro, M. R. (2011). Stories of Children and Adolescents from other Cultures: The Trauma of Migration. In V. Ardino (Ed.), *Post-Traumatic Syndromes in Childhood and Adolescence* (1st ed., pp. 77–90). Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470669280.ch4>

- Rienzo, C., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2018). Migrants in the UK: An overview. *Migration observatory briefing*. COMPAS, University of Oxford. Retrieved 5 Apr 2019, from:  
<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/>
- Rounsaville, A. (2014). Situating Transnational Genre Knowledge: A Genre Trajectory Analysis of One Student's Personal and Academic Writing. *Written Communication*, 31(3), 332–364.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0741088314537599>
- Salkind, N. J. (2004). *An introduction to theories of human development*. Sage Publications.
- Sawyer, S. M., Azzopardi, P. S., Wickremarathne, D., & Patton, G. C. (2018). The age of adolescence. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 2(3), 223–228.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642\(18\)30022-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-4642(18)30022-1)
- Schaetti, B. (2000). *Global nomad identity: Hypothesizing a developmental model*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertation and Theses database. Catalogue Number: 9992721.
- Schaetti, B. F., & Ramsey, S. J. (1999). *The global nomad experience: Living in liminality*. Transition Dynamics. Retrieved 19 Mar 2019, from [www.transition-dynamics.com/liminality.html](http://www.transition-dynamics.com/liminality.html)
- Schiltz, J. (2018). *Encountering uncertainty: Everyday camp life and futures of South Sudanese refugee youth in Northern Uganda* [Dissertation, Ghent University].  
<http://hdl.handle.net/1854/LU-8587068>
- Schulz, D. (1985). *The study of third culture experience in relation to the psycho-social adjustment of returned church of Christ missionary families* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 8609611).
- Sellers, E.D. (2011) *Exploration of themes evolving from the experiences of third culture kids* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 34666816)

- Siegel, D. J. (2020). *The developing mind: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (Third edition). Guilford Press.
- Slavich, G. M., & Cole, S. W. (2013). The Emerging Field of Human Social Genomics. *Clinical Psychological Science: A Journal of the Association for Psychological Science*, 1(3), 331–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702613478594>
- Smith, J. A. (2007). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage.
- Smith, J. A. (Ed.). (2015). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (3rd edition). SAGE.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. SAGE.
- Smith, J. A., & Eatough, V. (2007). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In E. Lyons & A. Coyle (Eds.), *Analysing qualitative data in psychology* (pp. 35–50). Sage Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446207536.d10>
- Smith, V. J., & Kearney, K. S. (2016). A Qualitative Exploration of the Repatriation Experiences of US Third Culture Kids in College. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(8), 958–972. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0093>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2004). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In G. M. Breakwell (Ed.), *Doing social psychology research* (pp. 229–254). British Psychological Society; Blackwell Publishing.
- Smith, J.A., and Osborn, M. (2008) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In: Smith, J.A., (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods* (pp.53-80). Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9780470776278.ch10>
- Spinelli, E. (2005) *The Interpreted World*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Stokke, P. (2013). *Adult third culture kids: Potential global leaders with global mindset*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Philadelphia: Drexel University <https://idea.library.drexel.edu/islandora/object/idea:4315>.
- Storti, C. (2022). *The Art of Coming Home* (2nd ed.). Nicholas Brealey.
- Straffon, D. (2003). Assessing the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending an international school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 487-501. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(03\)00035-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(03)00035-X)
- Strawbridge, S. & Woolfe, R. (2010). Counselling psychology: Origins, developments and challenges. In R. Woolfe, S. Strawbridge, B. Douglas & W. Dryden (Eds.), *Handbook of Counselling Psychology* (3rd ed.) (pp. 3-22). Sage.
- Tajfel, H. (1981). *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tajfel, H. (1982). Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 33, 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.33.020182.000245>
- Taft, R. (1977). Coping with unfamiliar cultures. In N. Warren, (Ed.) *Studies in Cross-Cultural Psychology*. London: Academic Press.
- Tan, E. C., Wang, K. T., & Cottrell, A. B. (2021). A systematic review of third culture kids empirical research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 82, 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2021.03.002>
- Tedeschi, R.G., & Calhoun, L.G. (2004). A Clinical Approach to Posttraumatic Growth. In P.A. Linley, S. Joseph (Eds.) *Positive Psychology in Practice* (pp. 405-419). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Thomas, K., & Althen, G. (1989). Counseling foreign students. In P. B. Pedersen, J. G. Draguns, W. J. Lonner, J. E. Trimble (Eds.) *Counseling across cultures* (3rd ed.) (pp. 205-241). University of Hawaii Press.

- Tufford, L., & Newman, P. (2012). Bracketing in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(1), 80–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010368316>
- Tyrrell, N., Sime, D., Kelly, C., & McMellon, C. (2019). Belonging in Brexit Britain: Central and Eastern European 1.5 generation young people's experiences: Belonging in Brexit Britain: Young People's Experiences. *Population, Space and Place*, 25(1), e2205. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2205>
- United Nations. (2013). *World youth report 2013*. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Retrieved 5 Aug 2019, from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report.html>
- UN DESA Policy Brief No. 133: *Migration Trends and Families* | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). Retrieved 22 November 2022, from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-no-133-migration-trends-and-families/>
- Usborne, E., & de la Sablonnière, R. (2014). Understanding My Culture Means Understanding Myself: The Function of Cultural Identity Clarity for Personal Identity Clarity and Personal Psychological Well-Being. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 44(4), 436–458. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12061>
- Useem, R. H. (1999). *Third culture kids: Focus of major study—TCK “mother” pens history of field*. Retrieved 5 May 2019 from <http://www.tckworld.com/useem/art1.html>
- Vindevogel, S., & Verelst, A. (2020). Supporting Mental Health in Young Refugees: A Resilience Perspective. In S. J. Song & P. Ventevogel (Eds.), *Child, Adolescent and Family Refugee Mental Health* (pp. 53–65). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45278-0\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45278-0_4)
- Viser, W. (1986). *It's OK to be an MK*. Baptist Sunday School Board.
- Volkan, V. D. (2017). Psychoanalytic Thoughts on the European Refugee Crisis and the Other. *The Psychoanalytic Review*, 104(6), 661–685. <https://doi.org/10.1521/prev.2017.104.6.661>

- Vrana, S., & Lauterbach, D. (1994). Prevalence of traumatic events and post-traumatic psychological symptoms in a nonclinical sample of college students. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 7*(2), 289–302. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02102949>
- Walters, K. A., & Auton-Cuff, F. P. (2009). A story to tell: The identity development of women growing up as third culture kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 12*(7), 755–772. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903029153>
- Wan, C., & Chew, P. Y.-G. (2013). Cultural knowledge, category label, and social connections: Components of cultural identity in the global, multicultural context. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 16*(4), 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12029>
- Wesselmann, E., Williams, K., & Hales, A. (2013). Vicarious ostracism. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 7*. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00153>
- Wiese, E. B.-P. (2010). Culture and migration: Psychological trauma in children and adolescents. *Traumatology, 16*(4), 142–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534765610388304>
- Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural shock and adaptation. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73*(2), 121-126. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1994.tb01723.x
- Willig, C. (2013). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology* (3rd ed). McGraw-Hill Open University Press.
- Winkelman, M. (1994). Cultural Shock and Adaptation. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 73*(2), 121–126. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1994.tb01723.x>
- Woolfe, R. (2016). Mapping the world of helping: The place of Counselling Psychology. In Douglas, B, Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (4th ed. pp 5-19). London, England: Sage Publications.
- Yardley, L. (2017). Demonstrating the validity of qualitative research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12*(3), 295–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262624>
- Yampolsky, M. A., Amiot, C. E., & de la Sablonnière, R. (2016). The Multicultural Identity Integration Scale

(MULTIIS): Developing a comprehensive measure for configuring one's multiple cultural identities within the self. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 22(2), 166–184. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000043>

Yoon, E., Langrehr, K., & Ong, L. Z. (2011). Content analysis of acculturation research in counseling and counseling psychology: A 22-year review. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58, 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021128>

Yucel, R. (2018). Scientists' Ontological and Epistemological Views about Science from the Perspective of Critical Realism. *Science & Education*, 27(5), 407–433.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11191-018-9983-x>

Zuckerman, M. (1999). *Vulnerability to psychopathology: A biosocial model* (pp. xv, 535). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10316-000>



## Appendix A

### Flyer



# CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

**Did you move to the UK between the ages of 10-17 from a European country?**

**If so, I'd like to hear from you!**

*I am a trainee Counselling Psychologist working on my doctoral thesis about experiences of Third Culture Kids in the UK. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview where you can talk about your experience of coming to the UK and how this may have impacted you. The interview will be done via zoom, and should last about 30-60 min. Through your participation you will provide an invaluable contribution to research on migration and furthering the concept of Third Culture Kids. This will constitute vital data for the development of better support systems in our constantly changing world.*

*For more information about the study and to take part, please get in touch with me:*

**Alla Montazer**

**Email: [alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)**

*The study has been granted ethical approval by the Research Ethics Review Panel, London Metropolitan University and is supervised by Dr Raffaello Antonino. The supervisor can be contacted on [r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk)*

## Appendix B

### Social media adverts

Posts Reels

Hi all, I'm looking for participants for my research which looks at the experience of being a Third Culture Kid in the UK - if you would be interested in taking part in an interview - please get in touch with me! Also, please share if you think you might know someone who might be interested. Thanks!

**CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS**  
**Did you move to the UK between the ages of 14-17 from an EU country?**  
**If so, I'd like to hear from you!**  
 I am a trainee Counselling Psychologist working on my doctoral thesis about experiences of Third Culture Kids in the UK. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview where you can talk about your experience of coming to the UK and how this may have impacted you. The interview will be done via zoom, and should last about 30-60 min. Through your participation you will provide an invaluable contribution to research on migration and furthering the concept of Third Culture Kids. This will constitute vital data for the development of better support systems in our constantly changing world. For more information about the study and to take part, please get in touch with me:  
**Alla Montazer**  
 Email: [aim1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:aim1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)

*The study has been granted ethical approval by the Research Ethics Review Panel, London Metropolitan University and is supervised by Dr. Raffaello Antonino. The supervisor can be contacted on [r.antonino@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:r.antonino@londonmet.ac.uk)*

Home Friends Watch Marketplace Notifications Menu

Facebook

tckresearch

3 Posts 58 Followers 58 Following

Alla M she/her  
 Trainee Counselling Psychologist, based in London. I'm doing research on the experience of adult third culture kids. I'm also a TOK myself!  
[linkedin.com/in/alla-montazer-9827b51b9](https://www.linkedin.com/in/alla-montazer-9827b51b9)

Edit Profile

**Research criteria update!** I'm now looking for participants who moved to the UK, between the ages of 10 and 17 y.o., from European countries - if you could be interested in sharing your experience with me about your move please get in touch!

Home Search Add Post Activity Profile

Instagram

Articles, posts & more...

All activity Articles Posts Documents

Alla Montazer (She/Her) · You  
 Counselling Psychologist in training  
 1yr ·

Hello! I'm a counselling psychologist in training, based in London, UK. I'm currently doing my doctoral research on the experience of being a Third Culture Kid. I'm looking for participants to take part in my research which involves doing an interview about their experience. I attach my flyer for this. If you're interested, or if you know anyone who may be, please get in touch with me! Many thanks :) #research #tck #psychology #thirdculturekid #participants

Participant recruitment flyer - 1 page

**CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS**  
**Did you move to the UK between the ages of 14-17 from a European country?**  
**If so, I'd like to hear from you!**  
 I am a trainee Counselling Psychologist working on my doctoral thesis about experiences of Third Culture Kids in the UK. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview where you can talk about your experience of coming to the UK and how this may have impacted you. The interview will be done via zoom, and should last about 30-60 min. Through your participation you will provide an invaluable contribution to research on migration and furthering the concept of Third Culture Kids. This will constitute vital data for the development of better support systems in our constantly changing world. For more information about the study and to take part, please get in touch with me:  
**Alla Montazer**  
 Email: [aim1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:aim1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)

Home My Network Post Notifications Jobs

LinkedIn

## Appendix C

### Participant information sheet



#### Participant Information sheet

I am a trainee counselling psychologist at London Metropolitan University and am currently carrying out research into the topic of Third Culture Kids and how they experience their transition to the UK. This research seeks to contribute to the existing literature on the topic of Third Culture Kids, who have been defined as individuals who have left and lived outside of their country of origin before the age of 18 for a significant period.

I would like to invite you to share your experience of moving to the UK in a confidential and anonymised interview. The interview would last between 30 and 60 min and will be recorded. Data from your interview will be used for my Doctoral level Counselling Psychology project. Important points to note:

- Interviews will be recorded and strictly confidential: all identifiable information will be anonymised
- You must be older than 18
- You came to the UK when you were between 10-17 years old
- Participation is entirely voluntary
- If you choose to participate you are free to withdraw at any point up until 4 weeks after the interview without question.
- All recordings will be kept securely and destroyed once the project is completed.

Before you decide to participate it is important that you understand that the interview will be discussing your experience and may evoke some distressing and difficult feelings for you. Please take your time in deciding whether you wish to take part. You will have the opportunity to discuss any feelings evoked post interview with the researcher and be given information on sources of support if you would like this.

Thank you so much for your time, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to ask by email:

[alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)

I look forward to hopefully hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards,

Alla Montazer

[alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)

## Appendix D

### Interview Schedule

- 1. Can you tell me about your experience of coming to the UK when you were 10-17 years old?**

Prompt: How do you think coming to the UK impacted you? Do you think you experienced any changes different to your peers who didn't have this experience?

- 2. Can you tell me what it was like for you living in the UK at that time?**

Prompt: What was it like for you being in an international/boarding school as a [national of a particular country]?

- 3. Can you tell me a bit about the challenges you may have experienced upon moving and in the following years?**

Prompt: Did you experience any difficulties?

- 4. How did you address these challenges at that time?**

Prompt: Did you seek help or support with these challenges? What was your support system like at that time?

- 5. How do you the experience of coming to the UK at that age affected you now?**

Prompt: As an adult, do you think coming to the UK at age X influenced you in how you are today?

## **Appendix E**

### **Distress Protocol**

This protocol has been devised to deal with the possibility that some participants may become distressed and/or agitated during their involvement in the research into the experience of being a TCK. Below is a three-step protocol detailing signs of distress that the researcher will look out for, as well as action to take at each stage. The researcher is a Trainee Counselling Psychologist and has developed a set of skills for working with people with psychological difficulties. This allows the researcher to ensure the safety of the participants and to manage situations where distress may occur.

It is not expected that extreme distress will occur, nor that the relevant action will become necessary. This is because the participants approached for the study are not considered to be a clinical population.

#### **Mild distress:**

##### **Signs to look out for:**

- 1) Tearfulness
- 2) Voice becomes choked with emotion/ difficulty speaking
- 3) Participant becomes distracted/ restless

##### **Action to take:**

- 1) Ask participant if they are happy to continue
- 2) Offer them time to pause and compose themselves
- 3) Remind them they can stop at any time they wish if they become too distressed

#### **Severe distress:**

##### **Signs to look out for:**

- 1) Uncontrolled crying/ wailing, inability to talk coherently

- 2) Panic attack- e.g. hyperventilation, shaking, fear of impending heart attack
- 3) Intrusive thoughts of the traumatic event- e.g. flashbacks

**Action to take:**

- 1) The researcher will intervene to terminate the interview/experiment.
- 2) The debrief will begin immediately
- 3) Relaxation techniques will be suggested to regulate breathing/ reduce agitation
- 4) The researcher will recognise participants' distress, and reassure that their experiences are normal reactions to abnormal events and that most people recover
- 5) If any unresolved issues arise during the interview, accept and validate their distress, but suggest that they discuss with mental health professionals and remind participants that this is not designed as a therapeutic interaction
- 6) Details of counselling/therapeutic services available will be offered to participants

**Extreme distress:**

**Signs to look out for:**

- 1) Severe agitation and possible verbal or physical aggression
- 2) In very extreme cases - possible psychotic breakdown where the participant begins to lose touch with reality

**Action to take:**

- 1) Maintain safety of participant and researcher
- 2) If the researcher has concerns for the participant's or others' safety, she will inform them that she has a duty to inform any existing contacts they have with mental health services, such as a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) or their GP.

- 3) If the researcher believes that either the participant or someone else is in immediate danger, then he will suggest that they present themselves to the local A&E Department and ask for the on-call psychiatric liaison team.
- 4) If the participant is unwilling to seek immediate help and becomes violent, then the Police will be called and asked to use their powers under the Mental Health Act to detain someone and take them to a place of safety pending psychiatric assessment. (This last option would only be used in an extreme emergency)

## Appendix F

### Sample Transcript

Extract of transcript.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Reader (32-bit)

File Edit View Sign Window Help

Home Tools Extract of transcript.p... x

90%

Step 1: Initial thoughts	Transcript	Step 2: Identifying themes
Descriptive – normal text <i>Linguistic – italic</i> <b>Conceptual – bold</b>	1. <b>Researcher:</b> ...should begin. All right. So, can you tell me about your experience of moving to the UK?	
Experienced moving before at a young age	2. <b>Eliza:</b> Yeah, sure. Um, I moved to the UK when I was just 10 I believe. Ummm, I came from ...from France, where I had been maybe for two, three years. But before that I was living in Singapore as well. So it wasn't my first time moving abroad. It was the second time I guess, although I was much younger the time before so this was ... this was definitely the first move that I... I feel like I was in... Yeah..... A proper, like mini adult [laughs] unmmm, and so... unmmm, yeah, we moved to the UK with my family, ... moved to London, specifically.	
International school in France (home); but a French school in UK	3. And...unmm... I guess we...we...we... were in the in the French High School in Central London. So in a way we moved from France, but actually where I was, was an international school, to the UK where I was in a French school. Ummmm, so that was an interesting...unmm... transition, always keeping that balance, I guess of a mix of culture and, unmm, and like between French and the new culture or like an Anglophone culture. But yeah, I remember moving to ... I remember very well like moving and, you know, the new home and I remember specifically the whole school environment. That's the main thing that I remember from my move to the UK. I remember very clearly my first day at school, I almost remember what even what I was wearing. Unmmmm, because I remember I had picked my outfit specifically to like make a good impression with my ...my...my new classmates. But I remember feeling excited. I don't remember	
<b>Stepping between cultures</b> <b>Unusual transition</b> Keeping that balance	4. <b>21. feeling scared or anything. I generally... genuinely remember a feeling of excitement of, of this new school.</b> And, ummmm, yeah, I remember a lot of adjustments had to be made, ummmmm. You know, I lived further away from school than I, than I used to, I used to walk to school and this time I had to take like a mini bus and I had to be with all the kindergarten kids because my parents wouldn't let me take the tube on my own. So ... ummm, yeah, things like this ...	<b>1.Excitement-for-new-school</b>
Vivid memory of first day at school Wanting to make a good impression with new classmates Feeling excited about new school	5. <b>27. memories that come up. Ummmm, but yeah, I clearly remember being very excited of being in a... in a big city.</b> I was coming from a little town in France, well little town... suburbs of Paris, but ...still it was in near the forest in a very natural place. And coming to the city where it was quite vibrant. And yeah, I remember that and, and also a lot of cultural discoveries. And moving to the UK	<b>2.Excitement of big city</b>
Excitement for big city		
Vibrancy of big city		



Extract of transcript.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Reader (32-bit)

File Edit View Sign Window Help

Home Tools Extract of transcript.p... x

90%

<p>The move is more momentous as connections are not as easy Immersion in British culture</p>	<p>32. was...mmm.... Yeah, very much like... ummm...like at the time. Like there was 33. no EasyJet, Ryanair, so it wasn't that...that easy to leave the country on holiday. 34. <b>So it was a really a real immersion into the British culture.</b> Ummmm, so I yeah, I 35. remember this being a very, very strong, ummm, like dimension of this move to 36. the UK. It was very much like discovering the British culture. And, ummm, yeah, 37. I mean, these are first thought that comes ..that come to mind. I don't 38. know if ....</p>	<p><b>3-Discovery-of-British Culture</b></p>
<p>Feeling hopeful for this new beginning</p>	<p>39. <b>Researcher:</b> Yeah, yeah, it makes perfect sense. So it sounds like there was quite 40. a lot of excitement about starting a new school being in this new country in a big 41. city. And how did it progress? So once you did start the school, and you went for 42. your first day, what was that like?</p>	
<p>People are nicer</p>	<p>43. <b>Eliza:</b> Yeah, so I remember, yeah again, just feeling excited. I remember feeling 44. very open and hopeful about new sort of friendships. I remember also... [pause] 45. Yeah, I think in comparison, I was coming from a very strict school, like not very 46. strict, but it was a very hard school the one I was in before like, very high level, 47. even in in not kindergarten... but the... I don't know what you call it like before, 48. before, you're 10 years old [laughs]</p>	
<p>Comparison with home shows that she's in a better place</p>	<p>49. <b>Researcher:</b> Primary</p>	
<p>Later transition was very hard by comparison</p>	<p>50. <b>Eliza:</b> Primary School. Thank you. Yeah. So... and I was, it was a very hard 51. Primary School. And so I remember like, feeling like I'm coming into a world 52. where everything is more.... people are nicer, like, teachers are nicer. Like, it's 53. more, I don't know, smooth and, and it was so yeah, I think the comparison made 54. it like even better, because I was just like, yeah, I felt really good. I just 55. remember feeling good. Ummm, and, um, and maybe to get the full context I 56. might I might be feeling these feelings also because further down, like the, the 57. move I did afterwards, when I was 15, back to France was really really hard. So 58. in hindsight, comparing it also to that I guess I'm, I'm I have these memories of it 59. being very smooth when I was 10 years old. But yeah, I think it progressed in a 60. way that I, I, ummm, I think coming back to the culture, I think that was a big 61. thing. Like I was... I was in a French school and I was making friends with</p>	

11.69 x 8.27 in

Extract of transcript.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Reader (32-bit)

File Edit View Sign Window Help

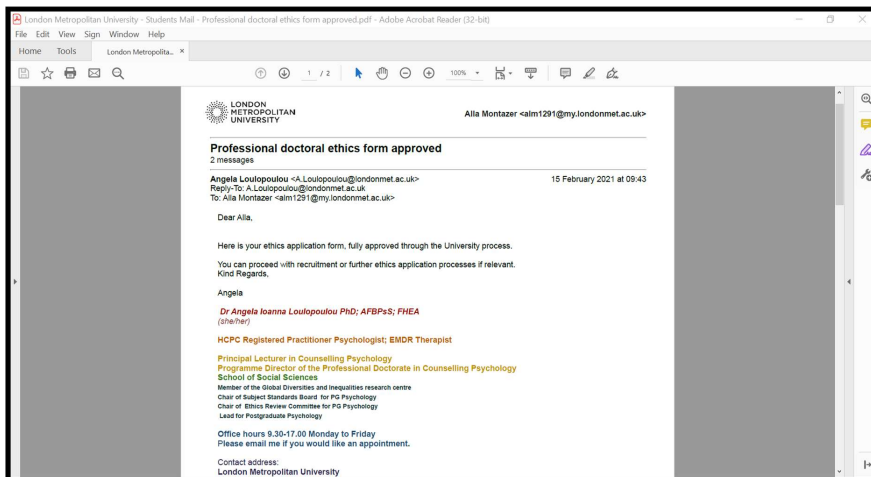
Home Tools Extract of transcript.p... x

90%

People were all bilingual	<p>62. French people. So that was, that was... that was definitely like one dimension where I was still attached to my...my nationality and where I was before, and I think probably that gave me a sense of...of... comfort and like classes were in French and my, I had a bit more English classes than I did, in that I would have in a normal French curriculum. So there was also that dimension and people were all bilingual. So we would speak like English and French, but still like the, yeah, the people I was meeting, the friends I made, who are still my friends today. So I think, yeah, being at that time, like building those relationships are still, you know, the ones that I have today, and we were talking about it recently with some friends that we met, like, on my first day at school, or I remember them, you know, from their first day in the year after. And so, yeah, I think I really enjoyed that sense of community, and a sense of vibrancy in, in being in this in, in London like this. Ummm, and so yeah, to come back to the cultural dimension, there was a lot of like, exploration, which I remember enjoying a lot, a lot of discoveries, a lot of new things. Like, I clearly remember picking up like, playing golf, like in in sort of Richmond Park my that my dad wanted to play golf. So he took us to, uh, to classes as well with him. And it was [laughs] really like fun. It was like a very British thing to do. And then like all the traditions like being very, you know, Guy Fawkes Day, the fireworks. These are all things that I grew up with, and that today feel part of my culture, because or like, I really identify, I know when they are, I celebrate them. I like ummm, yeah, I, I grew up and I explored it at that stage between, like, when I was 10. So, so yeah, there's a lot of us covering the country as well, like driving to Norfolk, to Wales. Like I have memories of all this. Ummm, and also having family visiting. I also feel like that's a development also that happened, like our family, my grandparents would come to visit. And, and that would be like a really nice way to explore more...ummm... in London as well. And I think another thing that that made it really interesting was that my mom ummm started studying, she hadn't she hadn't, she'd never studied, like at university. And she finally realised her dream, which was to study in art school. And so we also had this whole, ummm, [pause] mind opening, you know, new community and world that she was part of, and that like, we would meet her friends and go to her art school, and it was like this whole crazy world, ummm. And so this this, for me is like what the UK felt like, ummm, from from very early on, ummm, explorations, traditions, ummm, a big</p>	<p>4. Multiple languages</p> <p>5. Long lasting friendships</p> <p>6. Sense of London [removed]</p> <p>7. British culture immersion [merged with 16]</p> <p>8. Parents' immersion in new world and connections formed</p>
---------------------------	---	---

## Appendix G

### Ethical Approval



## LONDON MET RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW FORM

### For Research Students and Staff

**Postgraduate research students** (MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate): This form should be completed by all research students in full consultation with their supervisor. All research students must complete a research ethics review form before commencing the research or collecting any data and no later than six months after enrolment.

**Staff:** This form should be completed by the member of staff responsible for the research project (i.e. Principal Investigator and/or grant-holder) in full consultation with any co-investigators, research students and research staff before commencing the research or collecting any data.

#### Definition of Research

Research is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship\*; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also excludes the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.”

Scholarship is defined as the creation, development and maintenance of the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines, in forms such as dictionaries, scholarly editions, catalogues and contributions to major research databases.”

London Met's *Research Ethics Policy and Procedures* and *Code of Good Research Practice*, along with links to research ethics online courses and guidance materials, can be found on the Research & Postgraduate Office Research Ethics webpage:

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/>

London Met's Research Framework can be found here:

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-framework/>

Researcher development sessions can be found here:

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/researcher-development-programme/>

This form requires the completion of the following three sections:

**SECTION A: APPLICANT DETAILS**

**SECTION B: THE PROJECT - ETHICAL ISSUES**

**SECTION C: THE PROJECT - RISKS AND BENEFITS**

<b>SECTION A: APPLICANT DETAILS</b>
-------------------------------------

<b>A1</b>	<b>Background information</b>
	Research project title: An exploration of adult Third Culture Kids' experience of transitioning to the UK between the ages of 14 and 17. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.
	Date of submission for ethics approval: 15 December 2020
	Proposed start date for project: 5 weeks after submission date
	Proposed end date for project: 30 September 2022
	Ethics ID # (to be completed by RERP chair):
<b>A2</b>	<b>Applicant details, if for a research student project</b>
	Name: Alla Montazer
	London Met Email address: alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk
<b>A3</b>	<b>Principal Researcher/Lead Supervisor</b>
	Member of staff at London Metropolitan University who is responsible for the proposed research project either as Principal Investigator/grant-holder or, in the case of postgraduate research student projects, as Lead Supervisor
	Name: Dr Raffaello Antonino
	Job title: Senior Lecturer in Counselling Psychology
	London Met Email address: r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk

<b>SECTION B: THE PROJECT - ETHICAL ISSUES</b>
--

<b>B 1</b>	<p><b>The Research Proposal</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Background/rationale</u></b></p> <p>The proposed study aims to explore the experiences of adult third culture kids (TCK's) originating from EU countries when they transition to the UK. TCK's are individuals who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside of their country of origin (Pollock &amp; Van Reken, 2001).</p> <p>Bushong (2013) identified that TCK's can experience depression and anxiety which can be linked to the challenges they faced when they were relocating before age 18. The psycho-social process of leaving one's homeland for a new country has been recognised as a distressing experience (Carta et al, 2005). Migration literature suggests that leaving for a new country early in life can act as a risk factor for common mental health disorders (Bhugra &amp; Becker, 2005; Shah, 2004).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Research questions/aims/objectives</u></b></p> <p>It is proposed that qualitative research is undertaken to address the question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do adult third culture kids experience the transition to the UK at the age of 14-17?</li> </ul> <p>Specifically, the research aims to gain a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The impact of the move on TCK's interpretations of their life events and emotional processing; and</li> <li>- their sense of belonging, feelings of restlessness and rootlessness and identity formation.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Review of key literature in this field &amp; conceptual framework for study</u></b></p> <p>The concept of TCK's was popularised by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) who defined TCK's as a "person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside of the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all cultures, while not having full ownership of any" (p.19)</p>
----------------	--

The concept of TCK's is linked to the concept of Culture Shock (CS) which is "anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960, p.177), which is often experienced by individuals who find themselves in a new culture.

The experience of CS for a TCK is complicated by the timing during which the move happens – TCK's leave their parents' culture during their developmental years, prior to age 18. According to Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stages of identity development model, individuals successfully move from one stage of development to the next by overcoming a crisis in that stage (Salkind, 2004, p.142). In the case of TCK's, who move countries during the time that Erikson hypothesises that individuals go through the adolescence and young adulthood stages of identity development, their crises resolution could be impacted by the international relocation that they may be faced with. This is because TCK's may find themselves in the throes of learning about a new culture and trying to fit into it while at the same time trying to resolve the crisis of their individual developmental stage, which may impact the resolution of this crisis.

Empirical studies focusing on TCK's have found that these individuals can experience distress that is linked to:

- feelings of restlessness and rootlessness (Pollock & Van Reken 2001; Sellers, 2011; Mortimer, 2010; Fail, Thompson & Walker, 2004);
- challenges with identity development (Gilbert, 2008; Mortimer, 2010; Sellers, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009); and
- challenges forming and maintaining close relationships (Choi & Luke, 2011; Fletcher, 1995).

Studies that have explored the concept of TCK's are subject to 4 points of critique:

1. Age of departure –the definition of TCK states that the individual must leave their country of origin before age 18 (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) but no further clarification appears to be available about the range between 0-18 years. Accordingly, studies have not reached a consensus around what age range to use and use a variety of ranges without addressing how age of departure may impact the experience of transition (e.g. Choi & Luke, 2011; Gilbert, 2008; Moore & Barker, 2012; Mortimer, 2010; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Sellers, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).
2. Number of host countries lived in – the definition and research studies on TCK's do not focus on the number of countries an individual has to live in before age 18 (Choi & Luke 2011; Moore & Barker, 2012; Gilbert, 2008; Pollock & Van Reken, 2011; Sellers, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). Immigration literature has suggested that an increase in the number of international relocations can impact the psychological state of an individual by leaving them less affected when leaving

friends regularly (Dixon & Hayden, 2008) and leading to distress due to less positive affect (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009).

3. Time spent abroad – the TCK definition states that individuals must spend a significant part of their developmental years outside their passport country (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). However, there is a lack of consensus over what is meant by significant. Studies use a range from 1 year abroad (e.g. Schaetti, 2000; Gilbert 2008; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001) to “more than half of their lives between ages 5-18” (Choi & Luke, 2001). Literature on immigration suggests a deterioration in mental health in long-term migrants compared to new arrivals (Lou & Beaujot, 2005; Rivera, Casal & Currais, 2015).
4. Culture differences – TCK studies require the participants to be outside of their home country but do not specify the significance of cultural differences between countries (e.g. Choi & Luke, 2011; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). Bhugra (2004) has hypothesised that individuals who migrate from predominantly collectivistic societies into a society that is predominantly individualistic are likely to have problems adjusting to the new culture.

Review of literature has identified a gap where individual aspects of the TCK experience can be looked at to gain a better understanding of how such an experience impacts an individual. Specifically, it is proposed that adult TCK's are interviewed about their experience of moving to UK between the ages of 14-17 y.o. to explore how this experience has impacted the individuals' interpretation of their life events and emotional processing.

#### **Research methodology**

The research proposition focuses on the experience of TCK's moving to the UK by looking at their subjective accounts retrospectively. A qualitative approach is the most suitable as this would allow to explore a holistic understanding of participants' subjective worlds (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). This approach is in line with the principles of Counselling Psychology (CoP), which requires CP's to empathically understand how individuals make sense of their experiences (Woolfe, 2016).

Quantitative studies done on the concept focused on specific aspects such as the consequences of international sojourns on positive affect (Peterson & Plamondon, 2009); and are not able to focus on the individuals' interpretation of their experience on their life.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, 2007) is the method proposed to utilise to explore the experience of adult TCK's who moved to the UK. IPA allows for this to be



accessed through individual analysis of each participant's experience of the phenomenon under investigation - the experience of coming to the UK as a TCK from an EU country.

As Smith (2004) discusses, by looking at an individual's experience in depth, we may be better placed to understand the essence of it. Philosophically, IPA focuses on an idiographic experience of individual cases, rather than seek to generalise findings (Lyons & Coyle, 2007). It recognises the involvement of the researcher, who tries to interpret the participant's experience, through their own interpretation of their life events, leading to a double hermeneutic (Smith, 2007). IPA fits with the principles of CoP as it recognises that the research process is researcher-participant dyad (Smith, 1996).

### **Participants**

It is proposed that 6-8 adult TCKs from EU countries who arrived in the UK between the ages of 14-17 years old are interviewed retrospectively about this experience. The rationale for focusing on this sample is discussed.

#### **Adult TCK's**

It is proposed that adults (older than 18 y.o.) are interviewed retrospectively about their experience of leaving their home country. Frequently, the distress faced by TCK's emerge as issues in adulthood as opposed to specifically at the time of moving (Bushong, 2013; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

#### **EU countries**

The greater the differences in cultures, specifically differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies, the greater the effect of culture shock and thus the difficulty in adaptation to the new culture (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Research suggests that countries within the EU are generally individualistic (Gobel, Benet-Martinez, Mesquita & Uskul, 2018). In recruiting participants from EU countries, the impact of culture shock is likely to be minimised and we are likely to get closer to capturing the experience of being a TCK.

#### **Arriving in the UK**

To obtain homogeneity for IPA (Smith, 2007) it is proposed that all participants arrive in the UK as the only host country. This factor has not been isolated in previous research on TCK's. However, research on immigration has suggested that an increase in the number of countries one moves to can impact how they experience future transitions (e.g. Dixon & Hayden, 2008; Peterson & Plamondon, 2009). Therefore, in stipulating that the UK is the only host country for the proposed participants, it is more likely that we are able to gain a better understanding of how the transition may have impacted the TCK's inner world, emotional processing and their interpretation of their life events.

#### **Ages 14-17**

Existing literature on the TCK concept lacks a consensus on what effect the age at which the individual moves at impacts their experience, simply focusing on any age range before 18 (e.g. Choi & Luke, 2011; Gilbert, 2008; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009). Güngör and Bornstein (2009) have found that adolescents aged 14-17 years old may have an ability to move more fluidly between different cultures. It is proposed that this is the age range to focus on to establish how individuals who move from their home country to the UK are affected by this experience.

#### **Recruitment**

It is proposed that participants are recruited through the London Metropolitan University (LMU) campus using flyers. It is also proposed to disseminate email requests to undergraduate and postgraduate university programme leaders describing the study and asking them to distribute this to their students. I am an alumnus of two other UK universities and would distribute email requests to these Universities as well. Additionally, it is proposed to get in touch with global TCK organisations, such as TCKresearch.com which is an online community for individuals who identify themselves as TCK's, to gain access to an additional pool of potential participants.

Prior to the interviews, the participants will be briefed on all aspects of the interview and given 2 copies of a consent form (Appendix C) – one for participant, one for researcher. They

will be provided with an additional information sheet (Appendix D) containing the detail of the study.

They will be informed that they can say however much they wish, and space will be provided at the end of the interview for discussion and a de-briefing in case any concerns arise in the process of the interview or to address any questions.

Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study for 4 weeks after the interview. After this time, it would become too difficult to separate the individual participant's responses from the overall analysis.

Participants will be provided with the researcher's and the research supervisor's contact details for any concerns or complaints about the study in a de-briefing form (Appendix F).

Throughout the interview, participants' levels of distress will be monitored through verbal and non-verbal communication. An LMU distress protocol (Appendix E) is attached and will be followed in situations where participants become distressed.

#### **Confidentiality and Data Security**

At the recruitment stage participants will be briefed on confidentiality and how this will be followed. This information is also included in the information sheet. All identifiable data will be removed at the transcription of the interview and pseudonyms used (Bond, 2015).

Summarised and anonymised data will be used as part of my thesis submission and any related articles that may be submitted for publication in line with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014).

The participants' audio-recordings and transcripts will be kept in a password protected computer in the researcher's home; only the researcher will know the password. All other sensitive information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location in the researcher's home. The interview material will be retained for 5 years after the completion of the study and all the data will be processed in line with the Data Protection Act (2018).

#### **Sensitivity of the research topic**

The proposed research topic, investigating the experience of TCK's coming to the UK is not considered to be a sensitive topic of discussion. Furthermore, APA (2012) specifies that immigrants are not a clinical population.

Participants who are proposed to be recruited for the study are not considered to be vulnerable individuals. Should any distress arise during or after the interview, the distress protocol will be followed.

#### **Covid 2019**

In light of the the current pandemic, it is plausible that interviews with potential participants may need to be carried out via internet instead of face-to-face. In this case, the participants will be informed that for their safety and in line with government guidelines, the interviews would be carried out using a suitable video programme such as MS Teams.

Participants will be reassured that the same levels of confidentiality will be maintained as with face-to-face interviews. In case of video interviews, the recording would be done as a video recording, instead of audio. As with audio files, the video files would be kept in a password protected computer in the researcher's home; only the researcher would know the password.

#### **References**

- American Psychological Association (2012). *Crossroads: The psychology of immigration in the new century*. Retrieved April 4, 2019 from <http://www.apa.org/topics/immigration/report.aspx>
- Berry, J. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology, 46*, 5–34.  
doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x
- Bhugra, D. (2004). Migration, distress and cultural identity. *British medical bulletin, 69*, 129-41.  
doi: 10.1093/bmb/ldh007
- Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity. *World Psychiatry, 4(1)*, 18–24.
- British Psychological Society (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics*. INF180/12.2014.

Leicester: Author. Available from:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>

Bushong, L. J. (2013). *Belonging everywhere & nowhere: insights into counseling the globally mobile*. Indiana, USA: Mango Tree Intercultural Services.

Carta, M., Bernal, M., Hardoy, M., & Haro-Abad, J. (2005). Migration and mental health in Europe. *Clinical Practice and Epidemiology in Mental Health, 1*, 1–16.

doi:10.1186/1745-0179-1-13

Choi, K. M., & Luke, M. (2011). A Phenomenological approach to understanding early adult friendships of third culture kids. *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling, 1*(1), 47–60.

<https://doi.org/10.18401/2011.1.1.4>

Dixon, P., & Hayden, M., (2008) 'On the move': Primary age children in transition. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 38*(4), 483–496. doi: 10.1080/03057640802489418

Fletcher, A. (1995). Lifestyles of third-culture kids. Retrieved from

<http://www.centerforyouth.org/62253.ihtml>

Gilbert, K. R. (2008). Loss and grief between and among cultures: The experience of third culture kids. *Illness, Crisis & Loss, 16*(2), 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.2190/IL.16.2.a>

Gobel, M.S., Benet-Martinez, V., Mesquita, B., & Uskul, A.K. (2018). Europe's culture(s): Negotiating cultural meanings, values, and identities in the European context. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology, 49*(6), 858–867. doi:10.1177/0022022118779144

Güngör, D., & Bornstein, M.H. (2009). Gender, development, values, adaptation and discrimination in acculturating adolescents: The case of Turk heritage youth born and living in Belgium. *Sex roles, 60*, 537-158. doi: 10.1007/s11199-008-9531-2

Lou, Y., & Beaujot, R. (2005). What happens to the 'Healthy immigrant effect': The mental health of immigrants to Canada. *PSC Discussion Papers Series, 19*(15), 1–22.

<http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/pscpapers/vol19/iss15/1>.

- Lyons, E., & Coyle, A. (2007). *Analysing qualitative data in psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Moore, A.M., & Barker, G.G. (2012). Confused or multicultural: third culture individuals' cultural identity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 36, 553-562.  
doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2011.11.002
- Mortimer, M. (2010). *Adult third culture kids: Common themes, relational struggles and therapeutic experiences* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 3428760)
- Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology*, 7, 177-182.
- Peterson, B. E., & Plamondon, L. T. (2009). Third culture kids and the consequences of international sojourns on authoritarianism, acculturative balance, and positive affect. *Journal of Research and Personality*, 43(5), 755–763.
- Pollock, D. C., & Van Reken, R. E. (2001). *Third culture kids: the experience of growing up among worlds*. Yarmouth, Me: Intercultural Press.
- Rienzo, C., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2018). Migrants in the UK: An overview. *Migration observatory briefing*. COMPAS, University of Oxford. Retrieved from:  
<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview/>
- Rivera, B., Casal, B., & Currais, L. (2015). Length of stay and mental health of the immigrant population in Spain: Evidence of the healthy immigrant effect. *Applied Economics*, 47(19), 1972–1982. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00036846.2014.1002895>
- Salkind, N.J. (2004). *An introduction to theories of human development*. London: Sage.
- Schaetti, B. (2000). *Global nomad identity: Hypothesizing a developmental model*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertation and Theses database. Catalogue Number: 9992721.

- Sellers, E.D. (2011) *Exploration of Themes Evolving from the Experiences of Third Culture Kids* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database (UMI No. 34666816)
- Shah, A. (2004). Ethnicity and the common mental disorders. In Melzer, D., Fryers, T., Jenkins, R. (Eds). *Social inequalities and the distribution of the common mental disorders* (pp.171-223). East Sussex: Psychology Press Ltd.
- Smith, J. A. (2004) Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 1*, 39-54, doi: 10.1191/1478088704qp004oa
- Smith, J. A. (2007). *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage.
- Walters, K. A., & Auton-Cuff, F. P. (2009). A story to tell: The identity development of women growing up as third culture kids. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 12(7)*, 755–772. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670903029153>
- Winkelman, S., Chaney, E., & Bethel, J. (2013). Stress, depression and coping among Latino migrant and seasonal farmworkers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 10*, 1815–1830. doi:10.3390/ijerph10051815
- Woolfe, R. (2016). Mapping the world of helping: The place of Counselling Psychology. In Douglas, B, Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Kasket, E., & Galbraith, V. (Eds.). *The handbook of counselling psychology* (4th ed. pp 5-19). London, England: Sage Publications.

Please outline any ethical issues that might arise from this study and how they are to be addressed.

**NB** All research projects have ethical considerations. Please complete this section as fully as possible using the following pointers for guidance. Please include any points that you think would be helpful.

- Does the project involve potentially deceiving participants? *No*
- Will you be requiring the disclosure of confidential or private information? *Yes –*

*participants will be asked to talk about their personal experiences of moving to the UK, as well as other life events that may have been impacted by this. However, all participants will be given a pseudonym and all identifiable information (e.g. places of work/study) will be anonymised in line with the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) and the Data Protection Act (2018).*

- Is the project likely to lead to the disclosure of illegal activity or incriminating information about participants? *No*
- Does the project require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for the researcher? *No. However, the researcher holds a valid DBS check as part of their work as a Trainee Counselling Psychologist and will have this at the time of the study as part of course requirements.*
- Is the project likely to expose participants to distress of any nature? *Yes.*

*The project aims to ask participants about their experiences of moving to the UK and how they processed these experiences. It is possible that some aspects of this may lead to some distress. A London Metropolitan University distress protocol has been drawn up and will be adhered to in the event of a participant becoming distressed at the time of the interview or following it. The distress protocol can be seen attached in Appendix E. The research will be carried out in line with the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2018) as well as the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014) to ensure ethical and professional conduct in doing research.*

- Will participants be rewarded for their involvement? *No*
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest in this project? *No*
- Are there any other potential concerns? *No*

**If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.**

#### References

British Psychological Society (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics*. INF180/12.2014.

Leicester: Author. Available from:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>

British Psychological Society (2018). *Code of Ethics and Conduct*. INF94/07.18. Leicester:



	<p>Author. Available from:</p> <p><a href="https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf">https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>B</b> <b>3</b></p>	<p>Does the proposed research project involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis of existing data, artefacts or performances that are not already in the public domain (i.e. that are published, freely available or available by subscription)? <i>No</i></li> <li>• The production and/or analysis of physical data (including computer code, physical entities and/or chemical materials) that might involve potential risks to humans, the researcher(s) or the University? <i>No</i></li> <li>• The direct or indirect collection of new data from humans or animals? <i>Yes.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The project involves the collection of new data of participants' experiences of moving to the UK when they were 14-17 years of age directly from their accounts. The data will be collected using semi-structured interviews (SSI), as recommended by Smith (2007). This allows for the participant and the researcher to engage in a conversation with an initial pre-determined set of questions which are modified with reference to the participant's responses, so that important areas of the participant's account can be targeted. SSI's allow the researcher to explore the experience of the participant, which is consistent with the phenomenological nature of IPA (Smith, 2007).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of data with other organisations? <i>No</i></li> <li>• Export of data outside the EU? <i>No</i></li> </ul> <p><b>If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>References</u></b></p> <p>Smith, J. A. (2007). <i>Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods</i>. London: Sage</p>
<p><b>B</b> <b>4</b></p>	<p>Will the proposed research be conducted in any country outside the UK? If so, are there independent research ethics regulations and procedures that either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not recognise research ethics review approval from UK-based research ethics services? <i>No</i> and/or</li> <li>• Require more detailed applications for research ethics review than would ordinarily be conducted by the University's Research Ethics Review Panels and/or other UK-based research ethics services? <i>No</i></li> </ul>

	<p><b>If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain.</b></p>
<p><b>B 5</b></p>	<p>Does the proposed research involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The collection and/or analysis of body tissues or fluids from humans or animals? <i>No</i></li> <li>• The administration of any drug, food substance, placebo or invasive procedure to humans or animals? <i>No</i></li> <li>• Any participants lacking capacity (as defined by the UK Mental Capacity Act 2005)? <i>No</i></li> <li>• Relationships with any external statutory-, voluntary-, or commercial-sector organisation(s) that require(s) research ethics approval to be obtained from an external research ethics committee or the UK National Research Ethics Service (this includes research involving staff, clients, premises, facilities and data from the UK National Health Service (NHS), Social Care organisations and some other statutory public bodies within the UK)? <i>No</i></li> </ul> <p><b>If you answered yes to any of the points above, please contact your faculty's RERP chair for further guidance.</b></p>
<p><b>B 6</b></p>	<p>Does the proposed research involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing / storing information (including information on the web) which promotes extremism or terrorism? <i>No</i></li> <li>• Accessing / storing information which is security sensitive (e.g. for which a security clearance is required)? <i>No</i></li> </ul> <p><b>If you answered yes to any of the points above, please explain. To comply with the law, researchers seeking to use information in these categories must have appropriate protocols in place for the secure access and storage of material. For further guidance, see the Universities UK publication <a href="#">Oversight of Security Sensitive Research Material in UK Universities</a> (2012).</b></p>

<b>SECTION C: THE PROJECT - RISKS AND BENEFITS</b>	

<b>C1</b>	<p data-bbox="209 432 395 456"><b>Risk Assessment</b></p> <p data-bbox="520 459 788 483" style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Risks and their mitigation</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="209 512 1023 974">It is not expected that the project and the proposed interviews will lead to any risks to either the researcher or the research participants. The proposed interviews will be carried out in a room in a public place (e.g. The British Library) or at a London Metropolitan University site. In case of national lockdown measures or restrictions imposed by the government due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews will be carried out via the internet and the researcher will be in their own home for the purposes of this, in line with the BPS Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research (2017) and the BPS Ethics best practice guidance on conducting research with human participants during Covid-19 (2019).</p> <p data-bbox="209 1003 1023 1518">The study covers personal topics that may evoke some discomfort or distress for participants when they are discussing them. A London Metropolitan University distress protocol has been drawn up; this can be seen attached in Appendix E. It is not expected that the participants will experience any undue distress during the interview process. However, it is proposed that the participants' level of distress is monitored throughout the interview process and the protocol be followed at any sign of distress. As a Trainee Counselling Psychologist, the researcher will be equipped with specific skills to monitor the participants' emotional and psychological state to ensure their safety and will do so in line with the BPS Code of Conduct and Ethics (2018) and the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics (2014).</p> <p data-bbox="209 1547 986 1626">During the interview process, the participants will be offered to take short breaks to feel calmer should they wish to do so.</p> <p data-bbox="209 1655 1011 1733">At the end of the interview process, the participants will be de-briefed by the researcher and given the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have and raise</p>
-----------	--

any issues. Participants will also be provided with an email address of the researcher and the researcher's supervisor should they feel the need to raise any matters.

#### **Benefits of the project**

It is expected that the participants' contribution will provide mental health practitioners with a better understanding of how the experience of moving to the UK during the ages of 14-17 can impact a person's life, and what potential consequences it can lead to.

It is also likely that this information is likely to enrich and further the concept of TCK's and wider immigration literature that focuses on the interaction of relocation and mental health. This is likely to equip mental health practitioners, as well as educators and business organisations with tailored tools to better prepare and deal with international relocations and their consequences.

For some participants, the proposed study may be the first opportunity that they have to talk about their experiences, it is therefore possible that this will provide them with an opportunity to make sense of the experience of being a TCK and thus provide an opportunity for others to better understand this also.

For the researcher, the proposed study will provide an opportunity gain a better understanding of the concept of TCK which the researcher identifies with and provide hands-on research experience necessary for a counselling psychologist.

CoP as a profession is likely to benefit from this research as the profession developed in order to better serve multicultural populations (du Perez, Feather & Farrell, 2016; Bantjes, Kagee & Young, 2016) and this will add to the profession's social justice and focus.

**References**

Bantjes, J., Kagee, A., & Young, C. (2016). Counselling psychology in South Africa.

Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 29(2), 171-183. doi:

1080/09515070.2015.1128401

British Psychological Society (2014). *Code of Human Research Ethics*. INF180/12.2014.

Leicester: Author. Available from:

[https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf)

[%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf)

British Psychological Society (2017). *Ethics Guidelines for Internet-mediated Research*.

INF206/04.2017. Leicester: Author. Available from:

[https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-mediated%20Research%20%282017%29.pdf)

[%20Files/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-mediated%20Research%20%282017%29.pdf)

[mediated%20Research%20%282017%29.pdf](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Ethics%20Guidelines%20for%20Internet-mediated%20Research%20%282017%29.pdf)

British Psychological Society (2018). *Code of Ethics and Conduct*. INF94/07.18.

Leicester: Author. Available from:

[https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf)

[%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf)

[%20July%202018%29.pdf](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20and%20Conduct%20%28Updated%20July%202018%29.pdf)

British Psychological Society (2020). *Ethics best practice guidance on conducting research*

*with human participants during Covid-19*. Leicester: Author. Available from:

[https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Conducting%20research%20with%20human%20participants%20during%20Covid-19.pdf)

[%20Files/Conducting%20research%20with%20human%20participants%20during%](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Conducting%20research%20with%20human%20participants%20during%20Covid-19.pdf)

[20Covid-19.pdf](https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/www.bps.org.uk/files/Policy/Policy%20-%20Files/Conducting%20research%20with%20human%20participants%20during%20Covid-19.pdf)

du Preez, E., Feather, J., & Farrell, B. (2016). Counselling psychology in New Zealand.

### PSYCHOLOGY: PROJECT CHECKLIST

Delete either **NO** or **YES** to the following statements:

1. Will the participants be required to experience unpleasant stimuli or unpleasant situations above the normal level of unpleasantness expected in everyday life? <sup>1</sup>	<b>NO</b>
2. Will any relevant information about the nature, process or outcome of the experiment or study be withheld from participants? <sup>2</sup>	<b>NO</b>
3. Will participants be actively misled or deceived as to the purpose of the study? <sup>3</sup>	<b>NO</b>
4. Will participants receive any inducement or payment to take part in the study?	<b>NO</b>
5. Does the research involve identifiable participants or the possibility that anonymised individuals may become identifiable?	<b>NO</b>
6. Will any participants be unable to provide informed consent?	<b>NO</b>
7. Might the study carry a risk – above the normal risk expected in everyday life – of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of participants?	<b>NO</b>
8. Might the study carry a risk – above the normal risk expected in everyday life – of being harmful to the physical or mental well-being of the researcher in carrying out the study?	<b>NO</b>

If you answered **YES** to one or more of the above questions, explain how you will address the corresponding ethical concern(s) in the study protocol (no word limit).

<sup>1</sup> If required to experience unpleasant stimuli or unpleasant situations, participants should be informed beforehand and possibly screened for suitability. Finally, depending on the level of unpleasantness, it may be appropriate to use the distress protocol immediately after data collection.

<sup>2</sup> If information is withheld, the participants will need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants (attach the second consent form as an appendix to this document). Finally, the distress protocol should be used immediately after data collection.

<sup>3</sup> If the participants are actively misled or deceived, they need to be debriefed after the data collection. In addition, a second informed consent to use the data should be obtained after debriefing the participants (attach the second consent form as an appendix to this document). Finally, the distress protocol should be used immediately after data collection.

***Please ensure that you have completed Sections A, B, C and the Psychology project Checklist, and attached a Research Proposal before submitting to your Faculty Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP)***

<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/>

Research ethics approval can be granted for a maximum of 4 years or for the duration of the proposed research, whichever is shorter, on the condition that:

- The researcher must inform their faculty's Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) of any changes to the proposed research that may alter the answers given to the questions in this form or any related research ethics applications
- The researcher must apply for an extension to their ethics approval if the research project continues beyond 4 years.

**PSYCHOLOGY: SUBMISSION**

You must submit your Psychology Project Proposal and Ethics Application Form in **electronic form** (only) as follows:



1. Prepare a **single MS Word file**, including all attached material (if any) at the end of it;
2. **Sign it**, and **make your supervisor sign it** (signatures can be picture files of scanned signatures);
3. **Rename the single MS Word file** using the following convention and format:  
Ethics\_Course Code\_Student Surname\_Student ID number
4. e.g., Ethics\_MPhil-PhD\_Bond\_0000007 or Ethics\_Staff\_Bond
5. Submit the single and renamed MS Word file via Weblearn on *Psychology Research Ethics Community* (visible under *My Organisations*), **using the course-specific submission link**.
6. **Alert** the Chair of the Psychology Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) by email.

**The Psychology Project Proposal and Ethics Application Form must be complete and signed. Incomplete and/or unsigned forms will not be assessed and will require resubmission at the next opportunity.**

**The researcher must inform the supervisor of any changes to the proposed research that may alter the answers given to the questions in this form or any related research ethics applications. The supervisor will then either approve the changes or ask the student to resubmit the Project Proposal and Ethics Application Form.**

**Declaration**

I confirm that I have read London Met's *Research Ethics Policy and Procedures* and *Code of Good Research Practice* and have consulted relevant guidance on ethics in research.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Student</b>	<b>Alla Montazer</b>		<b>11.12.2020</b>
<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Dr Raffaello Antonino</b>		<b>14.12.2020</b>
<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<hr/>		



**PSYCHOLOGY: REVIEW****Reviewer**

Enter **X** in correspondence with one and only one of the following statements:

<b>C</b> Clear without amendment.	<b>X</b>
<b>M</b> Clear conditional on the requested changes being made (minor modifications). <sup>4</sup>	
<b>R</b> Revise and resubmit (major modifications). <sup>5</sup>	

Comments (required for M and R referrals).




	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Referee</b>	<b>Dr Verity DiMascio</b>		<b>02/02/21</b>

<sup>4</sup> The project must be revised. The revised project has to be approved by the supervisor **only**. The revised project, signed by both student and supervisor, must be submitted, for auditing purpose, via the **Minor Modifications Archive** submission link.

<sup>5</sup> The project must be revised, signed by both student and supervisor, and resubmitted via the ordinary submission link as if it were a new submission.

**Final judge (if one was appointed)**

Enter **X** in correspondence with one and only one of the following statements:

<b>C</b>	Clear without amendment.	
<b>M</b>	Clear conditional on the requested changes being made (minor modifications). <sup>6</sup>	
<b>R</b>	Revise and resubmit (major modifications). <sup>7</sup>	

Comments (required for M and R referrals).

	Name	Signature	Date
<b>Final judge</b>			

<sup>6</sup> The project must be revised. The revised project has to be approved by the supervisor **only**. The revised project, signed by both student and supervisor, must be submitted, for auditing purpose, via the **Minor Modifications Archive** submission link.

<sup>7</sup> The project must be revised, signed by both student and supervisor, and resubmitted via the ordinary submission link as if it were a new submission.

## Feedback from Ethics Review Panel

	<i>Approved</i>	<i>Feedback where further work required</i>
<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Section B</b>		
<b>Section C</b>		
<b>Date of approval</b>	12/02/2021	
<b>NB: The Researcher should be notified of decision within <u>two</u> weeks of the submission of the application. A copy should be sent to the Research and Postgraduate Office.</b>		
<b>Signature of RERP chair</b>		

## Appendix H

### Consent Form

**Title of research:** An exploration of adult Third Culture Kids' experience of transitioning to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

**Description of procedure:** In this research you will be asked several questions regarding your experience of moving to the UK within a voice recorded interview.

- I understand the procedures to be used.
- I understand I am free to withdraw at any time during the study without question. However, all data will be aggregated by the end of December 2021; therefore if I wish to withdraw it has to be done by 4 weeks after the interview date.
- I understand that participation in this study is anonymous. My name will not be used in connection with the results in any way, a pseudonym will be used on the digital voice recording and all information that may otherwise identify me (e.g. address, friend's names) will be changed prior to transcription. There are limits to confidentiality however; confidentiality will be breached if any information is disclosed that indicates a risk to safety.
- I understand that the results of the study will be accessible to others when completed and that excerpts from my interview (minus explicit identifying information) may be used within the study.
- I understand that I may find this interview upsetting and that it may evoke some difficult and distressing feelings for me. I will be offered support and the opportunity to discuss these feelings at length post interview with the researcher. The researcher will also give information on further support available if required.
- I understand that I have the right to obtain information about the findings of the study and details of how to obtain this information will be given in the debriefing form.
- I understand that the data will be destroyed once the study has been assessed.

Signature of participant:..... Signature of researcher:.....

Print name:..... Print name:.....

Date: ..... Date: .....

**Appendix I**  
**Debriefing Form**

Thank you for taking part in this research study. This is part of a Doctoral project that the researcher is conducting. If you are interested in the results of the study, or if you have any questions about this study, or if you wish to withdraw, please contact the researcher on the following email addresses: [alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:alm1291@my.londonmet.ac.uk)

Emails will be checked regularly.

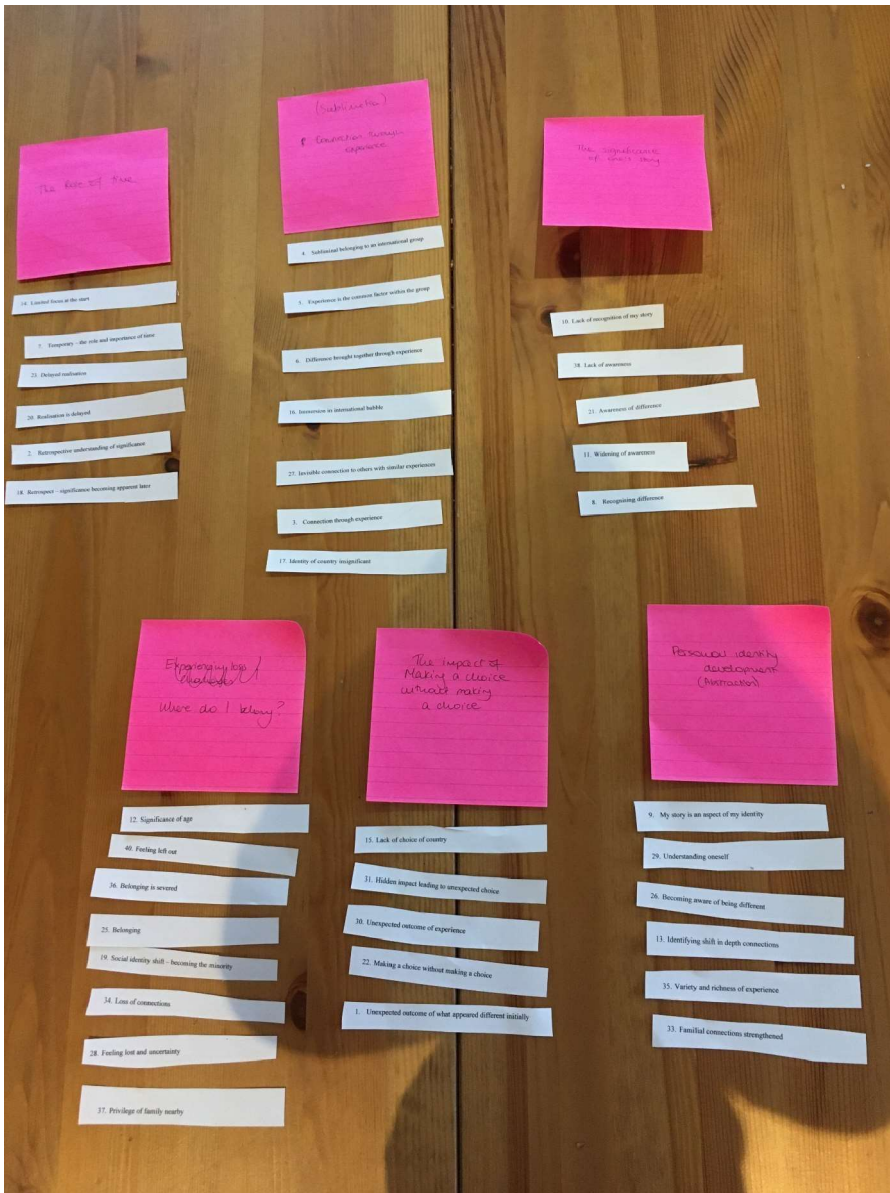
Please remember that if you wish to withdraw your data from this study it should be done by 4 weeks after your interview, as it may not be possible at a later stage.

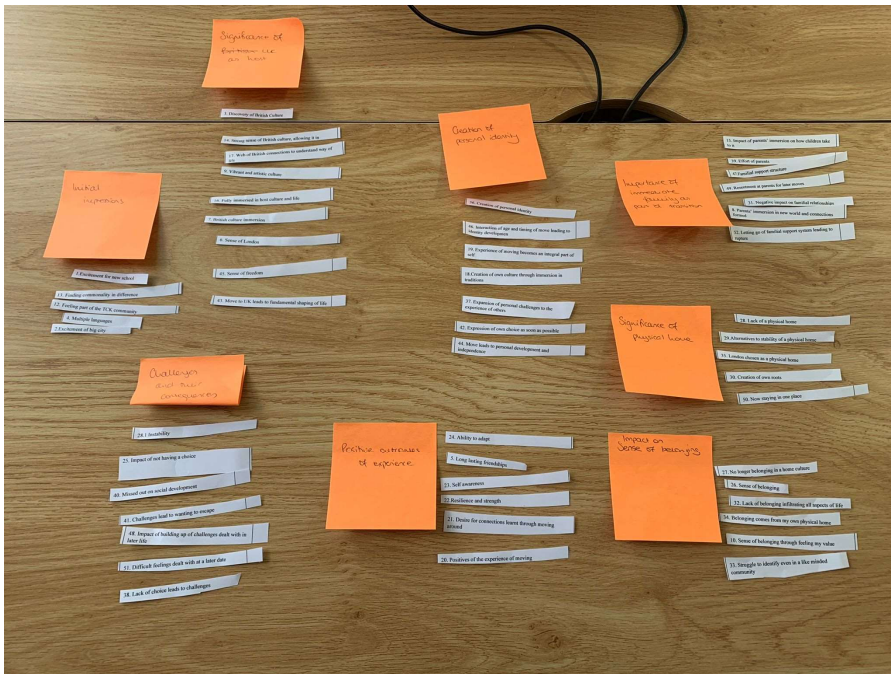
Equally, if you have any questions or concerns you are more than welcome to address them now.

If you have any complaints regarding any aspect of the way you have been treated during the course of the study, please contact my research supervisor Dr Raffaello Antonino on: [r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:r.antonino1@londonmet.ac.uk)

### Appendix J

#### Analysis process examples





## Appendix K

### Reflective Journal excerpt

#### Reflective journal – post interview 01.07.2021

Her answers touched me to the core, because it felt like the transition years had a very profound effect on what she was experiencing. It sounded like she was going through something very difficult in that time without a clear cut off point. Who's to say that at 18 you stop processing things the same way?

I also got the impression that she was trying really really hard to integrate with the British culture in order to fit in. She mentioned several times how she would never leave the place where she is at now.

I found it hard not to be a therapist in this interview. I could feel her pain at times, and I also found myself comparing my experience to hers so much. I will have to keep this in mind when I am doing the analysis. Is this her sadness that's coming out or mine?

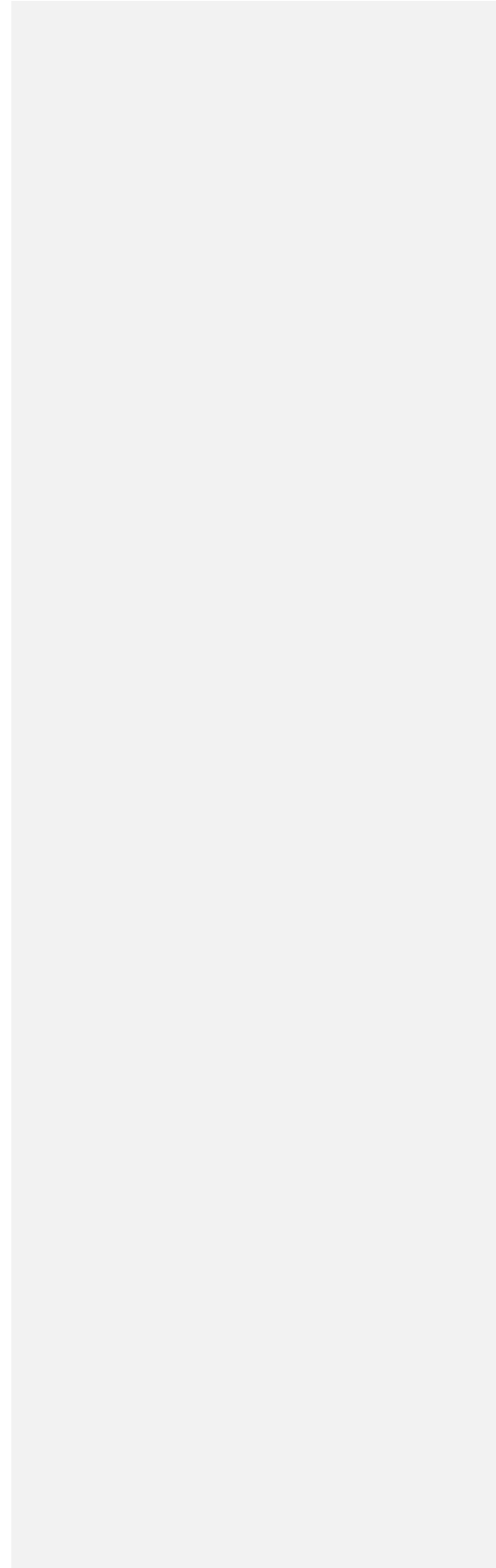
#### 29.11.2021 Analysis of 1<sup>st</sup> transcript

I found myself panicking about not finding enough negative material in the transcript from which potential issues may be stemming and thus making me feel like this research may be fruitless. Imposter syndrome is coming out a lot. In going through the analysis, in particular looking at the emerging themes, I found myself automatically going into what previous TCK research has found to be issues - e.g. lack of belonging; restlessness and rootlessness.

Therefore I had to take a step back and think about whether I am trying to make themes coming out of this transcript fit into my knowledge and instead focus on allowing the transcript to lead me to the themes that it is addressing. I also found the physical process of cutting out the themes, laying them out on the table and then moving them around to find their own groups to be very enjoyable. They naturally flowed to one another with a few falling away completely and a few merging into one when I recognised that the same themes



was appearing using slightly different words. In those instances, I looked at the transcript again to see in which of the participant's words the themes were most evident and applied them to those, removing the others. I took photos of the physical process to ensure consistency and an audit trail.



**Journal Article**

**An exploration of Adult Third Culture Kids' experience of transitioning to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.**

*Alla Montazer*

### **Abstract**

Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are individuals who spent a significant part of their developmental years outside of their country of origin. They differ from traditional migrants due to the relocation being driven by parents' choice, with a temporary mobility pattern. Research on TCK's suggests that their migratory experience(s) can be linked to challenges with identity development, a lack of belonging and others. There is a lack of consensus on the impact of age at which TCK's experience the relocations and little focus on cultural aspects of home and host countries. This study addressed this gap by looking at the experiences of six adult TCK's who came to the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 from EU countries. Verbatim accounts of semi-structured interviews were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Three superordinate themes emerged: a. The creation of me and my home (referring to personal identity formation and a lack of belonging); b. Meaningful connections (referring to the impact the move(s) had on significant relationships); c. The turmoil of adolescence and choice (referring to the interaction of adolescence with the move and the lack of choice when moving). Results were interpreted to suggest that these TCK's experienced difficulties with identity formation and belongingness. Losses of childhood friendships, as well as self-confidence were reported, and identifying that a lack of choice in moving differentiated these TCK's from their non-TCK counterparts, and their parents. The combination of adolescence with the move was linked to experiencing emotional distress.

*Keywords: Third Culture Kids; TCKs; IPA; Belonging; Losses; Adolescence*

### **Introduction**

According to The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) there are 281 million international migrants worldwide, representing 3.6% of the world's population (UN, 2022).

The concept of Third Culture Kids (TCK's) has been researched and developed extensively by Pollock et al (2017) who define a TCK as "a person who spends a significant part of his or her first 18 years of life accompanying parent(s) into a country or countries that are different from at least one parent's passport country(ies) due to a parent's choice of work or advanced training".

Today, the concept of TCK's deserves attention since globalisation and technological advances have allowed an increase in international mobility for many people, creating more families with children who live away from their country of origin (UN, 2022). It is therefore inevitable, that many individuals are likely to find themselves falling into the definition of TCK's. Many organisations are likely to send their employees abroad, which includes transferring families with children from country to country.

Culture shock (CS), which is "anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1960, p.177) is often experienced by individuals who find themselves in a new culture. From the perspective of a TCK, the experience of culture shock is complicated by the fact that moving back and forth from one culture to another happens before they completed the "critical developmental task of forming a sense of their own personal and cultural identity" (Pollock et al, 2017, p.39). It is the interaction of the timing of the move, together with the duration of it, that creates the unique experiences and characteristics of TCK's.

#### *Distinguishing characteristics of the TCK definition*

Numerous authors (e.g. Pollock et al, 2017, Tan et al, 2021; de Waal & Born, 2021) discuss how individuals who are raised in more than one culture are likely to share many common factors, such as a connection to more than one culture, and often because of that, not necessarily experiencing a “full” sense of belonging to either culture. Those whose lives are cross-cultural because of moving are also likely to share issues of adjustment to new cultures and acculturation struggles. These are similarities that are likely, to some extent, be shared by all subgroups of immigrants – from refugees to second generation immigrant children to those who fall within the definition of a TCK.

However, the particularities of the TCK subgroup are that, due to the relocation being driven by parents’ choice of work or study, or other reasons, the TCK’s mobility pattern is to temporarily move abroad with the expectation of repatriating to their home country; and may include living in one, sometimes many different host countries. As a result, neither the TCK family nor their host country are likely to expect TCK’s to root themselves and belong in the host country. This is unlike the traditional moving pattern of an immigrant family, who are more likely to make one significant move to a new country in which they settle permanently and thus consider this to be a permanent home (Tan et al, 2021).

A systemic review of TCK empirical research (Tan et al, 2021) has found that, to date, whilst there is a widespread interest in psychosocial developmental issues related to TCK’s, there is also a lack of programmatic research with a diverse landscape that covers a wide array of topic coverage, but which is scattered amongst publications in the fields of psychology, anthropology, education, theology, and others.

#### *Characteristics of the TCK experience*

Tan et al (2021) point out how in research on immigration, the idea of acculturation and acculturation strategies have been considered (e.g. Yoon et al, 2011; Berry & Sam, 2016), however, the TCK experience does not necessarily fully fit within the acculturation

framework of assimilation, acculturation, separation and marginalisation (Berry & Sam, 2016) for several reasons. Firstly, this acculturation strategy is framed from the perspective of intergroup or intercultural contact of existing cultural groups however, TCK's find it difficult to identify with existing cultural groups due to their multinational history. Secondly, existing acculturation models focus on the adult migrant's experience – which is different to a TCK, since an adult migrant is likely to have had an opportunity to develop a personal identity grounded within their home culture prior to the experience of moving. Thirdly, when moving as children due to the parent's choice, the voluntary aspect of moving is removed from the young person. This arguably may place this group within an “involuntary immigrant” category, which, from a research perspective mainly looks at experiences of refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. Berry, 2006) whose trajectories and experiences are likely to be very different to those of TCK's.

Research has shown that TCK's experience numerous benefits associated with international relocations but also face several challenges. Some of the benefits include the feelings that the family is strengthened through the experience of mobility (McLachlan, 2005); being more comfortable with the experience of travel, have a better understanding of different cultures and languages, and have greater adaptability and flexibility (Fletcher, 1995; Gerner & Perry, 2000; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

On the flipside, early displacement into a new culture can lead to several challenges, which research has focused on in greater detail; such as challenges with relationship formation (e.g. Hervey, 2009; Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2018; Choi & Lukw 2011; Choi et al, 2013; Bikos et al, 2009), difficulties with finding a sense of belonging (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011; Nette & Hayden 2007; Moore & Barker, 2012; Bikos et al, 2009; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009; Gilbert, 2008), and difficulties with identity formation (Cranston, 2017; Rounsaville, 2014; Moore & Barker, 2012; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2008) . These challenges

are of interest to consider because they can be deeply integrated with the presenting distress of an individual asking for support (Gaw 2000; Bushong, 2013).

The present study considered some of the aspects of the TCK experience by looking at a particular age group coming to UK from cultures that are like that of UK.

UK was chosen as a host country because it is a multicultural country which in 2017 had 9.4m migrants of which 39% were of European Union (EU) origin; and up to 24% were under age 25 (Rienzo & Vargas-Silva, 2018). It is therefore likely that individuals who fall within the loose definition of TCK will at some point end up in the UK. An age range for arrival in UK of between 10 - 17y.o. was selected as this is the age range which correlates with adolescence (Sawyer et al, 2018), which is one of the factors that differentiates the experience of TCK's to that of other types of immigrants.

Adult TCK's were interviewed to provide enough of a reflection period to try and understand the experience of the adolescent moves. It was also considered that in interviewing participants originating from EU countries, this may have minimised the effects of someone coming from a collectivistic society into an individualistic society (Bhugra, 2004), and instead focused more on the experience of being a TCK. Furthermore, it was hoped that in focusing on EU countries as home countries of participants, aspects of visa barriers were removed and cultural differences were kept to as much of a minimum as possible given that European cultures tend to share values and are generally found to be individualistic (Gobel et al, 2018).

This study therefore considered the following research question:

***How do adult TCK's from EU cultures experience their transition to the UK between ages 10 and 17?***

The objectives of this study were to gain a better understanding the impact of the move on the TCK's interpretations of their life events and emotional processing, and their

sense of belonging, feelings of restlessness and rootlessness, and identity formation. Also, to add to literature on this topic from the holistic lens of Counselling Psychology (Woolfe, 2016).

### Method

In looking to explore the experiences of TCK's arriving in the UK between the ages of 10 and 17 from EU countries Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. The data set was created through verbatim transcription of the semi-structured interviews carried out with a purposive sample of six participants as recommended by Smith & Osborn, (2008). Participants were recruited using social media and academic community contacts, ensuring that the following criteria were adhered to:

- Be over the age of 18 at the time of the interview
- Originate from EU countries
- They should have arrived in the UK between the ages of 10 and 17

The participants' names along with other identifiable information were changed to preserve their anonymity and ensure confidentiality. The details of the participants can be seen in Table 1:

Pseudonym	Gender	Age at time of interview	Age at time of arrival	Country of origin	Other countries lived in
Belka	Female	27	17	Lithuania	France
Aryana	Female	36	17	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Lily	Female	36	17	Austria	Canada, USA
Roxanne	Female	20	13	Italy	none
Eliza	Female	32	10	France	Singapore, Ireland, Italy
Belinda	Female	23	12	Italy	France

The semi-structured interview procedure was based on the recommendations of Smith et al (2009) and consisted of open questions and prompts. It looked to capture the participants' experience of being a TCK and what impact this may have had on them at the



time of the move and on reflection. It also asked the participants to comment on whether any specific challenges may have arisen because of the move and how these may have been dealt with. The interview schedule was drafted with reference to the studies examined, taking into consideration the research question of this study. The specific questions asked in the interviews are detailed in the Appendix.

The interviews were carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and were carried out online using Microsoft Teams. Participants consented to being recorded for the purposes of the analysis of the study. During the interview process, the questions were adapted to the participant's context and relevant issues brought up by the participant were probed. The aim was to facilitate the telling of their own story of the phenomenon they experienced through the transition to the UK in this specific age range.

The verbatim transcripts of the interviews were the raw data to be analysed using IPA described below (Smith et al, 2009). The interviews of the participants were not regarded to represent exemplars of TCK's, or to represent this entire group, rather to provide specific expression of the psychological experience of being a TCK in the UK.

The analytic process took the following steps:

- Interviews were transcribed verbatim; then were read and re-read several times whilst the recording of the interview was listened to, to ensure a general sense was obtained of the whole nature of the participant's accounts. During this stage, notes were made of potential themes and the process was informed by the researcher's experience of the interview itself.
- Each transcript was looked at again from the beginning with any emerging themes being identified and organised tentatively.
- The emergent themes were then looked at on their own to understand their individual meanings better and establish any interrelationships emerging. The focus

was on the psychological content of the phenomenon under study. This led to condensation of the data.

- The interrelated themes were organised into superordinate themes to create meaningful representation of the experiences communicated in the transcripts with the essence of the participants' experience grounded in their own words.

The analysis is organised through the superordinate themes emerging from the transcripts.

### Results

In doing the analysis, three superordinate themes emerged, with corresponding subthemes. These can be seen in the Table 2 below. A focus on the research question was held in mind throughout the analysis process, which enabled the in-depth analysis of the large volume of data collected. The results are organised into three superordinate themes: 1. The creation of me and my home 2. Meaningful connections 3. The turmoil of adolescence and choice.

Superordinate theme	Sub Themes
1. The creation of me and my home	1.1. I had a very different story from most people 1.2. I don't truly belong here 1.3. A home within myself?
2. Meaningful connections	2.1. The role of family 2.2. The seesaw of losing and finding friendships
3. The turmoil of adolescence and choice	3.1. Intricacies of choice 3.2. An important age 3.3. The undercurrent of emotions

Each theme is interpreted in detail next, with an example quote from a participant presented to support and illustrate the analytic process.

#### **Superordinate theme 1: The creation of me and my home**

All participants referred to the experience of moving at a young age as being a unique life event which became an integral part of their identity, that can often differentiate them

from their peers. This, together with the leaving behind of a physical home pushed them to reflect on how this impacts their sense of identity and belongingness creating 3 subthemes focusing how the participants' individual journeys are different to their peers; how their sense of belongingness is impacted and how the idea of a traditional home is challenged.

***Subtheme 1.1: I had a very different story from most people***

Participants identified how their experiences of moving differentiated them from others and gave them a unique story. This contributed to the formation of their sense of self and self-understanding. For instance, Belka illustrates this in the following quote:

*"later on I found myself, well years, years later , for example when I joined my first job it was almost never asked "where did they come from and where my accent is from?" no one was interested in that story, and it felt a bit strange because I certainly knew that I had a very different story from most of the people in the office, but it somehow was ignored"* (Belka, 4/67-73)

For Belka, the realisation that her story is different from that of her peers became apparent once she found herself entering the adult world of UK society, when she realised that there was a lack of recognition that her individual story was different to others. The fact that others were not asking her about her background seems to force this into a spotlight for her suggesting that it may be an important part of her identity which she may still be in the process of fully integrating within her sense of self. It may also highlight the fact that Belka's journey was different to the norm which forces it to naturally be an obvious and significant aspect of who Belka is, yet somehow it is mostly left invisible to others. This would suggest that Belka's experience leads to a two-fold identity – the one on the inside which incorporates her unique journey and the one on the outside where she finds herself in everyday UK society that doesn't necessarily expect or leave much room for the uniqueness of her journey. It thus suggests that bridging may be necessary to connect the inner and the outer worlds.

***Subtheme 1.2: I don't truly belong here***

In exploring the shaping of the participants' identities, it became clear that with the new formation of themselves they also seemed to have discovered that their new selves didn't have a concrete anchor to a physical community or place, leading to reflections on their sense of belongingness.

Belinda's experience of this is captured in the following quote:

*"For me, I haven't been able to find that feeling of I truly belong here. Even though it's true that I made this place home. But I will not say that I 100% belong here. And I can't even say that I will stay here forever"* (7/192-194)

Belinda appears to illustrate a sense of disappointment and loss over not being able to find a sense of belonging by alluding to not being able to identify an anchor within a feeling of belonging. She gives the impression that she has tried to do so by making the UK her home, however this does not appear to be enough to create a sense of full belonging for her. There is something about wanting a complete immersion of fitting in – through her reference of 100% - which doesn't appear to be present. There also appears to be a suggestion of a potential continued search by making a reference that she doesn't know whether she will stay in the UK forever. This continued search for a home may suggest that despite wanting to, there may never come a time where Belinda feels like she belongs to any one particularly group fully, suggesting continued feelings of rootlessness and restlessness. Rootlessness comes about through not getting to the 100% feeling of belonging anywhere; whilst restlessness comes about from wanting to keep searching and trying, leaving a sense of unfulfillment and disappointment.

***Subtheme 1.3: A home within myself?***

The participants differentiated between the internal feeling coming from a lack of a sense of belonging and an external physical home. Most of them made references to the meaning of a home to them and how they can conceptualise it in their lives today.

For instance, Belinda says:

*“I’m still trying to find a middle ground between travelling and experiencing different lives, but also having that home. And I think maybe it’s just a case of I need to find a home within myself. (Belinda, 13/323-325)*

She appears to make a very significant observation that one of the consequences of traveling and experiencing a new culture, includes the creation of a different life, which does not go hand in hand with having a home. The significance of this comes from noticing that in gaining the experience of travel and creation of a new life, one tends to lose the sense of an anchor within a traditional physical home. It’s almost as though she must make a choice between this experience of traveling and having a home, which appears to create a conflict for her. She alludes to the idea that maybe an answer to that tightrope is to take away the physical tying to a traditional definition of a home and instead internalise it within an abstract concept. Since the two ideas appear to create a conflicting dualism, Belinda seems to be in the process of bridging the gap between the two and establishing how she may be able to gain a sense of stability and stillness and how she can simultaneously access the dynamics of continuous movement.

### **Superordinate theme 2: Meaningful connections**

This theme highlights the significant role the participants’ nuclear family structures have had on their experience of moving to the UK at a young age and how the experience itself threw these relationships into focus. It also focuses on the trajectory of losing and gaining connections with peers and how the participants experienced this in their journeys and the impact this has had on them.

***Subtheme 2.1: The role of family***

Most participants reflected on the importance of familial connections and how these were impacted and the role these played in the experience of moving to the UK. Eliza reflected on the support and connections of her nuclear family system and how these were impacted by their experience of living in another country:

*“But it was mainly like, my parents, my brother and I are so tight, because my parents have purposefully created that as a safe space and as a safety net, for us wherever we went”*  
(Eliza, 17/525-527)

Eliza seems to create an impression of a strong familial unit in which she and her brother are purposefully embedded within the safety of said unit, suggesting a strong sense of support and care coming from within. She alludes to her parents' intentionally creating a safe space for the children of the family, and in other parts of her transcript speaks of them being there for one another throughout the transitional periods of physical moves and the challenges that came up within this process. Later in the interview Eliza also draws a contrast in how she felt this support diminish once the children had grown up and the parents focus shifted away from them creating a sense of loss and resentment for her. Her experience would suggest that her parents were mindful of the difficulties that may arise with the transition to a different country at the age at which she and her brother had found themselves in and had focused on providing an airbag for them as they tumbled through the challenges. This may suggest that she was provided with an opportunity to grow skills of self awareness that enabled her to identify what led to her to stand out from her peers. In turn it's likely that such an environment may have facilitated her creating helpful coping strategies and resilience in the face of adversity and challenges. Belinda's reflection on moving focuses on the challenges and the support she experienced:

***Subtheme 2.2: The seesaw of losing and finding friendships***

All participants reflected on their experience of making and losing friends and how this changed shape before and after the move. For instance, Aryana was able to clearly express some of the challenges she experienced in the aftermath of her move. She said:

Belka spoke of her experience of forming connections in a loss and gain fashion:

*“And such kind of losses probably are less experienced by people who never moved and stayed and let's say in the city where they grew up, which is also beautiful as I think retaining childhood connections and taking them through life, this is something I didn't get the chance to. Ummmm, well, perhaps a few, but I understand that they're less serious than anyone I met here (Belka, 13/282-288)”*

In comparing her experience to that of her peers who didn't relocate, Belka notices that for her peers who may have remained in their home cultures, they may have experienced the longevity and continuity of friendships and connections that start from childhood and last into later life. She seems to clearly identify that having that experience is something that is to be treasured, which she illustrated through describing them as “beautiful”. She also seems to clearly identify that she did not experience that, alluding to the loss of a “chance” of retaining these connections. In other parts of her transcript, she makes a reference to it being a painful experience to realise that she no longer belongs to her childhood circle of friends. Belka then concludes by diverting away from the sense of loss of the childhood connections to saying that the new connections she made after leaving her home country are deeper rooted than the connections she initially had and now lost. This appears to suggest that she experienced a loss which was then replaced by a deeper gain, perhaps indicating that she is describing a further step in her journey, given that her reflection on this journey appears to come with a sense of contentment and peace. As though the realisation that the loss of childhood connections also meant that she gained something deeper that couldn't be experienced without the experience of relocating.

### **Superordinate theme 3: The turmoil of adolescence and choice**

This superordinate theme examined the participants' reflections on how moving in the age range of 10-17 played a significant role in their lives – due to the interaction of the move with the developmental stage of adolescence. It explored how participants noticed that significant emotions appear to be originating around this time. It also explores the concept of power and choice and how the lack of the latter can impact the experience of the young person.

#### ***Subtheme 3.1: Intricacies of choice***

All participants identified that the choice of the move to the UK was not within their individual control – it was typically chosen for them as part of their wider families and situations. The lack of power within this choice affected individuals differently and left a variety of effects and reflections. For instance, Eliza makes the following observation:

*“I've spoken about this a lot with people during COVID, because I had these conversations around Third Culture kids adapting to, to the situation, you know, in different ways. Because, yeah, my world has always been challenged, or, like what I took for granted has been taken away from me so many times, whereas people who've never had to move, like, they've never experienced, like, something so powerful happening to them against their own will (Eliza, 7-8/219-225)”*

On reflecting on how the experience of moving affected Eliza in comparison to her peers who didn't have such experiences, she elaborates on how moving is something that is very powerful, presumably due to the loss of everything that she had been taking for granted up to this point, and specifies that that was something that was done against her will, creating an impression that she, like Roxanne, was forced into this choice. She makes a comparison to the Covid-19 pandemic and likens the adaptability she appears to have learnt through her experiences of moving to the sheer power of the pandemic and how this too, like the moves



that had happened without her choice, may have led her to lose things that she may have taken for granted before. Such a comparison creates the impression that the powerlessness that Eliza experienced within the moves were, to her, of a truly global scale.

***Subtheme 3.2: An important age***

All participants reflected on how experiencing adolescence, when they moved to the UK interacted with how they felt about the move and its consequences.

Belinda also makes a connection between the age at which the move is experienced and its ultimate impact in saying the following:

*“Yeah, I think it's obviously moving here. It was not just the only factor, but also the fact that you're going through adolescence. So it's also a big transition in your body and in your brain. And all of it is very, very intense when it's put together.” (Belinda, 4/102-105)*

Belinda talked about experiencing feelings of depression and on reflecting when this may have begun for her, she discusses the impact of the move. She appears to identify the move as a significant contributor towards how she found herself experiencing depression later, and she appears to make a very distinct connection between experiencing the move whilst in adolescence which may have created a very powerful combination due to the significant changes that occur in the brain and the body which are then combined with the social challenges stemming from moving countries in that age.

***Subtheme 3.3: The undercurrent of emotions***

Four of the participants identified in their interviews significant underlying emotions that they were able to link to the experience of moving at the age that they did. They appeared to reflect on the fact that the emotions they experienced may have not been obvious from the start, but in retrospect may have become clearer and easier to label.

For instance, Roxanne says:

*"I think when I moved is kind of when I can pinpoint starting to struggle with like anxiety and depression, so I feel like that definitely had a big part in it." (Roxanne, 4/80-82)*

Roxanne appears to make a very clear connection between her experience of moving to the UK with developing feelings of anxiety and depression. She seems to paint a definitive stance that suggests an almost causal relationship between moving with the subsequent emotions she finds herself struggling with. In the brevity of this quote Roxanne seems to create an impression of enormity of the burden she appears to be carrying because of her experience of moving and of the pain that it may have created for her, perhaps due to the significant challenges she found herself facing due to the changes in the external stressors she experienced.

### **Discussion**

#### **Impact on personal identity formation**

Participants referred to stepping in between cultures, either by referring to having to adapt or learn a new language, then switch to another language within the home setting; or by recognising that they found themselves to have different life stories compared to their non-TCK counterparts. It is therefore plausible that through these constant transitions, the participants are likely to have found difficulty in establishing a solid personal and cultural identity. This is like the findings reported by Moro (2005) and Weise (2010) who discuss how migrant children face the challenge of having to create splittings on a topographical, temporal, spatial and ontological levels. These splittings are needed to enable the young person to move between separate cultural worlds they are inhabiting but they can, at times, create confusion, uncertainty and anxiety for the young person, as they may become mechanisms for psychological functioning in the form of ego splitting.

In line with Tajfel's (1981, 1982) social identity theory it may be considered that not knowing which cultural group one belongs to can lead to an obstacle in the development of the cultural identity.

From a social mentality perspective (Gilbert, 2015; Siegel, 2012; Slavich & Cole, 2013). It can be considered that in the situation whereby our needs to belong to a group are threatened, this is likely to take precedence above other psychological and emotional developments, thus slowing down that process and requiring the individual to respond to the immediate threat of survival. It is possible that participants such as Roxanne and Belinda, who referred in their narratives of experiencing stress and difficulty stepping in between cultures between home and school may have been in the throes of responding to an immediate environmental threat of not knowing what group they belong to, or what their social reference point may be. This is likely to have taken precedence to discovering who they are at this point leading to potential confusion and emotional upset.

### **Sense of belonging**

Five the six participants made explicit references to a sense of not belonging that they had experienced throughout their experience of moving and following this.

From a social mentality perspective, we can see that humans require to share and operate in cooperative groups and relationships, coordinate their behaviours and work together for common goals – giving rise to a sense of belonging (Gilbert 2015; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Antonisch (2010) separates two parameters of belonging, one that refers to place-belongingness - referring to a “personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place” and politics of belonging which is a “discursive resource that constructs, claims, justifies or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion” (p.645).

The narratives within this study appear to accentuate that participants tried and struggled to make meaningful connections to physical places and to people to establish an

inner felt sense of belonging. Belka, Lily and Aryana explicitly pointed out the difficulty they experienced with finding a sense of belonging with the geographical location of the UK. This seems to be suggestive of how Antonisch (2010) discusses the sense of belonging indicating that at least an initial attempt is made by these participants to establish a sense of belonging with the geographical place and the discursive social construction of a socio-spatial inclusion by the host community (UK). This is also like the findings of de Waal & Born (2021), who found that their TCK's defined their belonging more in terms of personal relationships than in terms of geographical locations.

The difficulty with finding a sense of belonging led to 4 out of 6 participants explicitly mentioning the need to seek out continuous transitions, to find and solidify a sense of belonging, but often finding this difficult. For instance, Belinda spoke to seeking out moving around but simultaneously experiencing each transition as “traumatic” (4/95). This appears to validate the extensive discussion by Pollock et al (2017) on the feelings of restlessness and rootlessness which appears to be pervasive within the population of TCK's.

#### **Connections with Family**

Five out of six participants spoke of how their move to the UK impacted their relationships and with their families and their friendships. One of the focuses was on the immediate family with whom the participants had made the transitions; and they reflected on how the familial support they felt during this time from their families was very important. de Waal and Born (2021) also found within the accounts of TCK's who took part in their study that they tended to relate the idea of belonging to a strengthened relationship with their immediate family members, potentially due to the constancy that their family presented being there as they transitioned through geographical locations. Similarly, Bikos et al. (2009) found that the strength of family relationships became one

of the most important factors of support for their participants when these went through repatriation experiences.

### **Impact on Friendships**

TCK's in this study reflects that their friendships were formed within an international community, suggesting that they were created with individuals with similar life stories, in line with existing research (e.g. Choi & Luke, 2011; Firmin et al., 2006; Kwon, 2019; Lijadi & van Schalkwyk, 2014; Smith & Kearney, 2016).

From a biological perspective, we are physiologically set up to create social connections to thrive (Crosier et al, 2012; Hostiner et al, 2014) and thus it makes sense that when these connections are not formed, individuals are likely to express unhappiness because of that.

Belinda and Roxanne also spoke specifically of experiencing feelings of shyness in conjunction with narratives on forming friendships, creating a sense that this inherent quality of their personality may have been forced out because of the difficult environment they found themselves in, in line with the diathesis-stress model (Monroe & Simons, 1991; Zuckerman, 1999).

### **Losses**

A hidden aspect that became apparent within the narratives of the participants is that they experienced losses that felt highly significant to them, but which were not likely to have been experienced by their non-TCK counterparts.

Hidden losses are somewhat referred to in existing literature (Gilbert 2008; Smith & Kearney, 2016) and range in very individual experiences from losing material possessions that cannot be taken on the move, to losing pets and human connections. Unprocessed grief, and lack of validation and identification of such a process is something that can lead to understandable emotional pain and confusion. Participants

made references to spending time reading about the topic of TCK's which allowed them to consider and reflect their own processes and may have been an example of validation and a process of grief coming into effect.

### **Role of choice**

Five of the six participants made explicit references to not choosing the move the UK, but rather being forced into it by virtue of familial situations.

These narratives support the idea that as children or young people, TCK's are involuntary migrants, however they are not in the same category as child refugees or asylum seekers – who are the traditional target groups looked at in research on involuntary migration. The involuntary aspect of their transition differentiates them from other migrants as well as from their parents undergoing the same transition, since the parent(s) choose the move. This therefore places them into a category of their own, where, once again, they don't fully fit into any standard model. However, the importance of choice is something that requires to be considered as the power imbalance that is created through the absence of this volition is something that is likely to contribute to how these individuals feel which is demonstrated within the narratives of these participants. Literature on forced migration, which focuses on migrating for safety and addresses the plights of refugee and asylum seekers, suggests that the lack of choice within situation where the migration becomes involuntary can be equated to increasing the acculturative stress that may be experienced during this time referring to many stressors resulting from cultural, social and psychological changes (Berry et al, 1987; Weiss, 2010). Specific literature on TCK's doesn't appear to address the role of choice within the experiences and trajectories of TCK's yet this has come out as a salient factor within the experiences of the participants who took part in this study. The nature of a qualitative methodology such as IPA doesn't translate into generalising the emergence of this theme to a

wider population, however it does create a starting point at looking at the aspect of choice within the trajectories of TCK's.

TCKs' unique trajectory places them in a category whereby they experience being 'different' to both their peers and their families – as their position within the family didn't allow them to choose their trajectory. This therefore echoes the findings of existing research on the experiences of TCK's whereby they voice feeling different and articulate the effects of this which includes struggles with forming their identity, difficulty in establishing lasting friendships or establishing a sense of belonging (e.g. Bikos et al, 2009; Choi & Luke, 2011; Cranston, 2017; Moore & Barker, 2012; Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

#### **Adolescence**

Five out of six participants reflected specifically on the significance of experiencing adolescence at a time when they found themselves transitioning to the UK. The narratives indicate the interaction of the physiological and emotional changes occurring in the age of adolescence impacted how the transition was processed and received within the emotional and logical dimensions of the individual participants.

Adolescence is, in its nature, a significant developmental stage which involves physical and psychological changes (Hettich et al, 2020). From the perspective of Erikson's developmental model, it makes sense that a transition to a new country and culture would have an impact on the internal development of the individual, since in adolescence peer relationships begin to have more significance during this stage while the salient ties to families still retain their importance (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018). In the case of TCK's, they find themselves within a new environment with new peer relationships as well as altered familial ties due to parents also going through a transition and likely separation from more distant family members.

Migration literature shows that the acculturation stage (Berry et al, 1987; Weise, 2010) is a complex process, it can be assumed that such a process for adolescents and children can be even more complicated as it is compounded by the internal psychological development occurring at the same time which could arguably make them more vulnerable to the external environmental changes taking place (Weise, 2010). It is therefore plausible to suggest that cultural and geographical transitions during this time can significantly affect personal psychological development of that individual. Immigration literature on children also helpfully points out how migrant children face the challenge of building a bridge between their parent's home culture and the host culture and find a way of processing this and communicating this with their family members (Weise, 2010). One of the founding characteristics of TCK's is the concept of such a 'bridge' – the interstitial third culture that is created within the experience of that individual (Pollock et al, 2017).

#### **Emotional and psychological response**

The interaction of the age of adolescence at the time of the move, with the lack of choice when deciding to move as well as the other factors within an act of transition create a melting pot of emotional and psychological responses that all participants spoke about. Most participants spoke of the significant emotional effects they experienced which they linked to the transitions they went through. TCK literature suggests that such emotional responses can range significantly in their expression, giving examples ranging from low self-esteem, (Hoersting & Jenkins, 2011) to depression (Davis et al 2010; Hervey, 2009; Smith & Kerney, 2016) to feelings of suicidality (Walters & Auton-Cuff, 2009).

Such presentations make sense from a theoretical perspective as wider research on varying aspects of mental health has shown that in instances when individuals seek but are unable to form lasting positive relationships with others, they can become vulnerable to high levels of distress and mental health problems (Cacioppo & Patrick (2008); Hostinar et al



2014; Wesselmann et al, 2013; Gilbert 2015). Further, research on migrant children has shown that because of migration children can experience increased levels of psychological distress (Lavik, Christie, Solberg, & Varvin, 1996; Mollica et al., 1993; Resnick, Kilpatrick, Dansky, Saunders, & Best, 1993; Vrana & Lauterbach, 1994). It is therefore understandable that experiences shared by these participants demonstrate the emotional pain they experienced and, while from the idiographic standpoint of IPA this cannot be generalised, it nonetheless creates a platform from which we can consider further research on the mental and emotional impact of these moves on young people.

#### **Implications for practice**

This study highlighted the intensity of the experiences undergone by these participants and found support for other studies on the subject area of TCK's. It also pointed out how there is little academic literature on the aspects of choice and losses that TCK's may experience.

At present, there is no structured approach to consider what is the importance of the migration pattern combined with the life stage of the individual when a client enters a therapy room with a mental health professional. Further, little to no guidance is provided to parents of children who are contemplating moving countries; and limited support is provided within international schools and universities who host many TCK's. It is therefore important to bring awareness to the wider community of mental health, business and educational professionals how a life trajectory of someone who identifies as a TCK may impact them from an emotional and psychological perspective. It should also be considered what preparative steps can be taken to provide individuals who undergo this experience with support to integrate and process in a beneficial manner.

Further research is necessary to consider more clear-cut aspects that play a role within the trajectory of a TCK or anyone who loosely falls into this or similar category. Such as further research on the distinctive aspects of a TCK experience – for instance:

- what is the impact of choice within the life story of someone who has a life trajectory that falls within the definition of a TCK? Would there be any links to their emotional and psychological health?

- What aspects of grief and loss are evident within the experience of TCK's?

Additionally, it is necessary to consider the robustness of the definition and its suitability for the purpose of academic research. The definition of who is a TCK was updated by Pollock et al (2017). However, the implications of this update have not been considered as for those individuals who may have self-identified as TCK's in line with the older definition, but do not fall within the new definition, this identity has been taken away in an abstract fashion – without their choice. The arbitrary change to a definition does little, at this stage, to standardise the sampling procedures from an academic perspective and it needs to be considered how this may be improved to create consistency within this research.

#### **Limitations of the study**

The findings of this study are limited by several factors. Firstly, all participants recruited were female, no male experience was captured. While the qualitative lens of IPA is not one suited to generalisation, and therefore is it not intended nor possible to extend the findings of this group to all individuals falling within the definition of TCK's, it would nonetheless have been a valuable addition to the study to capture an experience from someone who identifies with a non-female gender.

Secondly, self-selecting nature of participants means that they volunteered to speak about their experiences, they had no obligation to do so. This may suggest that the experiences captured within this study may have attracted participants who felt the need to

think and speak about their identity, and who may have already registered the concept of TCK's whilst on a personal journey of self-discovery. It may suggest that this may have been a group of people who did indeed experience struggles that they were able to connect to their experiences of moving. The study therefore may not be reflective of experiences of TCK's who didn't struggle with their migration patterns and who mainly experienced advantages coming out of their experience. This may therefore skew the representation of how the experience of moving during developmental age may affect an individual.

It should also be considered that the age at which the participants gave their interviews varied (ranging from age 20 when their move happened at age 13; to age 36 when their move happened at age 17). It may therefore be considered that the individual process for making sense of their experiences and integrating them within their identity was likely to have been at a different stage. Accumulation of research on this topic is likely to help identify and unravel what individual factors may contribute to understanding this experience more.

Finally, the interview process took place during the Covid-19 pandemic whilst in total or partial lockdown. The impact of this unusual social state was not directly addressed in the interview schedule; however, it is possible that it may have played a role in how participants reflected on and shared their experiences. One of the participants made a specific reference and a comparison between the transitory nature in the life of a TCK with going through the pandemic, it would thus be interesting to consider in future research the impact and interactions of the pandemic on the lives of TCK's for whom global travel is a very integral part of their lives and identity.

### **Conclusion**

This study serves as a way of adding to the literature on TCK's, from the standpoint of Counselling Psychology as a profession and the UK as a country. The experiences interpreted in this study echo the findings of published literature on TCK's – difficulties with

establishing who the individual is, where they belong and how their relationships with others are impacted because of the move. However, experiencing specific losses (of important people, and personal characteristics such as confidence); as well as identifying that the lack of choice in the move process differentiated these TCK's from their non-TCK counterparts, as well as their parents, are aspects that have not been looked at in much detail in published research on this topic and would benefit from further research to better understand the intricacies of this experience.