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The Social Contexts of Young People

Engaging Youth and Young Adults

Edited by Patricia Snell Herzog

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Volume 11

Aims and Scope of the Series

Education and Human Development is an interdisciplinary research area that aims to shed light on topics related to both learning and development. This Series is intended for researchers, practitioners, and students who are interested in understanding more about these fields and their applications.

Meet the Series Editor

Katherine Stavropoulos received her BA in Psychology from Trinity College, in Connecticut, USA and her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of California, San Diego. She completed her postdoctoral work at the Yale Child Study Center with Dr. James McPartland. Dr. Stavropoulos' doctoral dissertation explored neural correlates of reward anticipation to social versus nonsocial stimuli in children with and without autism spectrum disorders (ASD). She has been a faculty member at the University of California, Riverside in the School of Education since 2016. Her research focuses on translational studies to explore the reward system in ASD, as well as how anxiety contributes to social challenges in ASD. She also investigates how behavioral interventions affect neural activity, behavior, and school performance in children with ASD. She is also involved in the diagnosis of children with ASD and is a licensed clinical psychologist in California. She is the Assistant Director of the SEARCH Center at UCR and is a faculty member in the Graduate Program in Neuroscience.

Meet the Volume Editor

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Contents

Preface

This edited volume embodies a commitment to multidisciplinary research in studying young people as they transition into adulthood. Too often scholars take a narrow view in utilizing the tools of only one discipline to inform their study design. Yet, young people are multifaceted, and the social contexts they inhabit warrant approaches from multiple disciplines to piece together a more holistic picture. Multidisciplinary research is about each discipline making a separate contribution to distinct aspects of an issue [1]. Closer connections are needed among disciplines to foster integrated research [2]. A major barrier to greater integration is *methodological imperialism*, a belief that some methods are more deserving or proper than others [3], often manifested through literature reviewing a singular method, such as only data from randomized control trial experiments [4, 5]. Integrating knowledge across disciplines and methodological approaches, this volume instead intersects information about young people across diverse social contexts, countries, ages, ethnicities, and methodologies.

At the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, we define philanthropy as an active effort to promote human welfare and prioritize seven values in fostering a greater understanding of philanthropy [6]. *Curiosity*: Lifelong and deep inquisitiveness about efforts to meaningfully improve societies. *Collaboration*: Welcome, open, and encouraging intellectual pluralism. *Belonging*: Cultivating a deep recognition and affirmation of diverse and representative community members and denouncing racism and oppression of all forms. *Integrity*: Honest, fair, respectful of intrinsic worth, treating others with professional dignity, and conducting accurate research. *Globalism*: Connecting local, national, and international practices and communities. *Stewardship*: Mindful of economic, social, environmental, and personal resource capacities. *Accountability*: Data-informed pursuit of excellence, effectiveness, and equity. In this context, we here in this edited volume situate the study of young people with attention to human welfare and aim for the twenty-three authors included in this volume to foster a spirit of curiosity, collaboration, belonging, integrity, globalism, stewardship, and accountability among a global scholarship attending to young people.

This begins by attending to theory and methods. Chapter 1 is authored by myself, a student, along with Una O. Osili, Chelsea Jacqueline Clark, and Xiaonan Kou. Together we represent disciplinary backgrounds in economics, political psychology, sociology, and social work. In the chapter, we harness the background knowledge of those multiple disciplines to investigate existing studies of generosity. To do so, we draw upon bibliometric techniques and apply these tools toward an integrative review of social science research. We intentionally steer away from methodological imperialism by systematically scoping a set of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research sources that publish data collected from a wide array of methodologies.

Garnering research on social networks and charitable giving, we found that a shared theme among these studies is that charitable giving is contingent upon ties linking individuals within a multidimensional space of interpersonal relationships. Networks are key for recruitment, retention, and participation in voluntary organizations. We highlight the implications of these investigations for engaging, retaining, and linking young people through charitable giving activities.

In Chapter 2, education scholar Huda Kamel Ahmed shares an integrative literature review and conceptual model for understanding ethnic heritage as it relates to the personhood and lived experiences of British Yemeni young people. This chapter draws insights by learning from existing research published in sources such as the *Journal of Applied Youth Studies, Journal of Adolescence, Theory & Psychology, Culture and Psychology, Race & Class, Psychology and the Conduct of Everyday Life, Concrete Human Psychology, Youth & Society*, and the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. This approach grounds the study of young people within a deeper understanding of the cultural, historical, and social embeddedness of their lived experiences by viewing the person within their social contexts.

The second section of the volume attends to education and work, and this begins with Chapter 3 by business and development scholars Robert Lawrence Afutu-Kotey and Maxwell Yeboah-Mensah. Situated in Ghana, the study investigates young people engaged in the informal economy. Employing a qualitative longitudinal life course biography approach, this analysis finds that young people have difficulties securing employment in the formal economy and informal enterprises are an important means by which many young people transition into adulthood with stable income flows. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic caused major disruptions to financial flows for young people, and the resulting fluctuations devastated the launching of social enterprises. The uncertainty of the informal economy raises questions regarding the long-term sustainability of these economic resources for young people.

Chapter 4 investigates educational counselors for high school and university students in Denmark. Authors Jeanett Bjønness and Margit Anne Petersen bring their backgrounds in medical science and drug research to bear on understanding the ways people cope with stress in educational contexts. Drawing upon in-depth interviews, this qualitative analysis finds that pressure to perform on social media can detract from receiving social support, resulting in loneliness among young people. In coping with the demands of a performance society, some young people turn to substances and pharmaceuticals with varying degrees of functional and illicit drug use. Performance-enhancing substances are utilized to exist within a culture that expects "being the best version of oneself."

Situated in Iceland, Anna Karlsdóttir in Chapter 5 studies young people from 18 to 30 years old in the Nordic regions of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Employing a mixed-methods design, this chapter presents results from quantitative spatial data along with qualitative interviews and field visits. The results are a mapped distribution of spatial disparities in "Not in Education, Employment, or Training" (NEET) young people. These broad-scale trends are unpacked with interviews with social workers or supervisors who are attempting to re-engage young people in work

and school. The findings are that active strategies to empower, care, and creatively re-engage young people can reduce marginalization and lessen socio-economic disadvantages.

In Chapter 6, Turkish architect Abdurrahman Mohamed presents an ethnographic case study of aesthetics in a university context in Bahrain. Additionally collecting data from college students through a quasi-experimental survey design, the chapter describes what artistic and architectural features young people appreciated in their cafeteria. Analyzing by major, the chapter identifies the differential effect of context for distinct sets of young people. Some young people appreciate artistic elements, while others focus more on the functionality of shared spaces. The chapter contributes implications for how the built environment structures the context of social relations.

The third section of the book includes chapters focused on community engagement and well-being. In Chapter 7, Heather L. Lawford, Heather L. Ramey, Yana Berardini, Christa Romaldi, and Nishad Khanna present findings from a Canadian study of generativity among young people aged 12 to 28 years old. Generativity is an expression of care for the welfare and legacy of future generations. Utilizing surveys with hundreds of young people sampled from communities, the analysis reveals the importance of adult allies in fostering youth engagement and developing capacity for generativity.

In Chapter 8, Anișoara Pavelea and Lorina Culic infuse their backgrounds in social psychology, political, administrative, and communication sciences to study youth between 18 and 24 years old. They investigate the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and wellbeing in Romanian emerging adults. Presence of meaning and satisfaction with life partially mediate this relationship, indicating that participating in religious and spiritual activities helps young people define their identity, with significance, which in turn fosters greater mental health. The authors theorize that religion can provide well-being benefits through its insistence on forgiveness and making peace with the past and that through embracing flaws young people can find a way to integrate a coherent life story.

Founded on a psychological approach, Ingunn Hagen in Chapter 9 studies how stress in adolescence and young adulthood can be coped with by practicing yoga. Among young people aged 12 to 29 years old in Norway, yoga is a self-developmental activity that provides a sanctuary from societal demands. In turn, this coping strategy appears to have mental health and wellbeing benefits. Fostering a pleasant mental state helped young people know who they are and authentically engage in an autonomous sense of self amid competing demands that could otherwise diminish their inner strength.

In Chapter 10, applied scientists and psychologists Marleen Haandrikman, Annemiek Fokkens, Miriam Oostinga, and Nicolette van Veldhoven investigate athletes in the Netherlands. Developing a biopsychosocial profile of sports culture, the chapter shows how potential risk factors from experiencing sexual violence and performance expectations can be lessened through fostering resilience. As a protective asset, empowerment and self-efficacy can be powerful social norms for supporting young athletes and reducing vulnerabilities. Engaging a youth sports compass is found to be an effective intervention in strengthening social support within the sports community.

In summary, this volume presents multidisciplinary studies of young people as they transition from youth to adulthood. The volume showcases diverse methods, social contexts, and countries.

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Section 1

Theory and Methods

Chapter 1

Bibliometric Applications in Social Science Research: The Social Network Context of Generosity

Patricia Snell Herzog, Jin Ai, Una O. Osili, Chelsea Jacqueline Clark and Xiaonan Kou

Abstract

Whether or not a person chooses to act philanthropically can seem like a personal decision. Yet, giving is inherently a social act, minimally involving a giver and a receiver. The relational aspects of giving decisions can be studied by investigating social networks. What is known about the role of social networks in charitable giving? To answer this question, this study utilizes bibliometric techniques to review existing literature in a systematic manner. Applying these tools to social science research facilitates integration of knowledge across multiple disciplines and diverse methodological approaches. Across the reviewed research, there are five central themes. First, networks can shape values of efforts to support the public good. Second, networks can informally punish people for acting too self-interestedly. Third, networks can join together or exclude, contributing to social inequality and its reproduction over time. Fourth, networks can maintain group dynamics. Fifth, networks can pattern behaviors into habits, form interdependence, situate what is considered normal, and provide stability in times of crisis. Implications of existing research are drawn toward understanding young adulthood within its networked social contexts of generosity.

Keywords: social networks, charitable giving, recruitment, bibliometrics, applied research

1. Introduction

This study engages the tools of bibliometrics to implement a systematic search process and integrative analysis. These techniques are applied toward understanding a specific set of social science research topics. The chapter is framed within an understanding that scientific processes should also be systematic in their literature review searching. The same tools that inform replicability in the data collection process should also guide the process of learning from existing studies. While many existing literature reviews synthesize a set of studies that is constructed by individual authors in ways that can be opaque and challenging to replicate, this study presents a set of replicable practices for how to scope relevant literature and ensure that the entire body of existing studies on a topic is sourced. The result is an integrative review

of existing research that evidences how bibliometric techniques can be utilized in practice. The synthesized findings are framed within their implications for practitioners who work in the field of philanthropy, as fundraisers, strategic planners, and social change agents. The practical tips garnered for nongovernmental, nonprofit, and civil society organizations are generated within sound research that is systematically scoped and theoretically integrated. Implications are drawn for understanding the charitable giving of young people with networked contexts. As a result, this chapter showcases how social science research can utilize bibliometrics to inform applied practices.

2. Topic background

This section provides background by explaining the topics of interest to a broad set of readers who may not be experts in these areas. This section also describes how the topics were framed toward deriving a set of systematic search processes in applied bibliometrics, which are described in the subsequent, third section on methodology.

Whether or not someone chooses to act generously can seem like a personal decision. Yet, giving is inherently a social act. Existing scholarship finds that individual decisions to act generously are embedded within social contexts. This study focuses on those social contexts. More specifically, identities, networks, and norms clearly impact the ways in which individuals choose to engage in charitable giving. These social contexts provide strong rationales for prosocial behaviors. How and why people engage in generous activities is contingent on their social identity characteristics, networks of relationships, and normative group guidelines.

The overarching research question that this study seeks answers to is: What is known about the role of social contexts in charitable giving? Answering this question requires an interdisciplinary synthesis that integrates knowledge across diverse disciplines, theoretical approaches, and empirical results. To begin, this background section delineates the following stepwise process: defining the search parameters which are then in turn applied in a systematic search. The first step is to address answers to this question: How is generosity defined and measured? (Section 2.1). Second, the next step is to address answers to the question: How are social contexts defined and measured? (Section 2.2). Informed by this background, the bibliometric analysis engages in a third step of bibliometric analysis (Section 3), which in turn advances answers to the question: How do social contexts impact generous activities? (Section 4). This is followed by a discussion and implications for understanding young adulthood within its social contexts of generosity (Section 5).

2.1 Generous actions

First, bibliometric techniques are engaged to systematically scope the topic of generosity [1]. Specifically, "Generosity is giving good things to others freely and abundantly. Generous behaviors are intended to enhance the wellbeing of others. Generosity can be actualized through various forms of giving: 'Giving comes in different forms. It's not always in money'" [1–4]. This understanding of generosity as the actions of everyday people is not entirely overlapping with philanthropy, which is understood as more formal, sectoral, and organizationally embodied activities. With this definitional context, the following analysis brackets as outside the purview of its scope the sector of organizations and the professionals who are required by

employment to maintain philanthropic activities. Those domains are important and worthy of study. Instead, this analysis focuses on everyday generosity, the interpersonal dynamics of giving, and how people engage with social institutions to affect change intended to benefit others beyond the self. This theoretical background informs how the topic of generosity is scoped in the subsequent bibliometric analysis.

2.2 Social contexts

Second, bibliometric techniques are engaged to systematically scope for the social contexts in which generosity occurs. People do not always act selfishly or in their best interest; nor are behaviors in every instance purposeful [5]. Combined, these postulates highlight that actions cannot be explained by personal preferences alone and underscore the importance of social interactions in shaping behavior [6]. While those are important avenues of study, this analysis focuses instead on the role of social relationships. Specifically, attention to three social contexts: identities, networks, and norms. Identities are briefly defined as social demographic characteristics that can shape constructions of the self. Networks are briefly defined as relationships embedded within groups and organizations. Norms are briefly defined as group dynamics that affect individual actions through perceptions of what groups deem to be valuable, important, desirable, unworthy, or futile. The following sections review each of these three social contexts in further depth. This theoretical background informs how the social contexts of generosity are scoped in the subsequent bibliometric analysis.

2.2.1 Identities

Social identities include gender, marital status, race, ethnicity, age, religiosity,[1] and socioeconomic status. This study focuses particularly on three social statuses most associated with marginalization: (1) gender, (2) race and ethnicity, and (3) socioeconomic status. First, gender differences are rooted in historical discrimination embedded within modern social institutions [8]. Yet, while the de-gendering of access has generally resulted in more women within education and labor force participation, women remain highly concentrated in unpaid and underpaid work. In summary, personal identities and expressions of self are often gendered.

Second, racial and ethnic differences are rooted in historical discriminations that are also ongoing in contemporary social systems. For example, generalized distrust (misanthropy) is higher for racial and ethnic minorities: such that in the U.S. whites are on average more than twice as likely to trust others [9]. The implication is that generalized social trust measures are most likely to tap into trustworthiness of whites, who compose the statistical majority in the U.S. Particular and strategic trust focus on expectations within more circumcised groups and is based on more interpersonal experiences. In summary, personal identity and expressions of trust are often raced.

Third, socioeconomic status or social class differences also structure identity relationships. The most common measures of socioeconomic status (SES) are income and educational attainment. Concern for the general welfare of others is higher for people with greater levels of educational attainment, yet benevolence and universalism are higher among those who have lower income levels [10]. Additionally, social class identities often matter most in their intersection with other identities, referred to as intersectionality [11].

[1] For an overview of intersections of religiosity and generosity, see [7].

2.2.2 Networks

Social inquiry has long attended to relationships as central to explaining action and change [12]. The majority of this scholarship focused on analyzing how different network structures explain outcomes. There are two sets of approaches within overarching theories about social networks: formalism and relationalism. Formalism studies the structural configurations and patterns of network ties, such as bridging nodes (people who connect one network to another) and structural holes (gaps where no ties exist). Relationalism views those approaches as static and fixed, and instead focuses on dynamic features of relationships and what relational qualities fuel or break interconnections. Both approaches share a view of networks as an important social conduit (channeling energy, information, and motivation between people) or blockage (responsible for gaps in information flow, hoarding of resources among a small group of people, and in other ways contributing to and perpetuating inequalities).

Scholars have also studied networks for their power in explaining cultural and organizational dynamics as mechanisms for shared values, meanings, repertoires [13]. These approaches include focusing on the roles of tastes, preferences, and storytelling in creating and sustaining relational ties. A cultural approach to networks focuses on the meaning-making processes embedded in relational ties and prioritizes the role of individual and organizational agency in forming and dissolving network affiliations. Networks are both an outcome and mechanism of human cognition [14]. Social networks are crucial architectures that influence perception, storage, memory, retrieval, and interpretation of information. In turn, affiliations contribute to cognitive processes that can result in homophily (seeking likeness or sameness in relational ties), stereotyping, and other in-group and out-group behaviors.

In summary, social networks influence and are influenced by dynamics occurring within the human brain, small groups and organizations, and institutional processes of economic and political systems. Networks are often a root explanation for social actions [15]. Relational mechanisms explain how network ties pattern flows of information, trust, and other resource sharing. For example, dynamics of reciprocity include one person deeming the other to be a friend and that second person deeming the first to be a friend in return. Alternatively, unreciprocated friendship leads to the dissolution of ties. Additionally, network closure refers to the finding that mutually connected people (friends of friends knowing each other) builds stability in the persistence of ties over time. Moreover, centrality within a network has important implications for access to resources, and isolation for exclusion. In reference to altruism and other prosocial activities, networks are a central mechanism for explaining group cooperation [16]. Repeated interactions among people strengthen social bonds and facilitate trust in believing relational investments will be reciprocated.

2.2.3 Norms

Social norms are general expectations for the ways that people act within groups [17].[2] These regulations communicate assumptions about what behaviors are acceptable in specific situations and among group members [19, 20]. Norms are "group-level

[2] For attention to role identity and role membership, see [18].

evaluations of behavior" that are "fundamental to social life," can "maintain social order, discouraging antisocial behavior and acting as 'soft guardrails' necessary for democracy," and which "catalyze positive social change, discouraging harmful behaviors such as violence and encouraging constructive behaviors such as those that improve health. Yet, norms can also cause destructive behavior, maintain inequalities, and exacerbate social conflict" [21].

Norms are a group-level dynamic.[3] Norms are not laws that are enforced by nation-states, nor policies enforced by organizations. Norms are instead less formalized 'unwritten rules' of behavior that govern acceptance within groups [21]. Participation in groups forms expectations of what is considered normal [24]. Norm studies include a focus on three primary aspects: rules, reputations, and relations. Rules are most clearly evident when violated, and participants in a group let others know the expectations by rewarding desired behavior or punishing undesirable behavior. Formal sanctions include punishment, such as imprisonment. Informal sanctions can be subtle and include nonverbals, such as eye-rolling. Similarly, formal rewards can include plaques, and informal rewards can be high-fives. Reputations are the collection of expectations accrued in groups over time [24]. A person can have the reputation of repeatedly being kind, or a person can have a reputation of recurrently being irresponsible. Relations are the channels through which norms are formed, communicated, and altered.

Here is a summary of seven norms that are relevant to generosity. **Norm of Giving:** People should give for no other reason than the value of giving [25]. **Norm of Social Responsibility:** People should support reliant others [26]. **Norm of Reciprocity:** People should reciprocate favors, affection, goods, services [27]. **Norm of Indebtedness:** People should be obligated to repay for received benefit [28]. **Norm of Social Comparison:** people should want to be similar in abilities, traits, attitudes, praise, inclusiveness, likability to others within salient reference groups [29]. **Norm of Conformity:** People should yearn for status (prestige, esteem, popularity, acceptance) and conform to standards from higher-status people, groups [30, 31]. **Norm of Distribution:** People should distribute help, not concentrate it [32]. This theoretical background informs how the topic of social norms is scoped in the subsequent bibliometric analysis.

3. Methodology

This is an application of bibliometrics to the social scientific investigation of generosity within three social contexts: identities, networks, and norms. There were two phases to implementing a bibliometric process. The first phase was a discovery process that informed an initial sample that was purposefully, rather than systematically constructed. This phase was informed by expert knowledge on the social science topics. The goal of the initial phase of the project was to explicate what is often otherwise implicit in the literature review process. The initial sample then informed the second phase, which was a systematic sample utilizing bibliometric techniques.

[3] To clarify what norms are, it is helpful to distinguish the boundaries of what norms are not. This analysis does not focus on broader cultural values that are reflective of national-level cultures typically discerned through cross-national comparisons (for a review, see [22]). Likewise, this analysis does not attend to differing degrees of social information (for a review, see [23]).

3.1 Initial sample

This study builds upon an initial purposeful sample to specify a systematic sampling frame. The purposeful sample spanned 70 years and more than 100 existing articles, books, chapters. The range of topics, approaches, theories, and sources provided the basis for the subsequent systematic approach, which utilizes bibliometric techniques to sample publications. Initially, the systematic sample consisted of five disciplinary journals in economics, sociology, and the social sciences that were parsed articles for with relevant topics: *Social Science Research* (SSR); *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS); *American Sociological Review* (ASR); *The Sociological Quarterly* (TSQ); *American Economic Review* (AER). **Figure 1** visualizes the process from initial to systematic sample.

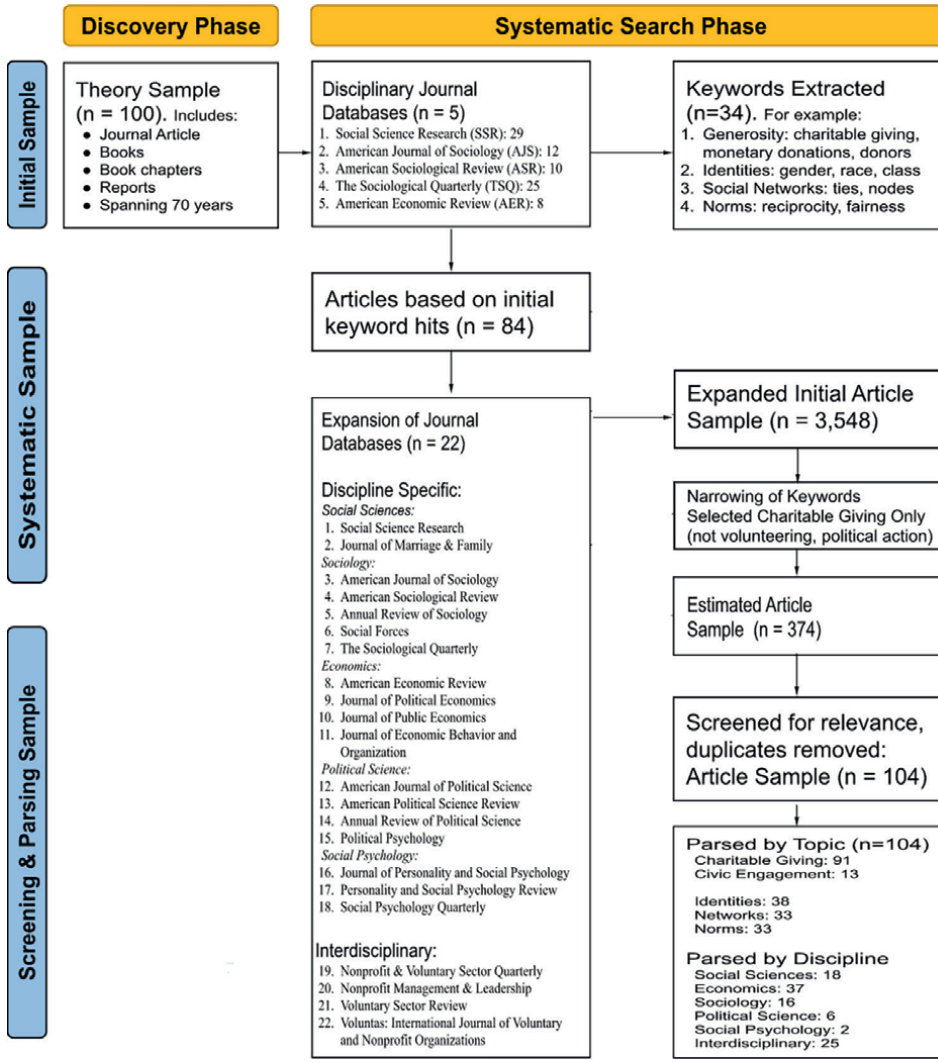

Figure 1.
Search process from discovery phase initial sample to systematic phase parsed sample.

Initial keywords used to locate articles relevant to (A) generosity included: (1) charitable giving (monetary donations, donors); (2) volunteering (time volunteers); (3) political action (voting, activism, protesting); (4) blood donations; (5) organ donations; (6) estate donations (willed giving, such as property upon death); (7) lending possessions (not bank loans/borrowing, rather a neighbor sharing property); (8) sustainability/environmental giving (such as spending money on fair trade coffee); (9) relational/informal helping (such as sitting a neighbor's kids for free while working); (10) community/civic engagement (composite measures of #1–9). For (B) social contexts, the initial keywords were: (1) identities (gender, race/ethnicity, social class/ses); (2) networks; (3) norms (such as norms of reciprocity, fairness, sharing).

Articles were sampled if they included both (A) generosity and (B) social contexts. The sample does not include articles on only A or B or that: (1) focus on macro-level explanations or outcomes (such as effects of tax incentive policy, cross-national comparisons of welfare states, characteristics of the political or economic institution alone); or (2) focus on formal meso-level explanations (such as actions taken by employed organizational actors: nonprofit management). In summary, articles were sampled if their approach: (1) focuses on individual-level outcomes (such as donor donating) and (2) focuses on informal meso-level explanations for charitable giving (specifically identities, networks, norms).

With these search parameters, and after thoroughly parsing for relevance, the initial results for five journals returned 84 articles: *American Journal of Sociology* 12; *American Sociological Review* 10; *The Sociological Quarterly* 25; *American Economic Review* 8; *Social Science Research* 29. At an average of about 17 articles per journal, for the 22 intended journals, this approach was expected to return approximately 374 articles, which was too large to reasonably read and synthesize in a single paper.

3.2 Systematic sample

To create a sample that could reasonably be synthesized, the search was refined to narrow the scope to recent studies published since 2010 and to focus only on charitable giving and composite scores of community and civic engagement that include giving. This included narrowing the keyword scope to: generosity; charitable giving; donation; religious giving; donors (parsed for monetary donation). For example, initial hits for these keywords returns 238 potential articles within the *American Journal of Sociology* (some of which overlap/duplicate hits across keywords); a smaller subset of articles are sampled for (a) charitable giving and (b) at least one of the social contexts.

The result is 22 selected journals. Of these 18 are specific to disciplines and scoped for topic relevance, and four are topic-relevant interdisciplinary journals. The 18 disciplinary journals included for social sciences: *Social Science Research*, *Journal of Marriage and Family*; for sociology: *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Annual Review of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *The Sociological Quarterly*; for economics: *American Economic Review, Journal of Political Economy*, *Journal of Public Economics*, *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*; for political science*: American Journal of Political Science*, *American Political Science Review*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, *Political Psychology*; and for social Psychology: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*. The four topic-relevant interdisciplinary journals were: *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, *Voluntary Sector Review*, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*.

The refined search parameters resulted in 22 sourced journals with initial hits of potentially related articles totaling to 3548 articles, out of which parsing returned 104 articles that were sampled as relevant for this analysis. **Figure 2** presents a word cloud visualizing the disciplinary distribution: economics 37, interdisciplinary topic 25, social sciences 18, sociology 16, political science 6, social psychology 2. This represents counts on articles that attend to both topic sets, not either in isolation. For example, social psychology studies on norms without a focus on charitable giving are not included.

Table 1 displays 91 articles studied charitable giving, with 66 within disciplinary journals and 25 within topical journals. Additionally, 13 articles studied composite indexes that included charitable giving within a larger construct; all of these articles were within disciplinary journals.

In terms of the social contexts, 38 articles studied how race, class, and gender identities relate to charitable giving, with 22 articles in disciplinary journals and 16 in topical interdisciplinary journals (**Table 2**; **Figure 3**). Distinctly, of the total of 33 articles each that studied networks or norms in relation to charitable giving, only five of the network articles and four of the articles on norms were in topical interdisciplinary journals, whereas the majority (86%) on these topics were found within disciplinary journals. One implication of this finding is that scholars who attend only to topical journals would be more likely to find content on identities and could (erroneously) conclude that little extant scholarship attends to networks and norms in giving.

Figure 2.
Discipline counts for systematic sample of publications.

Generosity topic	Total	Disciplinary	Interdisciplinary
Charitable Giving	91	66	25
Community/Civic Engagement	13	13	0

Table 1.
Bibliometric data for generosity topic and source type.

Social context topic	Total	Disciplinary	Interdisciplinary
Identities (Race, Class, Gender)	38	22	16
Networks	33	28	5
Norms	33	29	4

Table 2.
Bibliometric data for social context topic and source type.

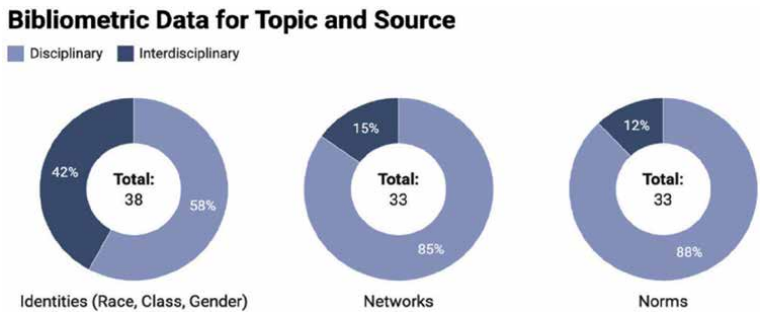

Figure 3.
Bibliometric data for publication topic and source type.

The following section presents the results of the systematic search and integrative analysis on the particular topic of social networks and charitable giving. The findings of charitable giving in the other two social contexts (identities and norms), are not the focus of this chapter and are thus only briefly summarized.

4. Results

Networks are an important social context in which individual decision-making occurs, and this section attends to links between social networks and charitable giving. Social networks can serve as conduits through which people exchange information and resources, and networks are how altruism becomes more broadly generalized to include giving to unknown others, or strangers [16]. Within this systematic search of journal articles, 33 studies attended to social networks and giving (e.g., see [33]). A shared theme in these studies is the notion that charitable giving is contingent on cooperation within ties of linked individuals. Group ties extend the boundaries of solidarity beyond immediate family to include wider circles of outreach. These empirical analyses are grouped within three categories based on the primary implications of their findings for practice: recruitment, retention, and participation.

4.1 Recruitment

Twelve studies attend to the power of network recruitment, of which seven pinpointed the role of asking. For instance, Beyerlein and Bergstrand [34] found that network ties increased the likelihood that people were recruited to engage in generous activities. Relatedly, Andreoni and colleagues found that asking others to give as a powerful motivator for generosity because direct communication between a solicitor and potential donor augments empathy for the altruistic purposes invited by the asker [35]. Indeed, verbal requests for donations increase the rate of givers by more than half and raise the total amount given by nearly three-quarters [36].

Moreover, asking at one point in time and following up later to collect donations also appears to be effective, likely due to separating the moment of the network influence on decision-making from the actual behavior moment [37]. Conversely, Exley and Petrie [38] found that expecting forthcoming asks afforded potential donors the

opportunity to decline to give. This seeming contradiction in findings may be related to network positions, that is: how close or socially distant one is from an acquaintance. Specifically, the closest friend appears to have the greatest network strength, such that the majority of network effect found in previous studies appears to be due to the giving activities of a person's best friend [39]. Plus, observing peer giving as another key network mechanism [40], and the odds of being a donor are 1.5 greater when close friends donate [39].

In terms of practical tips related to recruitment, fundraising through online social networks was effective when donors were incentivized to post a notice to their friends that they had donated, and donors were more likely to do this when the 'nuisance cost' was low, such as when they were already logged in to the platform in which asked to post [41]. Additionally, the ordering of solicitation calls matters. Meer and Rosen [42] found that volunteers who call to recruit alumni donors to give would often proceed through an alphabetized list in order of donor names. Since solicitors would often run out of time to call every person on the list, donors at the beginning of the alphabet received more calls than those later in the list and thus ultimately were more likely to be donors than end-of-alphabet alumni.

In addition to asks alone, several additional recruitment techniques were identified. Namely, reminders were found to be a helpful donor recruitment tool [43]. However, it is worth noting that reminders increased both the rate of donation and the un-subscription rate from the mailing list. This research implies that there is an 'annoyance cost' associated with too-frequent reminders, and that it is important to strike the right balance. A second tip is that suggesting a specific donation amount can result in a 50 percent increase in giving [44]. Third, there is inconclusive evidence that charity auctions are more effective than regular charitable giving donation mechanisms [45], which implies asks may be a cost efficient and comparably effective strategy.

4.2 Retention

Another six articles attended to retention. Donors can be viewed as relational partners with recipient organizations, in this regard there can be donor-organization network effects. For example, donors were more likely to be retained when they had previous experience with an organization that was positive, thought the organization had a trustworthy reputation, and felt personal affinity with the organization's cause [46]. Similarly, beyond professional capacities, donors were more likely to give to organizations that were already part of their existing network ties [47]. Specifically, more than three-quarters of donors in one year repeat their donations the following year [48].

Yet, not all network dynamics are positive, insofar as people can also rely upon existing ties to know their generous intentions and thus feel less compelled to have to enact their goodwill. For example, Knowles and Servatka [49] found that participants in a laboratory experiment were more likely to procrastinate on giving when afforded a longer deadline, which comports with theoretical expectations that people prefer to put off non-immediate tasks.

A practical tip for retaining donors and overcoming procrastination tendencies is to provide token gifts. For example, in a natural field experiment, donors who received gifts were more loyal to the organization [50]. In a laboratory experiment, participants were more likely to share resources with a group partner who gave them gifts [51].

4.3 Participation

A total of fourteen articles investigated participation aspects of network affiliations. As revealed in the studies on identities above, Tian and Konrath [52] found that affinity matters in donor decisions, with five types of effects within network pairs: (1) the number of shared identities; (2) the type of shared identities; (3) the salience of shared identities; (4) the social expectations of key identities; and (5) the degree of overlap between self and others in terms of shared identities. Yet, the size of social groups matters. For example, the donation rate is higher among large groups, but the amount of donations from each person is lower [53]. Moreover, groups with a high density of network ties among them have greater trust of strangers, but that generalized trust does not appear to spillover to other prosocial orientations and actions [54].

The kind of social group matters too. For example, donations based on political affiliation appear to have more of a 'tit-for-tat' expectation, in terms of strings attached for policymaker actions [55, 56], whereas donations based on sports affinity appear to be given more generally to support athletes and sports groups without reciprocity [57, 58]. Nevertheless, a 'pay-it- forward' mentality appears to undergird alumni giving, insofar as alumni were more likely to donate to their alma mater when they had received scholarship or other financial assistance as a student [59]. Peer pressure is also an effective alumni mechanism [60].

By far the social group with the greatest links between participation and charitable giving was within religious organizations. For example, people involved in religious congregation small groups were significantly more engaged in civic activities [61], and people with a greater sense of religious meaning gave more to religious causes [62]. Moreover, there appears to be a 'symbiosis effect', rather than substitution, referring to evidence that religiously engaged people were not solely giving to religious causes but also more likely than non-religious peers to donate to non-religious causes [63]. These religious participation effects appear to operate through both cognitive and emotional processes [64], and religious social networks seem to provide strong recruitment channels for donating to and volunteering for charitable causes [65].

In summary, there are five central themes in response to the research question: What is known about the role of social networks in charitable giving? First, networks can shape values of working toward the public good. Second, networks can punish people for acting too self-interestedly. Third, networks can join together or exclude, contributing to social inequality. Fourth, networks can maintain group dynamics, such as men giving more to religious groups. Fifth, networks can pattern behaviors into habits, form interdependence, situate what is considered normal, and provide stability in times of crisis. Additionally, key mechanisms identified within social networks include communication, rewards, sanctions, generalized exchange, and reciprocity. On this last point, it seems that one of the crucial ways that network dynamics emerge is through their structuring of repeated interactions, which can in turn support or inhibit other-regarding preferences such as solidarity and altruism [16].

5. Discussion

5.1 Engaging young people

Existing studies evidence the influence of social networks on shaping charitable giving behaviors, and this section outlines implications for understanding young

people within their social contexts. In terms of engagement, network aspects highlight the significance of whether and how the ties between solicitor and donor are established by the practice of asking. Simply starting from connecting a previously disconnected tie with donors will increase the probability of giving behaviors. This is important for fostering increased giving over the course of development from youth into young adulthood. Further, donor ties have the potential to promote generosity once these network connections are activated. When asks come from donor close ties, or when the giving behavior is exposed to donor peers, the likelihood of charitable giving is enhanced. In addition, the frequency and sequence of the tie connections also matter in generating a positive impact on charitable giving. For young people, who are on average more embedded in social media, online network ties are key for fostering giving.

These findings shed light on practices which are central for philanthropic practitioners. Reminders were found to be a helpful donor recruitment tool. However, it is worth noting that reminders increased both the rate of donation and the un-subscription rate from the mailing list. This research implies that there is an 'annoyance cost' associated with too-frequent reminders, and that it is important to strike the right balance. Practitioners can include this information into their strategic planning and decision-making processes in order to manage their relationships more effectively with existing and potential donors.

In recruitment-related studies, the network has been studied from both a cultural and structural approach. From the cultural perspective, individuals' agency in making the decision has been mostly studied in terms of whether or not committing to the giving behaviors. From the structural perspective, network positions have been centrally studied through examining the influence of direct connected ties on donors' giving decisions. Future research could extend the scholarship by examining the influence of other network positions, such as indirect connected ties, on charitable giving behavior.

5.2 Retaining young people

Regarding retaining young people, networks explain the relationship dynamics between donors and recipient organizations. Repeated giving behaviors are more likely to occur within existing networks, particularly between trustworthy ties and gift-encouraged connections. This implies that young people who are not already embedded within giving networks will be less likely to be retained over time.

On the other hand, network configurations also play a role in shaping the generous habits of donors. Close ties may be able to engender charitable giving behavior, but being embedded in closely connected networks may also inhibit donor ability to find gaps in need of attention. When giving ties are strong, people procrastinate on giving. Perhaps their long relationship history maintains their reputation and inhibits a need to give to demonstrate their generosity among friends. In this context, there may be opportunities to retain young people by strategies that focus on showing friends the fruits of a generous spirit, or in other ways building giving into network development.

In the retention sample, the network effect in charitable giving has been mainly examined from the relational perspective with a focus on the flow of trust and gift incentives, as well as their influence on donors' repeated behaviors. Future studies could expand this line of research by examining repeated charitable giving behaviors by studying the assortative and proximal perspectives of young people. This could develop a comparative understanding of flow pattern of trust and gift incentives in

dynamic relationships being built throughout the transition from youth into adulthood, to further understand the determinants of donor retention in the context of networked giving.

5.3 Linking young people

In terms of participation, the network aspect has been primarily examined through the ties between donors and their affiliations, from the perspective of shared identities between donors, the size, the density, and the type of affiliated groups. Future research needs to examine the role that these factors have in lining young people in giving. Specifically, these findings highlight three network factors that affect donor decisions: size, density, and affinity type. First, large groups give more on average, but the giving rate of each person is less. Second, a high density of network ties appears to foster greater trust, but not more giving. More research needs to be done to understand the role that group size and density has in young adulthood.

Third, certain affinity types expect more reciprocity from the giving behavior than other groups. For example, alumni give more to universities from which they received a scholarship, and political givers appear to expect an exchange in policymaker actions. On the other hand, sports givers appear not to expect direct reciprocity when giving to support athletics, and religious givers donate beyond religious causes only to more general causes. These findings about reciprocity expectations can help to contextualize ways that different affinity types can link young people into the cause.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributes to an understanding of social networks and charitable giving. By providing an integrative synthesis, results of existing studies are reviewed within the nonprofit and philanthropy activites of: recruitment, retention, and participation. The application of bibliometric techniques to analyzing social science research evidences their utility in extracting information from a diverse set of disciplines, theories, and methods to form a wholistic picture of what is known on these topics. Additionally, it highlights pertinent evidence and draws implications for practice particularly focused on engaging, retaining, and linking with young people.

6.1 Limitations and future studies

Nevertheless, this study also has limitations. First, the bibliometric approach includes possible selection biases based upon studies using ambiguous terms to describe networks and charitable giving, which may cause the keyword sampling to miss relevant articles. Second, to set the parameters at feasible boundaries for humans to cognitively process, the analysis focuses on charitable giving behaviors, delimiting other prosocial behaviors such as volunteering or organ donation for future studies. There is empirical evidence indicating that determinants or contagion mechanisms are not always the same across different prosocial behaviors, such as monetary giving and volunteering. Thus, the result of this research needs to be understood within the context of the activity studied: charitable giving. Future studies need to employ similar methods to seek generalizing to other forms of generosity. Third, the network

aspects that are the focus of this study are closely related to, and can intersect with, the other social contexts: identities and norms. For example, norms are essential in influencing the group dynamics of networks, and identity is one of the significant predictors for tie connections and network structures. However, within the bounds of this single paper, it was only feasible to present the network analysis. Future papers from this project will present bibliometric analysis of identities and norms.

6.2 Knowledge gaps

This integrative analysis based upon a systematic search of ten years of contemporary empirical studies reveals two primary knowledge gaps in understanding the social contexts of giving. One, the relational dynamics embedded within network structures are important for understanding giving. Yet, identities are studied more often than are networks and norms in relation to charitable giving. Networks and norms need to be afforded greater attention, especially within studies published in interdisciplinary outlets. Particularly of interest are studies that focus on how these network and norm processes operate during the dynamic phases of development from youth into young adulthood. There is some attention to field experiments and how they shape group dynamics in childhood, and there is a focus on the natural contexts of peers in youth. A knowledge gap exists in how developing networks matter for giving in young adulthood.

Two, practitioners and researchers would be aided by more synthesis across topics, disciplines, theories, and approaches, especially with application interpretations. Even within sets of literatures relevant for practitioners, the applications for practice are often minimal and not necessarily identified in relation to specific giving activities. To rectify this, future studies can replicate the approach of this bibliometric analysis to advance integrative understanding about what is known about the other sets of generous activities, such as volunteering and political action. Also pertinent would be integrations across identities and norms. Importantly, each of these topics needs to be reviewed within the context of what is known about youth and young adulthood.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 2

Perspective Chapter: Understanding Young People's Experiences – An Integrative Literature Review

Huda Kamel Ahmed

Abstract

A developed conceptual model to understanding experiences of young people with ethnic heritage is explored in this chapter. Through a synthesis of some of the traditional approaches to identity and personality, the author argues for the move towards a more comprehensive, extensive, and evolving approach to understanding lived experiences: the conduct of everyday life. Coupled to that is an understanding of the continuity of experiences using the concept of Personhood in Practice to articulate young people's learning and development in the context of lived experiences. Bringing together such approaches, the chapter presents an integrative review showing the development of a conceptual model. It gives an example of how such model was used in my PhD research to draw findings to understand the experiences of an under-researched and overlooked community: the British Yemenis.

Keywords: identity, personality, conduct of everyday life, British Yemenis, cultural hybridity

1. Introduction

Human experiences have been extensively studied in the social sciences with various theoretical traditions and fields of research addressing different areas of study. New and evolving ideas, approaches and perspectives for understanding human experiences are continuously being explored. Of particular interest to the study of young people's experiences is the move away from previously articulated cognitivist trait-based perspectives—which view human experiences as informed by information processing activity that is situated in a given mind and that is analytically and practically separated from the world [1–3]—to the belief that experiences emerge out of a relational nexus between the subject and the world [4, 5]. In other words, experiences must be understood as an emergent property that already presupposes the relational interface between the subject and the world, and cannot be conceptualised as an a priori faculty situated within an already constituted individual [6, 7]. This chapter focuses on developing a conceptual approach to understanding the experiences of British Yemeni young people, an approach that privileges the relational nexus between subject and the world.

The understanding of what young people do and why they do it, has been of continued interest in sociology and psychology, specifically in the study of identity and personality. In this chapter, I consider some of the explanatory approaches that focus on understanding young people's experiences by exploring what might be viewed as some of the dominant youth identity theories and personality paradigms. Because the particular focus of the study is young people of Yemeni heritage, ideas in and around notions of post-colonialism and intersectionality will also be explored, and these ideas will be linked to some of the traditional identity theories discussed in this chapter. I highlight the limitations of these approaches in relation to providing explanations of subject-independent truths that are tied to practical living and being. By providing an overview and synthesis of some of the main ideas around identity and personality, I explore what these ideas may suggest about the young person's living and being. I then move on to describe how the conduct of everyday life, specifically the theory of a person [8], is a manifestation of some of these ideas but in a particular form that gives primacy to actions. I show how Dreier's theory of a person generates a robust articulation of young people's lived experiences as well as the associated identities and personalities that inform those experiences. It is an approach that I argue examines the relational nexus between subject and the world, through the actions that young people undertake in their everyday lives.

2. Methodology

This chapter presents an integrative review as a distinctive form of research using existing literature to create new knowledge. I use diverse data sources to develop a holistic understanding of lived experiences, by reviewing the growing body of literature that has contributed, in the context of this research, to theory development. The publication sources and search engines utilised to find sources related to young people's experiences were mainly articles from publications outputs. Examples of such include articles scoped were from the Journal of Applied Youth Studies, Journal of Adolescence, Theory & Psychology, Culture and Psychology, Race & Class, Psychology and the Conduct of Everyday Life, Concrete Human Psychology, Youth & Society and Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies to name a few. Although these journals present areas within psychology that are interdisciplinary, the focus for this research was on those linked specifically to understanding young people, their experiences and identities linked to such experiences. For example, work by Meeus [9] focused on identity status models in longitudinal studies, work by Havnes [10] on cultural-historical activity theory and work by Kroeber & Kluckhohn [11] on culture definitions and applications, all of which are related to the research field. The scope was large and ranged from mature as well as recent articles. I also directed my reading on articles that already provided a review of the main theories for understanding youth experiences [12, 13], particularly as it provides a critical review on the existing theories and applications in understanding lived experience and identities. Other sources used were in the form of books that focused on such the use of case studies to build and test theories in social science [14] and those related handbooks on personality, theory and research.

The main produce of the research was the development of a conceptual methodological framework, integrating various paradigms and theoretical research, to understand the experience of young people. I then applied this model to an overlooked and under researched British Yemenis group of young people. The chapter

also shows how such model has the potential to contribute to other future research for other ethnic minority groups in the UK because it allows the examining the dynamics and interactions between self and society where human subjectivities are a reflection of, but not determined by, the social and cultural arrangements.

The model emerged from scoping the literature and engaging with the ideas on (1) youth identity, (2) personality paradigms, (3) post-colonialism, (4) intersectionality, (5) literature on researcher's positionality within the research and from personal experiences and the advantages it brings, (6) pilot study research, (7) photography methods, (7) the conduct of everyday life, (8) longitudinal studies, (9) personhood in practice and (10) narrative portraits. Each of these 10 different approaches was applied, either theoretically or methodologically, to develop a conceptual model, forming links between them. The inclusion criteria for the sources used in such scope needed to firstly relate to be young people and their associated identities and personalities, and secondly to literature on ethnic minorities groups living in the UK. Section 3 in this chapter elaborates further on the sources of intellectual knowledge and resources used that has contributed to developing this model. The overall research is, therefore, theory-led and data-driven, enabling the research questions, literature review, methodology and analysis to be connected in a way that brings about vital information on the participants in question. This model was reviewed by a panel of supervisors from the University of Manchester, who acted as peer reviews of the information gathered, edited and developed.

The model focuses on *actions and activities*. It provides a robust articulation of lived experiences as well as the associated identities and personalities that inform such experiences, linking personality with social processes that shape people's conduct of everyday life. Thinking in such way helps researchers explain and understand social life that is continuously challenged by dynamic and evolving problems. The development of conceptual frameworks and theories, such as the one developed here, is required to get a firm understanding of both classical and contemporary theories in the context of the research.

This chapter is derived from the literature review—chapter two—of my PhD thesis[1] [15] and builds off the first chapter of a larger empirical work where I explore the lived experience of six British Yemeni young people, and present data conducted over 19 months. The study of my PhD was guided by three research questions on (1) the types of everyday experiences, (2) the forms of learning and development and (3) what these experiences, learning and development suggest about the evolving social and cultural personhood of British Yemeni young people. The experiences of British Yemeni young people were documented and explored through linking and interconnecting concepts of the conduct of everyday life and personhood in practice.

The concepts in and around identity and personality have been traditionally seen as a standard way of thinking about young people's agency (self) and structure (society), and understanding what young people do, and why they do what they do. In relation to youth studies, issues of identity have been explored through different traditions that offer both psychological (subjective and behavioural properties of identity) and sociological approaches (membership and social interactions) [16, 17]. I begin this chapter by providing an overview of some of the main approaches for examining youth identity as means of explaining agency. To contextualise these with regard to the focus of my study, I then examine how post-colonial and

[1] https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF&publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw.

intersectionality theories provide an additional lens through which to understand British Yemeni young people more fully. I chose these theories in particular because of the historical elements of British colonisation of Yemen, and because of the ideas which intersectionality may bring to the interactivity of social identity structures (race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age and religion) in fostering life experiences. I show how these theories provide additional articulations of the interconnection of agency and structure that might be more theoretically aligned to explaining the experiences of British Yemeni young people. I then demonstrate how the theories of post-colonialism and intersectionality can be used as analytical tools to understand some of the nuances around British Yemeni young people's experiences, particularly with respect to their family histories and practices. I then move onto exploring complementary ideas that focus on some of the prominent personality psychology, showing how they have historically been built from ideas within biological, social and clinical domains.

In bringing these traditional ideas of identity, post-colonialism and intersectionality, and personality together, I show that, despite the explanatory importance of these theories, they seem to struggle in providing a justifiable understanding of some of the heterogeneity, as well as some of the homogeneity, in the everyday life experiences of British Yemeni young people. This gap was noted primarily from my undertaking of the initial study, and secondly, from my personal reflections of my own experiences that questioned an essentialised perspective of identity and personality that appears to be dominant in the field. In other words, such findings showed that, in the experiences of British Yemeni young people, there were elements of difference as well as similarities which did not seem to be accounted for in the main, by post-colonial and intersectionally inspired identity and personality theories. To avoid the pitfalls of what I argue to be dualistic (the separation of the subject from the world) and yet at the same time essentialist explanation and accounts of who British Yemeni young people are and what they do, I instead focus on the relational conduct of everyday life, with all the possibilities of both diversity and similarity, and change and reproduction in living and lived experiences. This is because the conduct of everyday life enables the connection between young people's evolving sense of themselves and the social arrangements of their lives to be explored recognising both habitual activity and the possibilities of change.

Building on such a critique, I broaden the understanding of identity and personality to encompass rationales and discourses associated with the conduct of everyday life in the experiences of daily living, in particular using Dreier's theory of a person [8]. I argue that Dreier's theory bridges the gap between psychological theorising on an individual level and a transindividual perspective, prioritising the actions of the person with others in his/her social life as a means of understanding experiences. I show how arriving at the conduct of everyday life enables a more comprehensive, extensive and evolving approach to understanding personality, which, in turn, provides a more concrete reflection of identity that yet contains elements of fluidity. I conclude the chapter by outlining an evolved conceptualisation of the conduct of everyday life in terms of the novelty of its application.

Figure 1 provides a summary of the approaches that I will discuss in the synthesis sections of this chapter.

The study of identity and personality reflect two of the major positions and central constructs in the attempts to understand young people's agency. The major academic traditions in these fields range from the sociological studies of identity and the psychological studies of personality. The former, in the main, focus on the

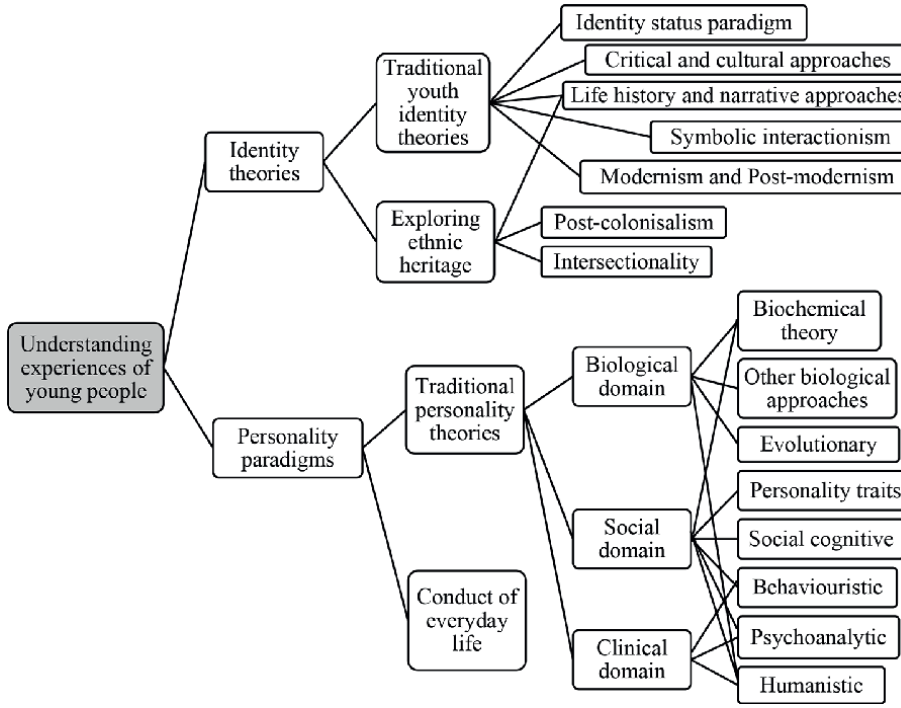

Figure 1.
Approach to the study of young people's experiences.

structures and system of people and their relations, and how they impact one another and the individual that help to generate identity and commensurate forms of agency [18–20], while the latter focuses on self and the individual, and the related cognitive dimensions of living which have both social dimension and aspects of an inherited trait-like perspective [21, 22] that provides accounts of the individualised self. In this section, I provide an overview of some of the main theories of youth identity, including post-colonialism and intersectionality, and then some of the main traditional paradigms of personality. I then synthesise the research position with respect to each of these ideas, highlighting some of its limitations in understanding British Yemeni young people's agency and structure.

Although I start by exploring these theories individually, clarifying along the way the research position with respect to each of these concepts, I also show, later in the chapter, that there is interconnection and overlap between these theories as they might help explain the lives of British Yemeni young people. Therefore, these theories and approaches should not be seen necessarily as analytically separate and distinct entities, but connected, through the narratives of British Yemeni young people's experiences.

3. Synthesis—identity

3.1 Identity scholarship

Identity has historically been seen as complex and slippery concept. As the boundaries between disciplines dealing with identity are quite arbitrary, an

investigation of identity needs to consider multi-disciplinary approaches. Although the term originates from the Latin root 'idem', meaning the same or identical, identity can be defined as a description of who a person is and the qualities of a person that make them *different* from others.[2] Hammack provides a definition that I feel in many respects resonates with my research focus because it includes the person's subjectivity and behavioural patterns, as well as their membership of societal groups [12, 23]—identity is *'ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice'* ([24], p. 22). Developing an identity to associate and/or distinguish oneself from others may be crucial in establishing a stable agency and structure [25]. Whether it implies similarity or differences, uniqueness or individuality, fixed psychological traits, social facts or transitory situations [26], identity involves recognising a common cause, storage of experiences and habituated thoughts and memory (in the person), and is represented in behaviours and social activities (in interaction) [27].

Although identity can provide a general understanding of some of the features pertinent to the individual, there is also the sense that identity is likely to evolve and develop during transitional stages of life that have both physiological and emotional dimensions. Literature on young people growth and development has shown that identity can also be examined in relation to individuals going through transitional stages of development. These stages include both physiologically and emotionally. Literature on the anthropology of young people [28, 29] describes adolescence as a universal period of time, experienced by young people as they grow and develop [30, 31]. The participants—being in the age range of 16–19 during the time of this study—may have experienced (and are perhaps continuing to experience) shifts and changes during this growth period, which can be seen as a transitional stage of autonomy seeking, emotional instability and identity exploration [32]. This may involve, perhaps, becoming more independent from parents and further associating with peer groups [33]. Young people may continue to develop and construct their own identity as they move through to adulthood [29]. This delicate, yet gradual, progression continually reflects experiences that may be associated with profound life changes [34].

3.2 Identity studies

Many mainstream or traditional approaches that explore youth identity tend to focus on several areas of study. Some traditions stress the internalisation of social positions and their personal meanings as part of the self-structure [35], while others show the impact of cultural meanings and social situations on identities [36, 37], emphasising how social contexts elicit certain identities that shape meanings and actions. Other traditions centre on collective identity and group-level processes [38, 39]. Of particular importance in delineating ideas of young identity is Côté's [12] expansive and comprehensive overview of the varying perspective and approaches to youth identity. He develops his overview with ideas from his previous work with Levin [40], to produce a universal taxonomy that attends to the multidimensionality represented by the various approaches in understanding youth identity. Adapted from Côté [12], in **Table 1** I summarise some of the main theories and perspectives on youth identity.

[2] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/identity

Youth identity perspectives/ approach	Focus	Description of the perspective/approach
Identity status paradigm	Objective individual focus	Young people experience different stages of commitment and crisis, contributing to identity formation. Four main identity statuses of psychological identity development can be explored here: identity diffusion, identity moratorium, identity foreclosure and identity achievement [41, 42]. With the passage of time, the young person may go through some or all of these stages [43], and not necessarily in an ordered fashion, and these stages of development can relate to education [44], career [45], politics and religion [46], and among other areas.
Critical and cultural approach	Objective individual focus	An approach that functions in the reflective assessment and critique of society and culture [47]. Identity is theorised by an adaptation of conceptualising multilateral relationships between individual identity and sociocultural context, recognising the causal importance of culture in societies and historical context, while at the same time acknowledging individual choice and change [48]. This approach is often used in comparative analysis to study the expectations and difference in culture, for example between individualism and collectivism structures and cultures [49].
Life history and narrative approaches	Subjective individual focus	Young people are viewed in relation to their narratives or stories, whereby temporal and developmental dimensions of human existence are revealed [50]. Experiences are constructed from cognitive interactions and originate from people's external perceptual senses, internal bodily sensations, and cognitive memories [51]. Human behaviour is conceptualised as significantly communicative and narrative in nature [52]. The approach of storytelling of individual chronological experiences can be used to analyse qualitative data [53].
Symbolic interactionalism Structural—Objective, social focus Interpretative—Subjective, social focus		This approach depends on the symbolic meaning and language that people develop and rely upon in the social interaction process [54], and how they help to give meaning to experiences [55]. Society is thought to be socially constructed (through conversations, thoughts and ideas), and bonded through environmental stimulus cognitively interpretation [56]. Symbolic interactionalism can either be structural or interpretative. The former emphasises on role designation and positioning, significant to the definition of the self, specifically hierarchy of prominence (how individuals play their role in a given situation), and hierarchy of salience (addressing individual values and their affect over identity formation) [18, 57]. The latter emphasises that a person must be understood as a social and thinking being [58], and the self becomes the product of society as it tries to incorporate itself into a group by realising and internalising societal expectations, leading to a constructive relationship between the self and society [25, 59]. Society is viewed as having different interrelated parts, designed to meet the social needs of people [60].
Modernism Post modernism—Subjective, Individual and sociological focus. Late modernism—Objective, Social focus		Modernism in general follow a set of critical, strategic and rhetorical practices, used as a critique of structure [20]. Postmodernists see words as having no objective meaning, and that structures are social constructs and so a merely an interpretation of truth. As a result, identity becomes fluid, it's meaning more ambiguous and unstable [61]. Post-modernist themes strengthen common practices of psychological science, leading to the understanding of concepts such as individual knowledge, the objective world and the language as a carrier of truth [62, 63]. In the sociological variant, identity is located within the interactional realm and is best understood in terms of its emergent and transitory properties, which vary according to the specific context in which interaction takes place. In late modernism, and as an opposition to postmodernism, there is a duality of structure, and people's freedom comes from existing structures [64]. As a result, identity becomes a task a person seeks to develop [65].

Table 1.
Some of the major identity theories.

These perspectives are among the leading approaches for thinking about identity and associated agency and will therefore act as a focus for exploring their relevance to young people's living experiences. However, in so doing, I will articulate some of the problematic issues that pertain to much of this thinking and yet also recognising that certain key approaches may provide important basis for my research.

3.3 Synthesis of identity scholarship

This section provides a synthesis and exploration on how studying young people's agency and structure, through the identity theories, depicted in **Table 1**, is, in the main, problematic. Although these theories may provide a contribution to understanding certain elements of the social structures and changes that pertain to the formation of a person, studying identity with regard to many of these approaches relies uniformly on methodological approaches that enable a person to generate perception of who they thinks they are based on recalled events (memory) that support such perception, and relatedly on the possible evaluation of the accuracy of feeling-of-knowing experiences [66, 67]. This methodological approach is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides an isolated description of a person, detaching him/her from ongoing social practices. This, in turn, provides an abstracted form of knowledge or an account that is partial. Furthermore, it restricts the examination of the various features of personal functioning and the features of the world in which a person lives. Secondly, studying identity in such a way entails a thinning out of the presence of the world in notions of psychological phenomena and neglects the significance of the world for psychological functioning [68]. Thirdly, the links between the historical structures and influences of the current environment, and how they affect the functioning of a person, are missing. I argue that this is the case for all the youth identity theories discussed in **Table 1**, albeit with different levels of sophistication.

Let me take the identity status paradigm as an example. Within this approach, there is an assumption that a young person, perhaps during adolescence, will experience a crisis during their development, and at this stage, must make a commitment to reach the identity achievement stage. Identity achievement is, however, relative. It is also measured differently, depending on the context of the research and there are many factors that affect identity achievement. Furthermore, the identity status paradigm suggests that some young people may fluctuate between different development stages and may not pass each stage or reach a certain level of achievement [41], and although this may be the argument in some cases, the pattern or sense of development varies for each individual, and should primarily depend on the person's evolving situation and linked practice. The dualism of agency and structure suggest that the two are separate and each have causal powers on the other. The argument here is that what young people do is both agency and structure at the same time—they do and undergo, one impacting the other continuously. Development is also influenced by different factors that are specific to the individual and the environment in which they live and participate. As such, identity formation is not static and is continuously evolving and developing with increased lived experiences, and so there is no end point. The identity status paradigm also suggests that a well-developed identity signifies a solid sense of personal uniqueness, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, high self-esteem, increased critical thinking, advanced moral reasoning and low levels of anxiety [42]. Although this may be achieved during adolescence and towards early adulthood, not only does it vary from person to person, but the living and being are constantly changing and evolving, suggesting the possibility of moving from

what appears a well-developed and stable identity to one less stable and vice versa. Additionally, the identity status paradigm does not consider the historical, ethnic and cultural dimensions of the growing and evolving person, and thus, may fall short in understanding young people with ethnic heritage.

A critical and cultural approach in understanding young people's experiences is more applicable when focusing primarily on the importance of culture in society, but as an effect, the approach produces a partial perspective of agency. Such an approach ignores the fact that a person is both a subject and subjected to the society (or culture) they live in, that therefore results in danger of essentialising what it means to have a culture, or in the context of this research a British Yemeni culture.

I now turn to two other identity approaches: postmodernism and symbolic interactionism. In the sociological variant of postmodernism, identity is located within the interactional realm and describes some of the unity in articulating identity [69] that relates to young people's interactions that are partially dominated by the rise of new media technologies [70, 71] and consumerism in society [72]. From my interactions with young people, and from reflecting on my experiences, I argue that these two realities may directly (or indirectly) influence the construction of young people's identity today, but this is relative to the individual and environment in which they live. Additionally, using postmodernist understanding of society also provides a simplified view of who a young person is and what they do, based on a generalised postmodern view of lived realities of how these realities influence daily activities.

There are also problems reflected in ideas within symbolic interactionism. The theory is rooted in phenomenological thought in which subjectively defined objects have meaning and so there are possibly multiple, conflicting interpretations of any situation [73]. The issue with this, in the context of this research, is that it gives the young person a mistaken sense of agency over structure, and perhaps some creative capabilities or misguided sense of control over society. This is not only relative and subjective but also leaves the person with the false sense that society, of which a person is a member, is designed to meet his/her social needs, and this is not necessarily true. Sometimes a person must change or adapt to suit the society they live in, and not necessarily the other way round. Furthermore, symbolic interactionism focuses on micro-level interactions [58] and so overlooks macro-social structures (such as norms and cultures), which makes it difficult to understand the interconnected experiences of an individual using this theory. Symbolic interactionists have been criticised in for their predominately qualitative approach to empirical inquiry and for their failure to deal adequately with social structure and power [55, 74].

However, the identity theory that relates to producing life histories and narrative approaches has a greater role in this research, primarily as an active methodological stance. This is because it provides an opportunity to focus subjectively on identity, social-life and culture, and at the same time, enables questions to be asked about some of the structuring components in a young person's daily life. Hammack's [24] definition earlier—identity '*manifest[s] in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course*'—supports the idea of using life histories and narrative approaches, as a methodology, for studying the subjective phases of social life, as well as the historical and structural aspects of social life [51]. This makes it ideal for exploring the experiences of British Yemeni young people. Documenting participants' stories using narratives that seek to apprehend, understand and render people's stories within their personal, social, economic, political and historical contexts [75, 76] is not only salient, but also produces a personal account of the here and now, in the

narrator's own words. It also enables an analysis of the collective contextual influences in which those lives are situated [77].

Perhaps what is also deficient in some of these perspectives on identity highlighted above is the lack of full engagement with issues of ethnic and cultural heritage. To explore this deficiency, I now describe some of the identity theories that relate to British Yemenis being of an ethnic and cultural heritage, and how these theories support in the understanding young people's agency and structure.

4. Synthesis—ethnic heritage

4.1 Ethnic heritage scholarship

Having examined, and critiqued, some of the mainstream ideas of identity, there seems to be a possibility of under-emphasis in and around some of the historical, cultural, political power issues of British Yemeni young people. This means that an additional set of thinking tools is required to enable a more developed understanding of identity in an extended way. Specifically, I explore how the post-colonial and intersectionality arguments are pertinent to my study of British Yemeni young people. I show their importance, in relation to some of the standard theories of identity (mentioned in **Table 1**), in developing ideas that explicitly focus on some of the important structural, cultural, historic reasons why British Yemeni young people see their world as they do. Although there are dangers of essentialising here, it is more about orientating theories to issues of post-colonialism. I start by exploring post-colonialism as a theory and discuss its potential use in examining the ethnic and power difference between colonising powers and those that have been colonised, including the impacts on first-, second- and third-generation British Yemeni young people. I feel that this discussion has been (partially) underplayed, or perhaps forgotten in the identity theories explored in **Table 1**. In using post-colonialism, the structural imbalance, the discrimination and prejudice, and the domineering are no longer overlooked. I then explore how intersectionality aims to move towards a deeper understanding of the social identity structures which, together, may serve as an influence on the experiences of British Yemeni young people. However, I later discuss how I make more pertinent the analysis of experiences using the conduct of everyday life more sensitised to post-colonial and intersectional arguments.

4.2 Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism considers ways in which identity is constructed through the discourses of colonialism, emphasising the importance of the cultural, economic, political and military dominance of the past [78]. In the context of this research, it refers to the way British Yemenis' identity may be constructed as a direct (or indirect) effect because of the colonisation of Yemen by Britain in 1839. Presented as the extension of civilization to justify the racial and cultural superiority of Western world over others [79], colonialism has caused changes in people's cultural identity, social places and economic roles within the colonised country as well as among those migrating to the Western country [80]. This relationship of control tends to extend to social, pedagogical, economic, political and broadly cultural exchanges. This section explores some of the prominent works of scholars in the field of post-colonial studies and shows how their work is related to the diaspora and identities of Yemenis settling in Britain.

I begin by exploring the work of three main scholars in post-colonial studies: Said [81, 82], Spivak [83] and Bhabha [84–86]. I chose these scholars in particular because of their major contributions in documenting and providing an insight into the impacts of colonialism. Most of the literature that I have examined in, and around post-colonialism, uses certain definitions, descriptions and elements from their work, perhaps as a foundation for understanding the influences of post-colonial theory on the lived lives of those affected by it. Furthermore, each of these scholars presents different, yet connecting, ideas of how to understand and represent the colonised forces in a way that may lead to further conversations and explorations. Additionally, and in the context of this research, I explore how Said, Spivak and Bhabha's ideas, separately and collectively, provide some explanation as to the possible changes in identities and, as an effect, the experiences of British Yemeni young people.

I begin by focusing on Said's work on the representation of knowledge of the colonised. Said uses 'Orientalism' to describe a style of thought based upon distinctions made between the Occident (of the West) and Orient (or other)—a style of dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient [81, 82]. Said argues that magical realism, referred to the adaptation of Western realist methods of literature, is presented inaccurately and is misleading, and stereotypical of the cultural representation of the east (as exotic, enigmatic and curious) [82]. This representation may hinder a representational reality of the orient in representational ways of understanding of Middle Eastern and Asian culture [80]. He suggests that these methods of representation are used as tools, by colonisers, to dominate the colonised, at an individual and community level [82]. This view is also shared by other scholars [87, 88].

Historical writing on the British empire in Yemen is also dominated by post-colonial traditions and theories [89]. Using Said's idea of Orientalism, it is possible to identify historiographical precedents for applying certain orientalist ideas to diplomatic source material to study British rule over Yemen [90]. Writings on such colonisation offer evidence of intelligence being interpreted in a way which underestimated the strength of local agents and amplified the influence of external manipulation [91]. This is what Said refers to as a misinterpretation of truth within a colonised culture [81].

Spivak [83] addresses the problem of misrepresentation by centring attention on giving the 'Subaltern'—a colonised group of lower economic and cultural status—a voice. According to Spivak, such voices were prevented by the colonised. She highlights the difficulty for an outside colonised person to represent what is truly happening in the colonised communities. Spivak is an advocate for subaltern voice, and the impact (of offering them a chance to speak) is the reduction of inherently restricted or misleading logocentric assumptions of the colonised people [92]. In this way, Spivak adopts a stance against a specifically intellectual form of oppression and marginalisation [93].

Within the context of this research, discussion around the 'other' and allowing the 'subaltern voice' resonate with the intentions of this research. By default, the British Yemeni community is a minority ethnic group and so can be considered as the 'other'. By providing a platform for their voices to be heard, through this research, assumptions or misleading statements on their living and being may be better understood. Although this research does not consider British Yemeni young people as being 'subalterns' as such, the reality is that there has been limited literature on their experiences, which may suggest a lack of attention given to their opinions and voices. Even though the occupation of Yemen by Britain of 128 years ended in 1967, the long period of colonialism has (directly or indirectly) presented some areas of misrepresentation and perhaps oppression, that may have produced a ripple effect on the lives of British

Yemenis today. This research provides an opportunity for British Yemeni young people to represent their living and being through their own words, enabling a clear understanding of their lived worlds. It is about privileging the participants as knowers of their knowledge or at least having their problems heard equally as other more dominant groups.

Bhabha [84] develops post-colonial theory on a different level and one that I feel most resonates with the British Yemeni context today. He engages with the idea that diversity is brought about by various cultural encounters and that individuals from post-colonial cultures can only be described as having 'cultural hybridity'—the mixture of cultural influences that allows the mixing of both the colonised country and pre-existing traditional customs [84]. Bhabha focuses on 'mimicry' as a means by which the colonised adapt the culture (language, clothing, food, education, etc.) of the coloniser [85, 94, 95]. A study by Hutnik and Street [96] reveals how British Indians' self-categorised differently in specific cultural contexts, while another study by Modood et al. [97] discloses the complex ways in which young British people of Caribbean and Asian origin manage to retain the aspects of older cultural practices, yet at the same time modify some to allow modification. Literature from these prominent post-colonial scholars, as well as others [79, 80, 98, 99], shows how colonisation has led to cultural, linguistic and religious differences among populations and also the possible emergence of historically constructed groups [48, 100].

Ethnicity is, thus, not simply a historical legacy of migration or conquest, rather it is constantly undergoing redefinition and reconstruction [100]. These are examples of how people from colonised countries balance between desires to root themselves in their communities of origin, while at the same time making use of the opportunities available in British culture. As a result, hybrid identity is formed with significant overlaps and mixtures of cultural practices [101, 102]. Although I do not use the term mimicry as such to explore the mixture of ethnic and national cultures of British Yemenis in my study, I understand the relevance of mimicry in the context of the desire for Yemenis, as an ethnic minority group in Britain, to produce unique cultural hybridity from a mixture of their Yemeni culture as well as their national British culture.

As a result of the British colonisation of Yemen, many Yemenis migrated to various cities in Britain [103, 104]. Dahya [105] documents the migration of some Yemenis to Sheffield and South Shields in the period of 1945–1950, and describes the history of several married men, who despite having left their wives and children behind in Yemen, continued to retain their ties with their families and villages by sending money home regularly [105]. His paper shows how the settlers carried out practices linked to their homeland. Some of the practices included using their Arabic language in their everyday conversation, dressing traditionally on special occasions, buying mutton from Yemeni butchers and making it into a stew and serving it in a huge dish according to Yemeni custom. They extend their hospitality to visitors in the same way as they would have done in Yemen [105], continuing their customs and traditions.

Yemenis also represent the first significant Muslim community to settle in Britain [106]. They projected their religious connections to Islam during the weekends, public holidays and the annual summer holidays by attending mosques that also served as a centre of social and recreational activities [107]. Most settlers continue to carry out their prescribed duties faithfully, such as prayers and fasts. This has been a continued practice throughout the generations.

Other literature on early Yemeni settlers focuses on the working and family status of Yemenis in Britain. When they first settled in Britain, Yemenis often formed a

distinct isolated community [108] and so were disconnected from British culture [109]. Reasons alluded to, in these articles, included the fear of a loss of culture and identity, and so like other Muslim ethnic minorities, the early Yemeni settlers may have attempted to perhaps establish an identity of difference [110]. However, such disconnections may have resulted in ethnic isolation and the congregation of Yemeni communities in specific areas in Britain [111]. The only reported efforts to marginally ameliorate Yemeni isolation was in South Shields, where prominent Yemeni community figures contributed by providing a mosque, religious education for men and women and an Arabic newspaper reporting British-related news, as well as news from Yemen [108].

Other research also shows that the integration between the Yemeni community and the British public was minimal [112], in part because the British chose to see Yemenis as different, and in part because the Yemenis chose to isolate themselves. Working in semi-skilled positions, Yemenis clustered together, lived in overcrowded houses and got by with a smattering of English [113]. To the British, the Yemenis were common labourers and not truly part of British society, and the Yemenis saw themselves as villagers whose primary focus was their homeland [112]. In effect, the Yemenis claimed to be temporary migrants, putting down only those roots, such as home ownership, that would enable them to accomplish their mission of saving for their return. The relative lack of support networks and institutions, apart from workers' unions, is indicative of Yemenis' strong belief in their eventual and inevitable return home [114]. Key political institutions in Britain were formulated by the Yemeni immigrants, that instead of being interested in workers' conditions in Britain, targeted socio-economic and political developments in Yemen [115]. Furthermore, Yemeni migration, over 30 years before the waves of post-World War II immigrants from other parts of the empire, enabled them, as a small group, to avoid notice [116]. This may provide an explanation for the minimal literature on Yemenis in Britain currently.

Living in Britain for generations now, and with the current voluntary (or enforced) migration of Yemenis from their native homeland due to its current political instability [117], the integration of Yemeni and British culture was and continues to be inevitable. The effect of this integration is the possible formation of a merging of ethnic and national cultures, or as Bhabha [84] puts it, cultural hybridity. Such cultural changes have continued to lead to a gradual shift from pre-existing roots and traditional customs to national influences of mainstream culture [118]. Within the generational changes (and with the passing of time and possibly more integration into the country of residence), findings may show the extent as to which a culture is mainstream or subculture. I also argue that cultural identity is better understood as a combination of both ethnic identity (or subculture—rooted in historical origins) and national identity (or mainstream culture—coming from the country of upbringing). The contact between two or more different cultures results in acculturation—a new, composite culture that consists of existing cultural features combined with newly generated features [119, 120].

As I have discussed in this section, post-colonial theory is one of the ways in which the agency of young people, with Yemeni heritage living in the country of the coloniser, can be explored. It may explain some elements of practices that young people experience and are experiencing, perhaps developed from their family histories and practices. I now move onto another way of exploring the interrelationship of agency and structure in the lives of young people, by considering the cross-cutting historical, ethnic and cultural dimensions, of living that has been termed intersectionality [121].

4.3 Intersectionality theory

The concept of intersectionality refers to the interactivity of social identity structures or markers (race, class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, age and religion) in fostering life experiences [121]. British Yemeni young people are not only young (age), British (nationality) and Yemeni (ethnicity), but they are also of a different skin colour to others in Britain (race), have different socio-economic and class backgrounds (class), are mostly Muslims (religion) and have many other interconnecting social identity markers. The focus of intersectionality is on the interaction of multiple identities markers and how these may suggest possible experiences of exclusion and subordination [122], privilege and oppression [121], and in possibly addressing the fundamental and pervasive concern of difference and diversity [123]. I am not suggesting that British Yemenis are either privileged or oppressed, rather this wide spectrum entails some exploration of their experiences in relation to possible power structures that may have produced certain inequalities in their lives, both as individuals and as communities. British Yemenis are different from other groups in Britain, but also to each other, and this diversity may manifest in some specific, even subtle, forms of intersecting inequalities. Instead of the idea that inequalities result simply from the accumulation of independent risk factors, intersectionality enables an understanding of the multi-dimensional relationships, modalities of social relations and subject formations [124]. It is in the interaction of those inequalities that the distinctive dynamics at their multidimensional interface can be captured [125, 126].

There are different ways in which intersectionality has been used in research. Many studies have used it as a theory to explore social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies, and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power [122]. Other studies focus on its use in self-identification, social networks, religious affiliation, language, positive attitudes, endogamy and varied cultural traditions and practices [126]. For example, studies on different ethnic minorities in the United States showed that political attitudes are important in measuring Black identity, language is salient in Mexican-American culture, relational aspects of social identity in British studies [127] and cultural attitudes play a major role in Asian-American identity [128].

Intersectionality also addresses the dynamics within both dominant and oppressed groups, showing how each person is uniquely advantaged and disadvantaged within this matrix [129] and that the cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated but also bound by interlocking social locations [123]. In this way, intersectionality can be used to explore how categories of different social structures within British Yemeni identity are intertwined and mutually constitutive [122, 126]. Although there is no consensus on how an intersectional analysis should be conducted [130, 131], there is flexibility and an open-ended methodology within this approach. This can include focus group discussions, narrative interviews, action research and observations—all with the central role of giving voice, elicited through such approaches.

4.4 Synthesis of ethnic heritage-related theories

Post-colonial theory and intersectionality enhance the understanding of how British Yemeni young people's agency is influenced by their history and social identity structure. In comparison with the other more wide-ranging theories of identity highlighted in **Table 1**, their application may be more pertinent in exploring experiences of young people with an ethnic culture. However, this importance is in the context of

their purpose as analytical tools, rather than a theoretical framework. This is because both post-colonialism and intersectionality, as theories, assume and give, perhaps, an imprecise perception of a fixed, static, essentialist view of who British Yemeni young people are and what they do, based on historical implication or social identity structures. In this doctoral research, I move away from the stagnant conceptualization of British Yemeni identity and argue that what needs unravelling goes beyond factors related to post-colonial theory, and social identity structures of age, race, ethnicity, etc.—it is more about their lived experiences, their living and becoming as they interact with the world around them. However, what post-colonialism and intersectionality might allow is the better appreciation of the nature of the conduct of everyday life.

Furthermore, post-colonial theory specifically relates to the effect of colonialism on British Yemeni young people because of the historical background and struggles of older generations. Although there has been some documentation of this [104, 105, 107, 132, 133] it cannot be assumed that all generations of Yemeni ethnic settlers experience cultural differences or injustice, for example. Moreover, the participants in this study are from first, second and third generations and so may not be as influenced by the historical implications of their parents and grandparents, as early settlers.

Similarly, consideration of various social identity structures, that are intertwined and mutually constitutive, may be highlighted when discussing British Yemeni young people's family histories and practices. However, these social identity structures, even as intersection elements, cannot be fully used as a label or representation of what it means to be a British Yemeni young person. Linking to Said's work [81] on the true representation of the 'other', intersectionality has also been shown to contain post-colonial theoretical perspectives [134]. In this research, I use the interactions implied by post-colonialism and intersectionality to further understand some of the reasons and implications of British Yemeni young people's experiences, moving away from theorising British Yemeni young people's identity and the feeling-of-knowing experiences. In doing this, I provide a representation of their experiences in their living and being, and as Spivak suggests [83], through their own words.

Having explored these identity theories that relate to understanding young people's agency and structure, and those with ethnic heritage, and finding limitations in using these, a shift in thinking towards a different approach was needed—one that does not dwell on the abstracted realities of identity. One such approach is the exploration of personality. I now move to explore some of the traditional personality paradigms, as a different, yet related, approach to the study of young people's agency, and suggest how these ideas may indicate ways of articulating young people's experiences of everyday life.

5. Synthesis—personality

5.1 Personality scholarship

A prominent way of thinking about personality is to see it as a collection of complex and sophisticated entities one that refers to the dynamic integration of the totality of a person's subjective experience and behaviour patterns [135]. From such a perspective personality includes conscious, concrete and habitual behaviour patterns, experiences of self and of the surrounding word, and unconscious behaviour patterns, experiences and views (including perception, cognition, memory) [21, 135]. The outcome is the coordination of multiple dispositions that are built upon habitual

desires and fears, behaviour patterns and intentional states. Therefore, personality derives from the person's capacity to experience subjective states that reflect the internal condition of the body as well as the perception of the external environment within which the body functions [136]. In other words, personality is a multi-level system that is perceived as an individual's unique difference in people, expressed as a emerging pattern of dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations and self-defining life narratives, complexly and differentially located in culture and social context [137]. In this way, a person continues to shape and adapt to a changing internal and external environment [136].

Although definitions of personality vary in accordance with the theoretical perspective from which it is viewed, it can be generally defined by *the type of person you are, shown by the way you behave, think, and feel*[3]. Much mainstream psychological understandings see the person as surrounded by numerous inputs, which enter and are processed internally *via* the brain, releasing outputs in the form of behaviour, thoughts and emotions [138]—hence *behave, think and feel* in the definition. Furthermore, personality is historically based upon several different widely encompassing paradigms, rooted in different sources [139]. The interplay of the behaviour settings, behavioural rules or personality traits, and the individual pursuits are essential in understanding person-environment transactions. Furthermore, the distinctive behavioural personality signature of a person may happen at different settings and situations.

I focus on personality psychology as a means of understanding young people's agency. Personality psychology has been systematically studied since the 1930s [140–143], and can be traced back in its ancestry to the ancient Greeks and Roman physicians and philosophers [144]. Historically, personality appears as a specified term with the aim of achieving a scientific understanding of individuality [145]. Many theories have been verbalised to enable the understanding of the complexity of personality—some suggest that it is biological and conceived to have genetic as well as environmental origins, others include a social dimension, and the impact of social forces on the growing person, while others view it as related to clinical aspects of personality studies, examining people who have suffered adaptive and adjustive failures. These different viewpoints are provided in **Table 2**, focusing on the different encompassing paradigms in this field.

These paradigms—in **Table 2**—are some of the important concepts in understanding personality, which provide some suggestions and insights into young people's agency. I now evaluate some of these personality paradigms within the context of the lived lives of British Yemeni young people.

5.2 Synthesis of personality scholarship

Understanding British Yemeni young people's evolving personality is, I would argue, imperative in the exploration of lived daily experiences. This is because it allows researchers to get a sense of how people's characteristics develop, change and impact their lived realities. I argue that studying personality in paradigms, such as those discussed in **Table 2**, looks at individualised outcome, rather than the process of understanding experiences in their totality, and so only partially provides direction in the study of young people's agency and lived experiences. This is because such ideas focus on individualised narrated accounts about the self, which I feel is inadequate for

[3] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/personality

Personality paradigms	Key studies on the paradigm
Biochemical theory	Temperaments are regarded as inborn biologically based, psychological tendencies that underlie individual differences in personality with intrinsic paths of development [146]. Personality development corresponds to four temperaments associated with variations: blood (sanguine), black bile (melancholic), yellow bile (choleric) and phlegm (phlegmatic) [144]. This theory has survived, and its application is valid, in some form, for more than 2500 years [147].
Psychoanalytic approach	Focus is on the unconscious mind, and involves empirical research [148] and Freud's psychoanalytic models of cognition in terms of behaviour and consciousness [149].
Personality Trait	Describes personality traits [150]—numerically—as orthogonal phenomena [151], and as universal individual behaviour within the person-situation debate [152]. Personality traits focuses on the effect of the situation against the effect of the person on behaviour [153]. This has led to the arrival of the 'big five' personality traits: extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to experience (or culture) [154]. There is also a chaotic plethora of personality constructs with different labels that have similar meaning to this and an example of such is the study on factors (including a combination of introversion, extraversion, emotional stability and self-determinism) which may determine personality traits [155].
Biological approach	Focuses on the nervous system's association with personality traits. Examples include linking the amygdala to aggression and certain types of emotionality [156], the hormone testosterone in to sociability and positive affectivity as well as aggressiveness and sexuality [157] and the neurotransmitter serotonin to regulation[158]. In addition, the influence of behavioural genetics on personality in twin studies has been documented [159, 160] the influence of family in children personality related outcomes and understanding the distal rather than proximal causes of behaviour [161].
Evolutionary psychology	Focuses on the possibility that behavioural patterns are human nature in itself, considering the evolutionary history environment and adaptation [162]. This paradigm faces criticism from sexuality studies [163], and behavioural phenomena [164].
Behaviourist approach	Views behaviour exclusively as a function of environmentally imposed reinforcement contingencies, removing unobserved mediators such as memories, perceptions and thoughts. This provides many restrictions in the study of social learning [165], and social cognition [166], as well as the cognitive-affective personality system [167].
Social-cognitive approach	Derived from behaviourist paradigm, this focuses on cognitive processes (perception and memory). Literature includes work on self-comparison [168], relational schemas [169], cognitive-affective processing system [170] and a person's fundamental worldview (incremental versus entity), goal orientation (learning versus performance) and behavioural pattern in response to failure (proficiency versus helplessness) [171].
Humanistic approach	Holds scientific values, and looks at the human being phenomenologically, through the understanding experience of reality [172], and so is useful when examining people of different cultures [173].

Table 2.
Some of the traditional personality paradigms.

the focus of the research, as such, ideas underemphasise the person in their concrete relational actions in systems of activity. Human personality also matures and evolves through lived experiences [174] and so understanding the person as a unique, whole individual requires bringing together different and distinct approaches that focus on a non-essentialisation of that person, and with the passage of time.

For example, personality traits are useful in reflecting the tendency for a person to respond in certain ways under certain point in time, but it does fully consider the social context or arrangements in which these circumstances occur or how they might change, and so cannot truly account for the overall and evolving personality of a person. Other personality paradigms rely on memory of past histories and perception, and although this is not necessarily an issue, the past that is written in the present or informed by the present and the near future may be interpreted in a way that may not give a representation intended by the narrator. It also depends on the assumption that people may relate stories that are expected of them or try and 'fill in the gaps' in their stories by answering questions that relate to the paradigms discussed. Other paradigms consider a person as an agent with the ability to make and choose appropriate plans that allow them to live their daily lives with values and virtues (mental, emotional and behavioural) significant to them and others around them. Although this may be true, it does not consider the societal pressure, the cultural expectations or the heterogeneity of people in their social environments; one's values and valued capabilities are not inherently in-built, rather they are learned through relational and cultural activity.

In framing this research, I am therefore opposed to using the personality paradigms mentioned in **Table 2** in articulating experiences and so direct my attention in a different path, one that focuses on personality as an evolving phenomenon that can be understood in the context of everyday living and being. This is where the concept of the conduct of everyday life becomes a useful tool.

Having discussed the limitations of articulating experiences through certain identity approaches and traditional personality paradigm—and the notion that they all too easily provide a rather fixed, static, essentialist view of who British Yemeni young people are, and what they do—I now move on to discussing how best to explore the actions and activities of people through the concept of the conduct of everyday life. I discuss why the conduct of everyday life has been chosen as a theoretical framework and why it provides a more concrete way of understanding personality and articulating lived experiences of British Yemeni young people.

6. Human experience scholarship

6.1 The conduct of everyday life

The conduct of everyday life explores the primacy of researching human actions in the contradictory and intersubjective context of everyday life [68, 175]. The concept opposes testing subjects against abstract *a priori* theories that fail to grasp the centrality of life as lived and living. Agency is seen as inseparable from the plurality of life contexts and one's individual conduct is in constant functional ordination with others [68]. This is one of the main reasons for using the conduct of everyday life in this doctoral research. As explained in the introduction section of this chapter, the focus is on understanding British Yemeni young people's experiences that privilege the relational nexus between the subject and the world.

Human experience and activity have been studied extensively, but the question of how and why one might conduct one's life has only recently started to receive attention [176]. Studying the conduct of everyday life is multi-disciplinary and the concept can be used in various areas including child development across different institutional settings in learning and education [177, 178], therapy [179, 180], family conduct [181],

in studying crisis, conflict and contradictory situations [182–186], homelessness [187] and different fields in sociology [188, 189], people. These different areas of study show the diversity in using the conduct of everyday life to examine how people live as active subjects within the contexts of their daily lives, recognising the dilemmas and contradictions people face in contemporary society [190].

The conceptual relevance of exploring everyday activities of individuals enables the organisation, integration and sense-making of the multiplicity of social relations and contradictory demands in and across engagements in different contexts [191, 192]. The concept considers how people collaboratively produce and reproduce their life through daily activities, habits, routines and personal arrangements of things and social relations. It directs attention to the social conditions in and with which people act, participate, and live their everyday life and incorporates the question of how people are subjected to socio-material dispositions of power, knowledge and discourse.

The focus in the study of everyday life is in activities, situated in and across a multiplicity of spaces and context [193]. These activities are the sum total of relations, which together build up an articulation of the human experience [194]. Human activity is systematically centred around the lived experiences, agency and efforts of living and being. In studying the conduct of everyday life, I turn towards exploring how psychological phenomena and problems are given content that relates to the holistic exploration of lived experiences. In this way, I show how the concept of the conduct of everyday life opens avenues to overcome the abstract individualism of psychology that encloses subjects in isolated psychological special functions. The concept also contributes to *'a psychological epistemology, grasping the richness, complexity and connectedness of psychological phenomena as well as the interrelations between human subjects and the world'* ([191], p. 3). An individual cannot be studied in isolation, as there is a constant relationship between the individual and the society, and so is *'co-created through the fabric of the societal world'* [191].

The choice to study the conduct of everyday life in this research is supported by the current changes in society in terms of patterns of social living, migration, globalisation, financial situations, international conflict and increasing individualism [192]. There is a greater social and cultural heterogeneity and complexity in today's times and so a variety of problems are continuously emerging. A current example is the struggles and difficulties in the recent Covid pandemic of 2019–2021. Recent literature on living in a world with Covid [195–198] shows some of the challenges people have encountered in organising and conducting their daily lives and how the period brought changes for society, significantly disrupting everyday life, albeit at different levels in different regions of the world. Such changes invite psychological studies to understand how people confront and experience local changes, in the conduct of their everyday living and being. Furthermore, looking at the conduct of everyday lives enables researchers to explore how people go through different trajectories and shifts, in relation to the social systems [199], while at the same time taking the historical, cultural, local and global conditions of living and being [200]. The conduct of everyday life also offers possibilities for collective work on the resolution of social conflicts [8, 68, 190, 201] and enables researchers to develop models or frameworks catered towards the nature and context of specific research.

There are many approaches to studying the practical applications of the conduct of everyday life. One such example is the Day Reconstruction Method [202]. This method assesses how people experience the various activities and settings of their lives, by systematically reconstructing their activities and experiences of

the preceding day, studying the person-behaviour-situation in a time sequence. Kahneman et al.'s work [202] focused on the activities and circumstances of working mothers over a full day. The participants were asked to construct a diary consisting of a sequence of episodes, revived from memories of the previous day. This was then grouped by activity or by interaction with others. They were then asked to describe each episode by answering questions about the situation and about the feelings that they experienced. This method allows the capturing of the impact of a situation on a person, and its location in the sequence of situations and activities across the day. Diaries were used to record daily experiences. The Day Reconstruction Method, however, poses some challenges. Firstly, it does not consider the impact that social arrangements may have on how people live their daily lives [8]. Secondly, it does not consider changes with time, the development of habits (perhaps through repeated actions) and the effects of other possible incidents. Thirdly, it reduced situations to behaviour, discounting how events and interpersonal relations were affected by the settings and the interplay between personality, situational and behavioural factors [203]. As a result, the understanding of the relation between behaviour, situation and person is limited and to some extent misrepresented [8].

Other methods have also been used to translate the concept of everyday life from theory into practice. Examples include Ingold's work on the maze and the labyrinth as alternative models of education [177], Hojholt's work on the ethnographic methodology on children's problems in school and their situated behaviour to understand conflictual social interplay between persons in social practice [204] and Hodgetts and colleagues' work on the ordinary as well as the extraordinary in the lives and struggles of homeless people [187]. Such studies provide an extensive description of studying the conduct of everyday life by giving primacy to actions. Although these approaches and methodologies are prodigious and provide a broad approach for the study of the conduct of everyday life, I looked for an approach that works with the participants in my research, I explored the literature on personality and identity, one that uses the concept of the day life, thereby avoiding essentialisation and one that is also manageable within the time frame of the study. Such an approach is Dreier's [8] theory of a person. I argue that this theory explores human psychological functioning, as conceptualised in relation to the overall structural nexus of social practice, and it considers the characterisation of individuals in terms of their stable and distinctive qualities, as well as the processes that cause these rationalities.

6.1.1 Dreier's theory of a person

Dreier's theory of a person [8] provides a comprehensive person-situation-activity approach to understanding personality and/or personhood. I use these terms interchangeable to mean the status of being a person that experiences life and is continuously changing and evolving with time. The theory emphasis is on actions and activities of a person across a day, throughout different settings and at different times. In this way, it examines the relationship between lived activity in those different social contexts, and the person's configuration of those strands of activity, which knot-together and give a sense of the person. As a person moves and engages with different social contexts in their daily life, they also act in specific ways as they experience day to day events and living. Such understanding enables a critique of both psychologised trait-based notions and constructivist notions of personality. Using the

theory of a person, I examine how people express themselves through their activities and actions, emphasising how these diverse processes evolve and become integrated to give each person a distinctive evolving personality or personhood.

Activities are affected by their social arrangements and practices, within different social contexts of which the person is a part. Dreier's theory of a person examines how a person is studied as existing in movement across time and contexts, and in several situations, as part of the social contexts and practices that take place [8]. Persons associate different concerns, purposes and histories with such different activities, relations, practices and contexts. The meaning and course of events and situations are also affected by the context and arrangements in which they occur. In this way, a person goes through life contributing to re-producing their social conditions. They also develop by expanding the degree to which they take part in having these conditions at their commands [199]. Therefore, a person is viewed as a participant involved in personal trajectories in relation to structural arrangements of social practices [199]. He/she is also theorised from the standpoint of the subject in his/her immediate life situation *vis-à-vis* an overall social structure [205].

Dreier's theory of a person focuses on three main areas: (1) order and arrangement; (2) situated participation and movement, (3) and—when coordinated, conducted and accomplished, considering the complexity of everyday life, offers insight into the conduct of everyday life. Each of these areas is interlinked, further elaborated and collectively constitute the theory of a person. **Figure 2** shows my interpretation of the theory of a person in relation to each of these strands.

6.1.2 Applying Drier's theory of a person

I now elaborate my understanding of each of these strands, relating it to the context of my research of British Yemeni young people's experiences. Having extensively read and re-read Dreier's paper on personality and the conduct of everyday life [8], I extracted some further key elements (shown here in italics) from these three main strands (bolded and italicised). These key elements became the advanced codes for analysis and thus the application of the theory of a person to the narratives of my participants.

6.1.2.1 Order and arrangement

A person is viewed as being part of a society with a certain order and arrangement of social practices; these are the diverse *social contexts*, or *places*, that make up the spatial dimensions of their everyday life. These are separate from each other, yet also

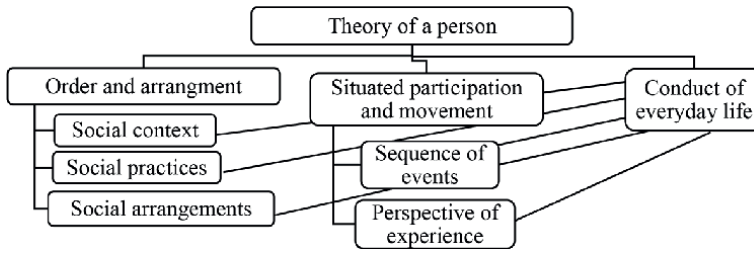

Figure 2.
Dreier's theory of a person.

linked to other social contexts in particular ways which channel how social practices may be pursued across them.

To participate in *social practices* within those social contexts, there are particular *concerns*, *demands and responsibilities* for a person. The *activities* of persons and the *relations* between persons are part of these social practices. Social practices may manifest in activities that hold *purpose and meaning* for the individual and can be derived from *family histories and practices*, as well as a person's other practices, such as work or studies. Family histories and practices can also highlight the extent to which theories such as post-colonialism and intersectionality contribute to the social practices of British Yemeni young people. Social practices take place in particular social contexts and are affected by their social arrangements.

The *arrangement* of social context defines who counts as a legitimate participant, the particular social positions in which a person takes part, and the arrangements for when a person may shift to another position in that context or participate in other parts of its social practices. This arrangement of the day in *time* (and over time) and in establishing some sort of *order* as to when a person may or must participate in a particular social context. As a person moves across social contexts, they prioritise their time and order their efforts, activities and commitments, learning to cope with living a complex everyday life. The order and time in which a person arranges their social practices, in social context, and with different relations establishes a structure in a person's daily life. This may introduce rhythms or activities and certain shifts, breaks and inner tensions during everyday activities.

6.1.2.2 Situated participation and movement

People carry out a *sequence of activities* that become *habits* of activities. The activities and experiences are part of their relations with others which depend on and hang together in social practices. A person's agency is also deeply entrenched in the social practices they engage in, and so a person is seen as participating in different situations and movements. In these situations, a person associates particular concerns with particular social contexts and has particular things at stake in them. They also pay attention to particular things, gather particular experiences, are in and nurture particular states of mind, and reflect on their lives in particular ways [8]. As soon as they move into other social contexts, they encounter other arrangements, positions, relations and co-participants, where they have other concerns and other things at stake, and so their participation takes on other meanings. Activities are also situated in a location from where their *perspectives of experience* and their activities reach out into the world. They also change as a person encounters other *changes* in situation and because of *reflections*.

6.1.2.3 The conduct of everyday life

A person conducts their own life through the structure they have in place—their order and arrangements as well as their situated participation and movement. The conduct of everyday life here is a characteristic individual way of living, an accomplishment of effectively managing and coordinating the diverse activities and commitment in many social contexts and relations. It is a *'deeply personal endeavour... a personal arrangement in relation to the social arrangement of everyday life'* ([8], p. 12). Coordination is in routines and habits that introduce a degree of ordinariness. However, changes to routines are also manifested in individual differences in the ways

in which persons prefer to conduct their everyday lives. The hope is that one will reach a personally necessary and desired balance of activities and commitments across contexts and days. By establishing a conduct of everyday life, a person's life becomes marked by their commitments to others [206]. A person also develops their personal conduct of everyday life by learning new skills and understanding that helps the person get through transitions in relation to shifts and breaks in their everyday activities, relations, situations and social contexts. Some of these shifts may be particularly intense and complicated when persons are affected by sudden, disruptive events and these change the perspective of experiences as well as the habits formed.

As shown in **Figure 3**, the conduct of everyday life expresses a synthesis of the areas within order and arrangement, and participation and movement. It emphasises the sociality of human subjectivity, showing a person being the social subject in their psychological processes. From this perspective, the individual has a first-person perspective of their real-life situation as well as its mediation through all-embracing social structures that are very much interconnected and intertwined and that permeate in the context of the conduct of the everyday life and living.

In summary, the theory of person addresses phenomena that pose questions regarding what it means to be a person, producing a theoretical proposal that examines how the order of everyday lives affects the functioning of a person [8]. Although the theory was developed based on Dreier's theoretically motivated studies of psychological interventions in relation to psychotherapy [179] and learning [207], it can be applied to other fields of research. Arguing in favour of a more ecologically valid approach to theorising personality, and by enabling the study of the subjective dimensions of person-situation-activity, Dreier's theory offers a way of linking research on personality with research on the social processes whereby persons conduct their everyday lives. The theory presents how the conduct of everyday life—a

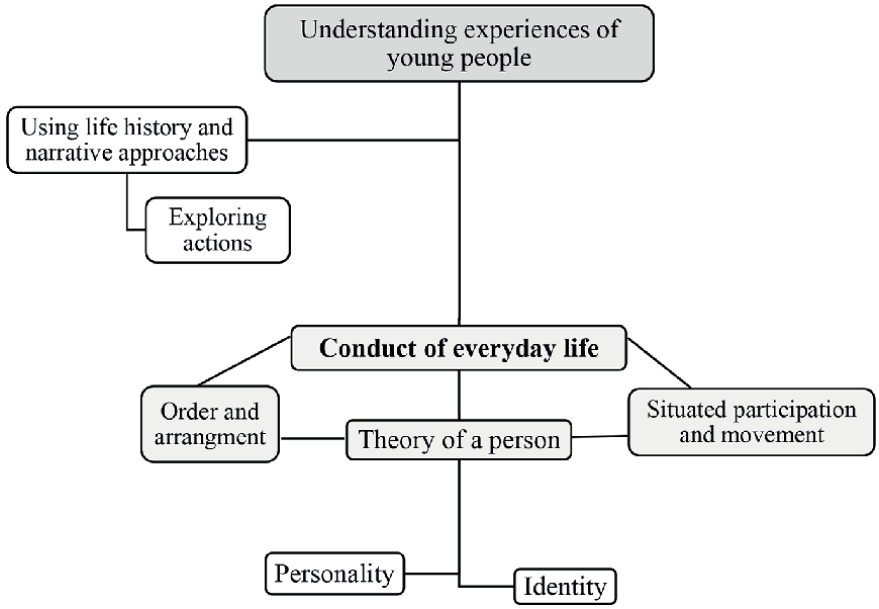

Figure 3.
Developed approach in the study of young people's experiences.

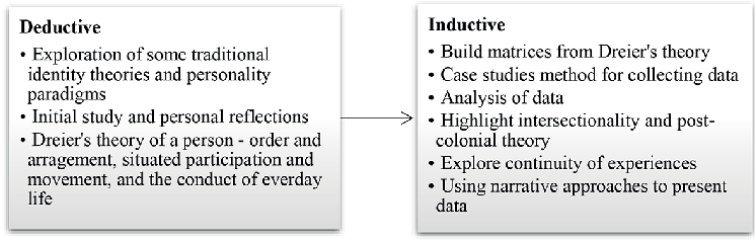

Figure 4.
A deductive-inductive approach to understanding the experiences of British Yemeni young people.

mediating category between individual subjects and societal structures [8]—plays a central role in understanding lived experiences.

Dreier's theory of a person focuses on studying human behaviour in the context of the conduct of everyday life and in this doctoral research I employ a deductive-inductive approach to data analysis using Dreier's theory as the basis of my conceptual model. This approach is shown in **Figure 4**.

I argue that such approach allows a more inclusive exploration of British Yemeni young people's agency and structure.

6.2 Personhood in practice

Personhood in practice [208] as a concept relates to building and changes in habits. The building and configuring of habits relates to both incremental learning processes (habit development and adaptation) and development shifts (habit reconfiguration), as the individual actively engages across and within different social and cultural contexts. Learning processes and development shifts (adaptive habits or habits reflexively configured) are understood in this context as meaning—operationalised through actions associated with challenges of everyday living. Studying habits within the context of learning and development in people's evolving actions and activities is paramount to understanding the experiences of the young people in this research. It is in the continuity of experiencing that learning and development is bought about. Roth's understanding of development involves the idea that experience is not only cumulative-quantitative changes in habits but can also be transformative qualitative changes in behaviour [208]. This is explored elsewhere in my writing.

7. Linking theoretical ideas

Having explored some of the prominent work of identity and personality as a means of understanding young people's agency, as well as settling on the conduct of everyday life in the theory of a person as a conceptual framework for such understanding, I now connect these overlapping yet distinct constructs, positioning post-colonialism and intersectionality within such synthesis. The link between identity and personality is an extensive and ongoing discussion [209] and covers different fields of research. In my review of the literature in and around identity and personality, there appear, at first sight, to be little in terms of an overlap between the thinking and major traditions of these concepts. Through a focus on the activities and daily actions of people, in the context of the conduct of everyday life, I show how, in using life

histories and narratives, a link can be established. This enables a focused understanding of personality, which in turn reflects identity in a way that provides a comprehensive way of understanding lived experiences of British Yemeni young people.

In other words, to understand British Yemeni young people's experiences, one must begin with the young person's narrative, his/her story, but in a way that does not ask about the essentialising ways of and thinking about young people—as either individualised singular products of traits, or part of a pre-determined set of interactions with society. Instead, the focus should be in asking about the activities and actions of the young person, and how this is configured through an evolving set of experiences in the conduct of everyday life. In this way, both aspects of the homogeneity and heterogeneity of being a British Yemeni young person—that relate to the way the person conducts his/her life—are presented.

This change in thinking and questioning was very much inspired and provoked by a pilot study (on five British Yemeni young people), from my own reflections of my personal experiences and through conversations and discussions with my supervisors and other academics. It became apparent that an overemphasis on particular mainstream view of identity and personality did not seem to reconcile themselves too readily with regard to what people do, and how and why they do what they do. There is also an extra dimension that is potentially underemphasised in examining social identity structures, the heritage of young people that relates to their cultural, historic positioning, the issues of colonialism and the use of power, and defining how they are connected in terms of the identity of nations, but also the young people and their family's position in the context of dominant culture. Using a life stories and narrative approach [210] allows the connections between these ideas to develop. The proposal here is to let the story speak for the young person, and so present an evolving sense of their personality and identity over time developed with others in particular social fields of experience that relate to elements of the culture and social contexts.

Life histories and narratives approaches were explored earlier in this chapter as a theory for understanding identity, and I appreciate its relevance here. However, I use this as a methodological approach as it serves a more functional practical role in application for an insight into experiences [77]. In contrast to the other theories explored in **Tables 1** and **2**, narratives, or stories of experiences, emphasise an individual life lived [211], giving information on identity and personality in terms of the complex and contextual ways in which identity development, symbols, traits and characteristic adaptations (and so forth) manifest. Because identity is a much more specific aspect of the self, and involves conscious awareness, change or situational variability, it is in the narrative of the young people's experiences in the conduct of everyday life that integrates personality, development, agency and structure [212], and in which identity can be truly understood. Stories also allow for a feeling of coherence across time and place, providing a sense of purpose and meaning. Such stories change and evolve as lived experiences occur [210], and this also encourages using a longitudinal approach in this research.

This approach of starting with the narrative or story of activities and actions is what I adopt in this research and is depicted in **Figure 3**.

As shown in **Figure 3**, through using life history and narrative approaches to explore actions of British Yemeni young people, the conduct of everyday life (using Dreier's theory of a person) provides a representation of the young person's personality, which in turn reflects their identity. This does not mean that I completely disregard the ideas of the identity theories, but only explore them if there is a reference to them in the young persons' narrative. In other words, in analysing the young people's

narratives of their activities, the implications of traditional identity theories and personality paradigms may be discussed, but only in relation to such activities.

This shift in thinking resulted in devising a set of possible questions that can be countered in the analysis of the narrative. Examples of such questions include the following: What do the narratives say about personality traits, characteristic adaptation and other traditional personality paradigms? Does the narrative produce a comparison between cultures? What does the narrative say about the effect of technology and/or consumerism? In the narratives, are there any symbols or language that developed in social interactions with which the young people associate and interact? These questions can only be applied in the analysis stage of the research once all data was compiled. Furthermore, questions on how the narrative represents the young person in relation to direct (or indirect) influences of post-colonialism or whether they reveal any forms of inequalities due to different social identity structures can be further studied. It is through these narratives that these questions can be explored within the context of identity and personality but only within the narrative of the young people. This is an alternative way of exploring lived experiences of British Yemeni Young people which perhaps connects more present theories within identity, post-colonialism and intersectionality, and personality.

Specific daily narrative experiences are not only contextualised in time and context, but they also reveal life story constructs that the young person uses to make meaning of their past experiences. It also provides a feeling of personal continuity that gives a sense of their life story [210]. The focus is on how individuals make an integrative meaning of their lives, and these may provide meaning that exhibit different mentalities in accordance with their contexts. In using case studies as a methodology, I offer a rich, contextualised detail of the cultural representation of young people. I focus on how young people make sense of their lives through emphasis on narratives that integrate past and present experiences, with some attention to the future. Although this is best done in an autobiographical way (as done in [213–215]), longitudinal case studies of stories of some daily activities can also provide substantial amounts of information on the lived lives of my participants, as well as how young people make sense of small slices of their lives. Through such a narrative, I capture life as lived, showing how people continue to build their personality through the actions and thought processes that happen and are shown through their everyday conduct and experiences as they live it, day by day. In this way, personality is studied through situated, daily actions of the person.

8. Case study of British Yemeni young people

The experiences of six British Yemeni young people—in the actions they do in their daily lives—have been explored using the research approach and design, illustrated in **Figure 5**.

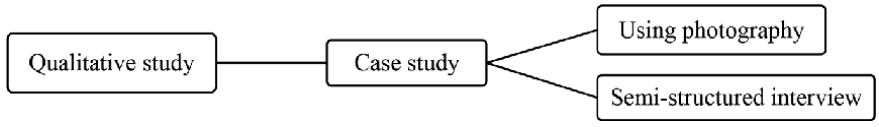

Figure 5.
A summary of the research approach and design.

Case studies [216] are used to explore the conduct of everyday life in real-life settings, focusing particularly on the experiences of six British Yemeni young people, as six different cases. Firstly, I examine each case on its own, used content directed approach for analysis of each case and then explore the main themes found in the six cases using thematic analysis. I then used narrative approaches to report the research findings. By focusing on the developed conceptual framework, I refrain from essentializing what British Yemeni young people are and do and avoid generalising their experiences as much as possible. However, in engaging with some of the nuance of their lived experiences, the cultural and social arrangements of experiences, inevitably, reflect a broad picture of British Yemeni subcultures and groups. I show in my findings how this illustrates some of the evolved identities and personality, and how these trajectories are suggestive of British Yemenis young people's biographies, in their both homogeneity and heterogeneity.

The empirical study is presented more fully in subsequent chapters of my thesis[1]. However, I will summarise here the empirical findings of my research.

8.1 Finding 1

The conduct of everyday life incorporates the theoretical ideas into practical application by studying the psychological processes of experiences, focusing on activities and action, within the social and material contexts of their everyday living [176]. Going beyond psychological theory and research, the young people's collective participation in everyday practice and their efforts to handle the conditions, relations, concerns and struggles in life are explored in a manner that articulates their subjective experience and participations in and across different social contexts in the fabric of everyday life. This makes it ideal in studying the types of everyday experiences British Yemeni young people have.

8.2 Findings 2

The conduct of everyday life also considers how people make and live their everyday life in the patterns of daily activities, routines and personal arrangements of things and social relations. This makes it useful in exploring the different forms of learning and development British Yemeni young people experience over time. With additional ideas from Roth in personhood in practice [217], changes to everyday living explore learning in ways that inform cumulative-quantitative shifts in how a young person sees their doing, as well as through transformative-qualitative changes in personhood.

8.3 Findings 3

Considering the ethnic, historical and cultural dimensions of my participants, the conduct of everyday life, with supporting ideas from intersectionality and post-colonialism, also directs attention to the social conditions in which people participate and live their everyday life and includes the question of how people are subjected to socio-material dispositions of power, knowledge and discourse. This enables an understanding of the evolving social and cultural personhood of British Yemeni young people.

8.4 Findings 4

The conduct of everyday life is a key concept for understanding British Yemeni young people's active efforts in conducting and organising their day-to-day activities, that is also suggestive of their overall evolving biography. Research on the conduct of life provides details on how British Yemeni young people, both as individuals and as a collective community, are involved and subjected to the powers, forces and complexities of their daily experiences. Based on such analysis and thinking, my cumulative understanding of my research findings suggests that British Yemeni young people are young people first, and yet their lives are infused by cultural hybridity as second. Although there are emerging themes of body image, language, home, food and religion [15] that display the cultural hybridity of the young people, their age implies that they are young people first. The evidence and theorisation of the cases here suggest that it is in that (interconnected) order that one can understand and articulate the young people's experiences.

9. Conclusion

This chapter presents a conceptual and methodological approach for understanding British Yemeni young people's agency and associated and interconnected sets of structure and cultures. This framework is distinctive for two main reasons. Firstly, the framework consists of a multi-dimensional focus, whereby it considers various paradigms of personal and social identity, agency, reflexivity, personality, personhood and the conduct of everyday life. Previous literature has focused on articulating experiences through developing an understanding of identity formation [31, 32, 41], including Côté's ideas of youth identity [12, 40], Crenshaw and Mccall's positioning on intersectionality and the interactivity of social structures [125, 218], and Bhabha's exploration on influences of post-colonial theory in the location of culture [84]. Although these are valuable, I have developed a conceptual framework that integrates these theories, focusing primarily on personality, personhood and the conduct of everyday life. Particularly, I use Dreier's theory of a person [8]—in what British Yemeni young people do what they do and why they do it—and Roth's understanding of personhood in practice [208]—in the learning and development within the context of continuity of experience—to assemble a framework that enables the interlinking between agency and structure, which is suggestive of a person's evolving personality, and reflects their practiced identity. This is important because it avoids essentialising people based on their social identity structures and instead declares that it is the conduct of their everyday life that enunciates what it means to be a British Yemeni young person.

Secondly, the approach developed focuses on activity and action, consolidating other studies of the conduct of everyday life [68], but with a focus on an ethnic minority group in Britain. This opens up the study of the conduct of life to additional critical analyses of embodiment. Such work compliments and extends studies, in this epistemic field by examining the dynamics and interactions between self and society where human subjectivities are a reflection of, but not determined by, the social and cultural arrangements. In fact, the subjectivities of young people in this study recognise how individuals relate to and potentially change the social arrangements of society through a hybridity of evolving actions, habits, reconfigurations and forms of reflexivity.

I show how, in applying combinations of these theories and ideas to British Yemeni young people, a deeper sense of understanding their cultural, historical and social-embedded experiences is possible. This gives us a sense of who they are, taking together their views and perspectives of a person and their environment in the context of their lived lives.

Additional information

Parts of this chapter were previously published as a doctoral thesis by the same author: "The experiences of British Yemeni young people in the context of the conduct of everyday life" Ahmed, H. (Author). 1 Aug 2023 Student thesis: Phd".

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Section 2

Education and Work

Chapter 3

Re-Examining Transitions to Adulthood among Young People Engaged in Informal Businesses in the City of Accra, Ghana

Robert Lawrence Afutu-Kotey and Maxwell Yeboah-Mensah

Abstract

Using a longitudinal qualitative methodological approach, the study observed the life course and businesses of young people in the city of Accra over the period 2010 to 2023. The study explores the extent to which business engagement in the informal economy among young people contributes to their transitions into adulthood, and the sustainability of these transition gains. Initial observations demonstrated that, many of the young people were able to achieve transition gains, such as, financial independence, afford rental accommodation, provision of support for family and external relations while some were able to enter into marital and cohabiting relationships. However, the sustainability of these transition gains were challenged over time by factors such as poor business performance, difficult economic conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concludes by calling for financial and advisory support to reinvigorate the businesses and sustain the transitions achieved in the life course of the young people.

Keywords: transitions to adulthood, sustainability, young people, informal sector, Ghana

1. Introduction

Young people in many countries across the globe are confronted with several challenges including unemployment and attaining the status of adulthood [1, 2]. Across the African continent, improvement in economic performance over the past few decades have not been accompanied by improvements in employment opportunities for young people and this has affected the transitions of young people into adulthood. The employment situation confronting young people and the challenges in attaining the status of adulthood have been observed in the global North [3] and South as well [4]. However, the challenge is noted to be more pronounced in the global South compared to the North [5].

The challenges confronting the young people especially in Africa have made some scholars to cast various aspersions about their conditions and futures. Ref. [6] for

instance, have described the African youth as a group deprived of resources and stuck in a situation of perpetual waiting. Although frustrated with unemployment and transition challenges, the young people are not just a passive group who do nothing about their situation. Many do engage in several activities as a means of survival. Within the African continent for instance, the young people in an attempt to overtime the challenge of unemployment and making gains in social mobility do engage themselves in several informal economy activities, albeit with the prime objective of earning a living. One of the key sectors within the informal space that have engaged many of the young people in Africa over the past two decades is the rapidly changing mobile telephony sector. Many of the young people do indulge in informal support services of the mobile telephony sector including mobile money services and airtime, the sale of mobile phones and accessories, mobile phone repairs and other services such as transfer of music, and recharging of mobile phone batteries.

Although significant attention have been given to young people involved in informal businesses in Africa [4, 7, 8], very little is known about the benefits young people involved in informal businesses in Africa in particular derive from their engagement in these businesses, and more importantly, the extent to which informal business engagement among the youth contribute to their transitions into the assumption of adult roles or responsibilities. However, an exception is [4] who observed the business influence in the transitions of a group of young people over the period 2010–2017, and observed that engagement in the informal business contributes the young people enjoying financial independence, afford rental accommodation, provide support for family members, and establish and sustain households. What we do not know is the sustainability of these transition gains as a result of the youth engagement in the informal economy. It is in light of the above that this chapter explores the sustainability of young people's transitions using young people involved in the informal mobile telephony sector in the city of Accra as a case study. What is the current state of transitions among young people involved in business in the informal economy? How sustainable are transition gains among young people? An exploration of young people's transition gains and the sustainability of these transitions will contribute to the growing body of literature, which have called for policy support for young people involved in informal businesses generally, and the returns from business in the transitions of young in the global South and Africa to be precise.

2. Young people, transitions to adulthood and business engagement: a theoretical perspective

The United Nations defined the concept "youth" to constitute the age group 15 to 25 years, but this definition is different from that of the National Youth Policy of Ghana which defines youth to include the age group 15–35 years [9], similar to the definition of the African Youth Charter [10]. In the literature however, the terms "youth" and "young people" are frequently used interchangeably to refer to the same group [11], and we do likewise in this chapter. However, in order to get a greater understanding of young people's transitions and their lived experiences with a focus on the rights, duties, and responsibilities that they assume, youth is approached from a life course perspective. Young people who successfully take on these obligations and roles are considered to have acquired adulthood.

Early studies on young people's transitions into adulthood especially within the global North was defined as a process marked by a series of life events [12].

Thus, transitions were seen in the context of school-to-work where young people are expected to complete full-time education and begin work that will lead to attainment of economic independence. Transitions to adulthood were also defined in the context of household and family formation, which involves young people leaving parental home, forming a union – cohabitation or marriage, and becoming a parent. Overtime, transitions in many parts of the world have been observed not be a linear course. Rather, transitions have been observed to be late whereby events in the life course of young people tend to be delayed or postponed. In other instances, transitions to adulthood have protracted and have become complex at times [13].

Transitions to adulthood have also been observed in the context of personality development leading to the introduction of concepts such as emerging adulthood which constitutes the phase of life between adolescence and full-fledge adulthood with distinctive demographic, social, and psychological features [14, 15]. Emerging adults frequently examine a number of potential life directions in terms of love, employment, and worldviews since they have left the reliance of childhood and adolescence but have not yet accepted the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood [16].

In the global South and in many parts of the African continent, transitions of young people into adulthood in the late 20th Century have been described as 'waithood' where many young people find themselves in perpetual state of waiting for a future that is becoming elusive [17]. The envisioned better lives of the young people in Africa for the future through work, education or migration have not materialised. The situation of waiting has also been worsened by the introduction of structural adjustment and neoliberal policy reforms which have worsened inequality, poverty, unequal access to resources and marginalisation with young people among the worst hit [18].

Consequently, the youth in Africa have experienced frustration, disillusion, despair or apathy and many of these experiences are becoming a way of life for many. The current experiences of the youth have led to several depictions in the literature. According to [19], the current generation of African adolescents is one that was born into social environments where chances of leading respectable lives are slim, with many of them ending up locked in situations of inadequacy with limited opportunities and dim prospects. [20] portrayed the youth in Africa as being "stuck" between childhood and adulthood, a situation described in equal measure as "waithood" [21, 22]. Waithood depicts the involuntarily prolonged adolescence of especially urban youth who are dealing with issues of poverty, unemployment, access to education, and more generally, social and political marginalisation [21, 22]. The young people are mostly deprived of resources required for attaining social adulthood (i.e. financial independence, marriage, family, household formation etc.) which leaves the youth in a perpetual state of waiting and this contributes to a feeling of dullness, frustration and indignity [6].

Despite the various characterisations of youth lives, there is a contrary perspective which points to the fact that the youth do engage in several activities in the process of waiting. The youth while waiting are noted to build relationships while engaging themselves in self-employment with many going into business activities in the informal economy [4, 23]. The informal economy has been observed as a provider of employment of last resort for many including young people [24]. Despite its significance, however, very little in terms of empirical research has explored the gains from the sector for many of the young people who continue to venture into various kinds of businesses in the sector. Additionally, the empirical literature has also not given attention to the influence of business engagement in the transitions of young people into adulthood,

and more importantly, the sustainability of these transitions. What is the current state of transitions into adulthood among young people? To what extent does young people's informal business engagements influence their transitions to adulthood? How sustainable are the transitions of young people involved in business in the informal economy in the city of Accra? By exploring these questions, the chapter aims to contribute in filling the knowledge gaps in the transitions of young people involved in businesses in the informal economy in the developing country city context while contributing to the youth transitions literature in Ghana and the African continent as a whole.

3. Methodology

The study utilised longitudinal qualitative methodological approach involving the use of life trajectory observations and biographical interviews conducted with young people involved in informal businesses in the mobile telephony sector over the period 2010 to 2023. Following an initial mapping exercise in the city of Accra in 2010, the lives and businesses of 11 young people operating various informal mobile phone businesses were tracked through repeated interviews over the period 2010–2013. Additionally, biographical interviews were conducted with 25 young people also involved in informal businesses in the mobile telephony sector such as mobile money and airtime services, the sale of mobile phones and accessories, mobile phone repairs and other services such as transfer of music, and recharging of mobile phone batteries. The interviews focussed on the young people's life course with particular attention given to how the businesses have changed over time and the key resources they have drawn on to sustain their businesses over the years and the gains in businesses in the transitions of the young people into adulthood. The ages of the young people ranged from 21 to 33 years with an average age of 25 at the time.

After a gap of 5 years, we revisited the young people and conducted repeat biographical interviews with 28 of them out of which 8 were females. The repeat interviews focused on similar issues earlier highlighted such as the life course and business, resources for business and the influence of business in the transitions of the young people into adulthood. In 2023, we revisited the young people and were able to conduct biographical interviews with 11 with three being females. The interviews focussed on discovering how the life course of the young people have evolved in over a decade, the current state of their businesses, the key resources they were drawing upon, and how gains in transitions reported in earlier rounds of interview have been sustained over the period.

With the over 10 years of rapport built with the respondents over the years, the latest round of interviews were conducted on the phone, and audio-recorded with the informed consent of respondents. The audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and several readings of the data were done after which a manual analysis of the data was conducted leading to the determination of codes and themes, which in addition to data from preceding round of interviews constituted the analytical core of this chapter.

4. Sustainability of young people's transitions

Evidence from the repeated interviews with the young people conducted from 2010 to 2017 pointed to five thematic areas where the young people identified to have made transition gains as a result of their engagement in business in the mobile

telephony sector. These themes include financial independence, support for family and social relations, ability to rent residential accommodation, marriage, and acquisition of land. We explore current state and sustainability of these transition gains in the life course of the young people as follows.

4.1 Financial independence

Although financial independence is noted as one of the most significant markers of young people's transitions into adulthood [4, 25], achieving financial independence has always proven difficult for many [26]. However, our interactions with young people involved in business in the mobile telephony sector over the period 2010 to 2017 have proven that they were able to achieve financial independence, and the achievement of financial independence among the young people cut across various business types and by gender. A typical instance, which reflects many of the cases is that of John who noted that, "This business has helped me ... as I can say that I now have financial independence." Commenting on his status of achieving financing independence in 2017, Steve noted that, "I see a very bright future for myself, if I'm able to manage this business well. Everything is looking bright for me." Notwithstanding the positive responses from the young people regarding their business engagement in the transitions to financial independence, when we interviewed them again in 2023, the situation has completely changed. According to Steve, "After COVID, my business has never been the same. I do not make enough money as I used to". When we interviewed John in 2023 to further explore the current status of his financial independence which he alluded to be enjoying, he noted that, "I cannot say that I have enjoyed financial independence over the past few years as business has not been very good." Grace, commenting on her current status of financial independence observed as follows:

> *In the early days of the mobile money business, the business was good and I made a lot of profit, but now it is common and it is difficult to make so much profit from the business. I cannot say I'm independent, financially.*

As captured in the narrative of Grace, there is keen competition in the informal mobile business space currently and this has reduced the profit margin for many operatives. The intense competition can be attributed to the low capital requirement for start-up for some of the businesses (for example, mobile money and airtime services) which has made it possible for many to enter the business space. With the increased number of young people starting businesses in the sector, many of the young people recently interviewed alluded that sales per person has reduced and hence profitability. With reduced profit margins, as observed in many of the narratives, it becomes difficult for the young people to sustain the financial independence which they alluded to be enjoying during the last round of interviews in 2017.

When asked about the state of financial independence, Esi who has been involved in mobile money business over the years noted that, "Oh not that much, something small now that the mobile money business has become common." The response of Esi, similar to that of Grace is reflective of many of the young people who complained about the increased number of people who have ventured into the mobile telephony sector with the view to earning a living, and thereby reducing the profitability and financial independence of the young people involved in business in the sector. The profitability of businesses and the transition gains in the mobile telephony sector and the informal economy as a whole is therefore linked to performance of the young

people's businesses. During periods when the business is experiencing a good turn in performance, financial independence of the young people as observed tends to be stronger and vice versa. It is therefore difficult to argue that the young people are enjoying a sustained transitions into the status of financial independence as a result of their engagement in business in the mobile telephony sector.

4.2 Marriage and family sustenance

Some of the young people in earlier round of interviews before 2017 had indicated that one of the greatest benefits from running their businesses is the fact that they have been able to regularise their marriages. Others are cohabiting but most of the young people indicated that were able to offer the needed support in these relationships. A typical example is Florence, who observed that, "Through this business, I'm able to offer support to my husband … in the payment of our children's school fees." When we interviewed Florence again in 2023 about the support she is providing in her marital relationship, she pointed out the capital boost she needs to sustain her business to be able to play her supportive role in her marriage.

> *I've three children now and I use proceeds from this business in taking care of them. I need money to sustain the business. The more capital I invest into the business, the better the profit for me and the better the support I can give to my family but things are difficult now. (Florence, 26 years old mobile money vender).*

From the narratives, supporting in relationships is important for many of the young people although sustaining this support has at times proved challenging. The reason being that at times the business is not thriving, and the gains from the business is not enough or do not come at all. This makes it difficult for the young people to be able to offer the required support in their relationship. The way out as many alluded is to inject a bit more capital into the business.

Although the narratives indicate that the businesses of the young people are not performing well, many saw the need for capital injection into the businesses to enable them make more gains and sustains the transitions including marital sustenance, which they have assumed. It is therefore important to note that even though the young people have transitioned into marital or cohabiting relationships, their gains need to be sustained which calls for the businesses to flourish. Sustainability of the businesses which is very much linked to the sustainability of the young people's transition gains depends on the reinvestment into the businesses as well as favourable economic conditions in the country. In the words of Peter in the recent round of interviews, "The more sales I make, the better the profitability from my business and the more I'll be able to do for my family." The young people therefore continue to look out for opportunities to reinvest into the businesses. Other factors which have affected the sustainability of businesses and the support that the young people offer in their relationships including marriage is the difficult economic conditions over the past few years. Supporting arguments regarding the difficult economic conditions in the country which is adversely affecting businesses and transitions generally, Frank, a 38-year-old who deals in the sale of mobile phones stated as follows:

> *Things have become difficult in the country and you need big capital to sustain your business. At times, you make sales but you cannot use the returns to buy items into your shop because prices of items have gone up significantly.*

Like many of the narratives, Peter's demonstrates that the capital base of the business of the young people is being eroded by high rates of inflation which threaten their businesses and sustainability of the any transition gains that have been achieved. A way out of the difficult economic conditions for many of the young people is the need to reinvest into the businesses, which many are doing or looking out for avenues to do in order to sustain the transition gains of supporting their marriages and other cohabiting relationships.

4.3 Support for family relations

Many of the young people, in the last round of interviews indicated that as a result of their engagement in informal businesses in the mobile telephony sector, they were able to offer support to their family relations which hitherto was not a possibility. This support comes in many forms including financial assistance to family relations and assisting in the payment of school fees for young siblings. This support was unlike what is dominant in the youth literature where young people are portrayed as recipients of assistance from familial relations [1, 27]. The support for family relations as observed cut across the various business groups and by gender where both young males and females were observed to be assisting family relations. In the recent round of interviews however, it was observed that this support has substantially reduced as the narratives indicate:

> *I used to save money in the course of the year and during Christmas, I purchase food items and share with my relatives, but now, I'm unable to do that. I only support a niece of mine at the moment. Conditions are difficult now, and I can no longer support the people I was supporting. (Ryn, 34-year old phone dealer).*

Similar to Ryn's narrative, Florence, who runs a mobile money service noted that, "I have to adjust to the living conditions. It is unlike previous days when I could easily give out support to relations." The narratives show that the young people are unable to support as many relations as they used to do and this they attributed to the difficult business terrain in recent times. As captured by the narrative of Ryn above, many of the young people have to introduce readjustments in the way they support their relations which means that support in most instances is reduced. Despite the difficult period however, the young people indicated that they have not cut off support to relations entirely, but rather, support within their network of relations have been reduced in accordance with the new realities confronting them and their businesses.

4.4 Ability to rent accommodation

In the previous round of interviews, many of the young people studied indicated that they have gone through challenges with accommodation previously, however, they have been able to rent accommodation where they were staying while a few indicated that they are developing a place of their own. When we interviewed them again in 2023, many of the young people indicated that they are still able to rent despite the difficulties that the businesses are currently going through. Esi who is into mobile money services indicated in 2017 that, "... for four years now since I started this business, I have been able to rent a room where I stay with my two children." When we interviewed her in 2023, Esi, like many of the young people further stated that, "I am still renting but the business is not going well." What this means is that for many of the young people,

the ability to rent, just like other transition gains that the young people indicated they have achieved over the years is tied to the success of the businesses. More so, because of the critical nature of accommodation to many young people, even if the business is not thriving, they still need to channel however little gains they are making from their businesses into getting themselves a decent accommodation that they are occupying. Thus, although many of the young people spoke about the difficulties confronting their businesses, many have been able to sustain the gains of rental accommodation due to the significance with which they attach to the need for accommodation.

5. Conclusions

With difficulties in securing employment among young people across the African constituent and consequent challenges in making gains in transitions to adulthood and social mobility, some have ventured into informal enterprise activities in the mobile telephony sector [4]. These informal businesses initially appear to have secured many of these young people in the city of Accra an avenue where they were able to make some gains in their transitions into the assumption of some adult responsibilities as a result of stable income flows from their businesses. Although these jobs have provided avenues where the young people are able to secure livelihoods, the findings points to a strong link between the performance of the informal businesses of the young people and their transitions into adulthood, and more importantly the sustainability of any transition gains on the part of the young people studied. The difficult economic conditions in addition to the lack of finance for reinvestments that will reinvigorate the businesses and the transitions of the young people came out strongly among the greatest challenges to the sustainability of transitions to adulthood among the young people studied. The lack of finance for young people's businesses and the difficult economic conditions have been observed among the greatest challenges confronting businesses of young people in Africa [28, 29]. The constraints in the businesses of the young people as identified have implications on their transitions and sustainability of any transition gains achieved over the years.

The findings of the study also revealed the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the businesses of young people, and sustainability of any transition gains among young people. The devastating effects of the COVID-19 on the businesses of young people have been observed in many countries across the African continent [30, 31]. Specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about the situation where many small and informal businesses have experienced price fluctuations, production uncertainty and business discontinuity or unsustainability [30], while others are confronted with the challenge of raising resources for recapitalisation of their businesses [31]. The findings of the study confirms these challenges, in addition to the constraints which these challenges poses to the transitions and sustainability of any transition gains achieved by young people.

The informal businesses, and most especially the performance of the businesses, are important in the transitions to adulthood among the young people. However, any transition gains as observed need to be sustained in order to make a worthwhile experience in the life course of the young people. Considering the challenges of finance, the COVID-19 pandemic and general economic decline and their effects on the businesses of the young people studied, support in the form of financial assistance and technical advice are therefore very much needed to propel the businesses of the young people to greater heights.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Chapter 4

Beyond Pressure and Perfectionism – Student Struggles in Contemporary Denmark from the Perspectives of Educational Counsellors

Jeanett Bjønness and Margit Anne Petersen

Abstract

This chapter explores the struggles that high school and university students in Denmark experience and try to cope with, through the perspectives of study counselors. Scholars have lately described a relation between students' felt pressures and an increase in diagnoses such as stress, anxiety, and depression as well as increases in the non-medical use of prescription pharmaceuticals for enhancement purposes. While counselors have a unique position in the educational system as someone who is there to support the students, they are also witnesses to the changes that student populations experience over time. The chapter is based on in-depth interviews with 36 counselors at different universities and high schools in Denmark and examines how counselors cope with new developments in the educational system as well as new kinds of student challenges and struggles that go beyond issues with performance and perfection.

Keywords: study counselors, students, educational structures, pressure, coping strategies, performance enhancement

1. Introduction

> *Many of our students just long for a gray Monday. There aren't many completely normal days, where you as a student only attend classes and talk about the homework you have done for those classes (H5).*

This chapter is based on in-depth interviews with 36 counselors at universities and high schools in Denmark. As the quote alludes to, counselors note that students often long for a 'normal' day with no pressures to perform or obligations to present themselves in specific ways. While students' experiences are well-documented in research, experiences and perspectives from the point of view of educational counselors have been

less explored even though these experiences would make an important contribution to understanding the pressures and struggles students face in current educational contexts. Counselors have a unique position in the educational system as they are there to help while at the same time not being part of the teaching system. Furthermore, counselors not only see struggles existing within student populations but also witness how these struggles might change over time, as well as how recent developments in the policies and practices that govern educational programs, also might influence students' struggles. The chapter shows that counselors struggle with their role and possibilities to help students, and while the chapter mainly focuses on counselors' experiences and views of students' struggles with pressure and performance, we also describe how they deal with the fact that some students seek other solutions to their problems than asking counselors for help. As such, this chapter builds on the growing research interest concerning young adults and their overall well-being in the European and North American educational systems [1, 2]. It has been documented that as a result of an increasing focus on competition and achievement in Western Societies, many students feel highly pressured [3, 4] and several researchers have highlighted the relationship between the pressures experienced by students and an increase in diagnoses such as stress, anxiety, and depression [5, 6], and the increase in non-medical use of prescription pharmaceuticals for enhancement purposes among healthy college-students [7–14]. This is also the case in Denmark, where several reports bear witness to increases in anxiety, stress, and a general lack of well-being among young people [2, 3, 15–17]. A tendency for young people to use and misuse prescription medicines as a way of keeping up and performing in the Danish educational system has also been noted [18–22].

2. Theoretical background

An important theoretical point of departure for this chapter is that achievement seems to have become the ideal for a 'good life' and that the ideal self is an achieving self [2]. Even though modernity theorists [23–25] decades ago noted a growing space for individual self-construction and that the individual is less bounded than before, it seems that the poststructuralist self is not quite as 'unbounded' as these theorists have suggested [26]. On the contrary, a new kind of individual responsibility to construct self-hood seems to have developed. This kind of self has been linked to neoliberal societal values [27], that favor the predominantly active, efficient, and goal-oriented individual [15, 26, 28] and include an obligation to perform well.

In line with these more general sociological points, recent educational research also reports on an increasing focus on efficiency, performance, and accountability in educational policies in many Western societies. Devine et al. [29] suggest that this development places new demands on students, which again require a focus on competencies such as efficiency and goal orientation. According to recent Danish surveys, young people report decreases in well-being compared to a few years ago [17]. While young people's mental well-being is affected by various factors, external as well as internal, and the causes for a lack of well-being are manifold, we suggest that the overall social focus on performance may be one of the major factors relevant to this development. A similar point is made by Sørensen & Nielsen [30] who analyze the self-construction of young Danes. The young people they have interviewed seem to experience no self-evident right to subjectivity, and to regard subjectivity as something they are obliged to earn and create themselves (Ibid: 44). This means, the authors suggest, that the obligation to perform a specific kind of self is strong and

that young people, out of fear of becoming 'abjected', and thus 'nobody' (Ibid: 36), seem to be inclined to act close to the ideals. In line with, for example, Willig [31], Sørensen & Nielsen argue that this obligation seems to be hard for young people to avoid or eliminate (see also [16]), and they see this new demand to be a flexible, responsible, and self-realizing individual (see also Refs. [27, 32]) as different from the demands of modern societies. They argue that 'the self' used to be 'closed', in the sense that there were relatively constant rules to follow, while in contemporary Western societies, the self is 'open', and that it is the obligation of young people to 'close' it by choosing the right ways to present themselves. The educational system, the authors argue, is a central arena of this self-construction.

Furthermore, one domain that seems to be increasingly important in the lives of young people is the increasing influence of social media. While researchers increasingly associate the focus on performance and perfection in young people's everyday lives, and especially in educational contexts, with their stress and dissatisfaction, several studies have recently focused on how social media might play a role in young people's images of achievement and perfection [33].

Considering the described general discursive and structural conditions and developments, we investigate how counselors understand students' conditions, struggles, and coping strategies, as well as how they contemplate their role in relation to the students in contemporary Denmark. Our analysis of the counselor's narratives is thus inspired by a poststructuralist perspective [34, 35], suggesting that counselors' (as well as the students') narratives are conditioned by and embedded in social and cultural notions and norms.

3. Methods

The chapter is the result of the analysis and comparison of interviews with educational counselors. The interviews formed part of three different datasets from related but separate research projects which included interviews with 36 counselors and 100 students. All three projects were concerned with the overall topic of performance enhancement and student struggles, primarily with a focus on the perspectives of the students themselves [12, 18, 21, 22]. In this chapter though, student struggles are analyzed through the lens of the educational counselors, and it outlines how counselors experience students' challenges and solutions, also in the cases where students handle their problems in other ways than asking them for help.

3.1 Sample

The interviews for the first two projects took place at Danish universities and high schools between 2014 and 2016, and the last interviews took place at Danish high schools in 2018 and 2019. All three projects have sought to construct a diverse sample of both high schools and universities, to include as many different experiences and perspectives as possible. This includes both urban and rural high schools, various universities as well and different study programs that attract different student populations, including both competitive and less competitive settings. That being said, we also relied on schools and universities' willingness to participate, and we recognize that the more resourceful institutions may have been more inclined to participate and that we relied on willing doorkeepers [36]. While our sample may not be representative, it nevertheless still covers a variety of perspectives.

The narrative data in this chapter come from in-depth qualitative face-to-face interviews with 36 study counselors from five different universities (U) and seven high schools in Denmark (H), conducted by the authors. The interviewees have worked as counselors between two and 25 years, there is a majority of women in the sample, and more than half have worked as counselors for over 10 years. We did not notice any differences between the experiences of male and female counselors, the main differences had more to do with the amount of time they had worked as counselors. While the interviews have belonged to different research projects, their focus and content are similar, addressing the themes also paramount in recent literature regarding student pressure and performance [2, 30].

We were particularly interested in exploring how counselors' views on students' struggles could contribute to the overall understanding of what students face in educational contexts in contemporary Denmark. The interviews focused on their individual experiences as counselors, both regarding recent political and structural developments in the educational system, the public discussions of performance pressure in media accounts, the kinds of problems students presented to them, and their knowledge of students' coping strategies including performance-enhancing substance use. The interview schedules were open-ended and participants were able to raise themes and issues that were not necessarily included in the interview schedule [37]. For example, the perceived changing role of parents and importance of social media were themes introduced by the counselors. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.2 Analysis

The empirical material was coded with Nvivo, using elaborate code trees with main codes and subcodes. We used thematic analysis [38] and discussed the material across the codes to identify patterns. In the analysis of the data, we were attentive to the ways in which the attitudes of the counselors reproduced or diverged from themes in public discourse or the media about education, performance, and perfection, which may affect the work life and attitudes of counselors. Furthermore, we paid attention to how themes raised by counselors resonated with and differed from the themes raised by students [12, 18, 21, 22]. Across all our data, our analysis suggests that many developments and considerations are emphasized by both counselors and students and between the different universities and schools, regardless of socio-cultural contexts and geographical locations.

The projects have been reported to the Danish Data Protection Agency. Our data collection is GDPR compliant and the research projects to which the data belongs have been followed by research groups of competent peers at Aarhus University.

4. Results

Overall, our analysis suggests that there are an increasing number of students who seek counseling. Counselors find that students seem to experience new demands concerning their study life, as well as regarding themselves as individuals, requiring new coping strategies. The analysis illuminates the ways in which counselors conceptualize and manage this development and illustrates that student everyday life, as well as counselors' role in the students' lives, have changed radically. Many of the counselors try to explain these new developments by pointing to not only increased pressures in the

education system but also by alluding to changes in leisure time and family life, including parental roles [30]. Furthermore, counselors are concerned about the increase in diagnoses among young people in general, as well as about indications that more students than before use performance-enhancing drugs. Finally, they are concerned about the pressure that is born of the requirement to present oneself as a successful being on social media [39]. The counselors reflect on how recent structural developments also cause new requirements for their daily work with the students. Among other things, they assume a more caregiving role than they used to and thus find themselves involved in tasks that they think ideally should be taken care of by the parents.

In the first section, we focus on how counselors describe the students they meet in the light of new demands for self-realization through perfection and achievement. In the second section, we take a closer look at how counselors view the background and implications of the students' challenges. Finally, in the last section, we present and discuss the counselors' experience with different coping strategies that students employ to meet their described changes and challenges.

4.1 Perfection and achievement

When we ask the counselors to describe the young people they meet in their counseling practice, they all (across our data sets) tend to describe contemporary students as concerned with perfection and grades.

> *They want to... uhm... perform well. They are all very concerned about that and about their marks. That is what is important to them... they are very concerned about doing what they see as perfect (H5).*

The university counselor in the following quote, sees a tendency among the students to focus more on performance and results and he relates this to the new demands placed on students:

> *Students can no longer take their time the way they once could. They are pressured to finish their studies fast, both because of limitations in the financial aid system and because they in a shorter time-span need to perform well if they want to get a good internship or a relevant student job, or perhaps get into an international study program (U1).*

Striving for perfection is not only a concern connected to grades and academic performance. Rather, it seems to reflect a more *general* tendency among young people to be concerned with perfection and achievement, not only to be the perfect student but also the perfect friend, partner, family member, intern, or whatever else they engage in [20, 21, 30, 40]. Furthermore, and related to the urge for perfection, according to the counselors, one of the main characteristics of the students is that they are goal-oriented. As a counselor at one of the central counseling offices for university students describes it, this 'perfectionism' may cause students to have problems handling situations they have not planned for:

> *I always tell them; 'Yes, a truck can suddenly get stuck in the middle of your road. That is life. You have to learn that not everything will always be perfect. But this is very difficult for them to deal with. It is one of the challenges that we try to help them with (U7).*

Some counselors also relate the focus on perfection and grades to another important change: they note that the 'kinds' of students that seek help have changed and that the students they meet now are in many ways more resourceful than the ones they met earlier:

> *Lately, after the progress reform, I get more students who have had a normal childhood, but who come with stress symptoms. So, there is a difference and I think we have just seen the beginning of it (U9).*

But even if the students, who seek counseling, seem more resourceful than before, often, the students themselves cannot explain what is wrong, other than feeling stressed or unhappy. As one high school counselor notes:

> *Typically, they do not know what is wrong themselves. Some experience performance pressure which then triggers some anxiety. It is typically the girls who have anxiety, there are also boys, but it is especially the girls... It is clear that it is about having to appear perfect on a lot of parameters and at once and... that it triggers them... either panic anxiety or social anxiety, there are some contexts where (...) they cannot necessarily even say 'that's why I have anxiety'. But they can say 'I feel pressured both in this and that and that area' (H3).*

As the previous quote illustrates, and this is especially so for young women (see also [18]), the range of different expectations the students have for themselves often somehow "gets in the way" of well-being. One high school counselor talks about several young women who collapse in a high-school gym class, and he relates this incident to the pressure to have perfect looks:

> *They are very preoccupied with the perfect look; it is important to look good to be good enough. Moreover, they come and tell me that it's awful that they've only got B and not A in some subjects - they seek out the teachers and want an explanation of what they can do better to get an A. They are very preoccupied with those grades (H5).*

Besides performing at school, the counselors experience that it is also important for young people, especially in high school, to perform in the peer group, and to be seen as popular, fun, or good-looking. Students who seek counseling often say that they are afraid of being excluded from the group and of being seen by peers as stupid or inadequate. This tendency to feel inadequate and insufficient is underscored by the following quote from a high school counselor:

> *We have many more than before who feel inadequate. They do not use the word 'insufficient', but they say, 'I am not good enough'. And when I talk with them, it's the fear of being stupid and of being outside the group that preoccupies them. What do the others think about me? (...) That is something we've talked about in the group of student counselors - this has become much more widespread! Many of our students miss a gray Monday (H5).*

When asked, the counselor expands on the concept of a gray Monday, explaining that the students need "ordinary and predictable days, where they know what to do".

He thinks that many of the students find that the expectations are too high and that they meet (too) high demands for levels of reflexivity and independence.

Many of the counselors note that the demand to work independently and the pressure to be reflective is growing, and there is great pressure to constantly start new projects and meet multiple deadlines. They find that the pressure experienced by the students is very 'real', and they note the same tendency in their own work lives: "In our own schedule as study counselors - many more assignments come in" (H9).

Related to this, and regardless of where in the educational system they are working, almost all the counselors notice that one of the challenges that students face is the ability to structure their time. Having to navigate many different projects and subjects as well as social and extracurricular activities is in itself a difficult task, and with the added pressure to perform well it becomes even more difficult:

> *We did a little 'study' of our own, looking at what the main reasons for seeking help at the counseling office were. Apart from lack of self-confidence, time management was a major issue (U7).*

Many counselors note that strongly related to the anxiety of wasting time is a growing goal-orientation among the students. A university counselor explains that the students who are in the phase of applying to schools or universities are very concerned about making the right choices:

> *One of the things I have felt most clearly during the 4 years I have worked here is that there has been more goal orientation among the students, especially those who seek us out: 'If I start here, what opportunities do I have? What can I end up with? What choices should I make?' (...) These are people who have not started at all yet (...) they make plans, and if at some point they have to deviate from this plan, then they feel that they have wasted their time in some way. And I think that is a pressure for them, to be sure not to waste time or resources or limited financial aid (U12).*

Some of the high school counselors see it as their task to explain to the students that more than grades, it is important to focus on well-being and a curiosity to learn. But then, as one counselor explains:

> *Then the students smile at me and say 'yes, but we know very well what reality is like - we must have an A in average to get into our dream study. So, it is worthless to focus on well-being' (H5).*

This seeming lack of confidence among students in their own ability to influence the general circumstances is something many counselors experience, and while it is more pronounced in the high school domain, several traits of it also exist within the universities. Furthermore, while there are some differences in how striving for perfection and focusing on achievement is challenging for young people, who seek counseling in high schools and universities, overall, they seem to experience many of the same kinds of problems in their everyday lives. This points to a more general problem that may be less connected to the specific level of education or type of situation a young person is in and more to a general societal and cultural phenomenon.

4.2 Recent reforms and changes in the study counselor role

Overall, study counselors are quite concerned with recent reforms of the educational system which is also described in research [39, 41]. They find that recent changes in Denmark, for example, the implementation of the 'progress reform' in 2005, has had a large influence not only on the educational pressure that students must deal with but also on their own role and ability to help students, who face difficulties. One high school counselor, who is also a teacher with nearly 20 years of work experience, reflects on this:

> *It is quite frustrating to have to live up to all these demands that come from outside the educational system. Things have changed a lot…with these reforms… I thought, great, we are going to get much more time with the students, more time to talk with them. But that was not the case at all. It was all about working more. In fact, we are getting less and less time. Both in teaching and in general (H2).*

The counselors attribute the experience of teachers and counselors having less time with the students to the continual pressure from the government to change procedures. Especially the older, more experienced counselors underline the increased time pressure and the fact that more students demand their assistance only adds to the time pressure.

These changes have increased pressures both on counselors' time and their performance. Some counselors also note that this development may relate to what has been described in recent literature, that academic education has become more of an ideal in the overall discourse on youth [2, 3, 6]. Many counselors believe that this development may lead young people to believe that performing academically is the only way to perform a successful youth identity:

> *I think many more young people choose and are admitted to university than used to be the case. Earlier, it was not for everyone, but now it seems that everyone is somehow pressured into getting a university degree, even if it is not really their thing (U4).*

The counselors are concerned with the ways in which recent developments; reforms and an increase in the presence of students with diagnoses such as anxiety, depression, and stress, influence both the students' lives and their own daily work as counselors. The more experienced counselors find that the students they meet often have other and more serious problems than the students who approached them before the reforms. In fact, sometimes, counselors find that helping students is beyond their ability as study counselors. The counselors reflect on these changes, and in the following, we describe the four main developments that counselors see as "game-changers" in their own work life: increases in students with diagnoses; parents' changing roles; increasing loneliness among students; and the presence of social media in students' lives.

4.3 Student pressures and an increase in diagnoses

The counselors experience that the combination of the performance-based 'measurement culture' with the increased time pressure creates new requirements and a more stressful situation for many students [12, 18, 20].

> *Many students experience that they are not good enough. And then there is a hassle in the family, and the boyfriend splitting up, or the housing situation is unsafe (...) These things have always been talked about, but what we've seen escalate over several years is about performance and perfectionism. This affects all students (...) Perfectionism is not just being very ambitious, but as something unhealthy, almost pathological, and you scold yourself because you got a B and not an A. (U6)*

Study counselors, especially at high schools, suggest that increasing demands, while simultaneously having less access to face-to-face contact with teachers, may contribute to the problems experienced by students:

> *Many have a diagnosis.... A lot of them are anxious. We try to help them develop strategies that they might be able to take with them further on in their studies... our role as counselors has really changed. It used to mainly be concerned with electives and study requirements, and of course absence from school, which we still deal with, but then we talk about why they have been absent, and then all the problems surface (H5).*

The more experienced high school counselors recall that, some years ago, they helped more with, for example, choice of subject and absences from classes, while now they increasingly help with problems such as vulnerability related to anxiety and depression. Especially high school counselors have noticed that particularly the youngest students over the last decade or so, have started to seek help from counselors regarding new kinds of challenges in the educational system:

> *I really like to feel that I make a difference for the students. Those who don't really have adults in their lives, at least they have a study counselor in whom they can confide. Because it is important to have grownups who you can share your thoughts and problems with.... you know, the pressure has increased, and the students use me for more things than earlier on...I really feel that many of them are much more vulnerable than what we have seen before (H5).*

As this last quote illustrates, one common concern about the growing vulnerability of students is that they seem to lack responsible adults in their lives.

4.4 The role of parents

Both high school counselors and university counselors underscore the importance of family support for the well-being of students, but quite a few of them hear from students that they feel that their parents lack interest and that they do not feel supported by them. An experienced university counselor (U13) cites a student he met in counseling: "*Now I am a first-generation academic, a true pattern breaker, and there is no one in my background who understands me. I feel extremely lonely*." On the other hand, counselors also often hear of parents who, in the eyes of the students, expect too much from their children. This is sometimes when parents are very well educated, and the student feels pressured to live up to that. Finally, counselors mention that some students live with a single or vulnerable parent and may be afraid to bother them with their problems.

Quite a few of the high school counselors describe that students often experience distance in relation to their parents and that they lack an adult with whom they have

a confidential relationship. Sometimes, when high school counselors invite parents to meetings, the parents have no idea what their child is struggling with:

> *Sometimes it comes as a surprise to the parents how big the problem is. And many of the students we see feel that their parents are not really present in their everyday lives (H5).*

There is a general tendency that counselors are increasingly experiencing having to take care of tasks that they think of as parental tasks, such as care and recognition.

4.5 Loneliness

A growing problem that counselors struggle to help students with is the issue of loneliness and a sense of feeling different. In a recent study about Danish university students, one out of four participants described themselves as lonely in their study environment [42], and our interviews showed that this may manifest itself in many ways. One university counselor gives the following examples:

> *It can be: "Now I am a first-generation academic, and there is not anyone in my background who understands me. I feel that I am extremely alone with this". Or: "I come from a home where both my parents have Ph.D. degrees and I think there is so much I have to live up to intellectually". I might see slightly different versions of it depending on the background. But I might see it with all types of backgrounds (U5).*

Although loneliness is a theme both among university and high school counselors, it is more upfront among high school counselors. Many of them are concerned with an increasing number of young people feeling alone and socially excluded:

> *Typically, they come to my office and say, 'I want to change class'. And when you ask 'why?' You find that it's not about the teachers, it's not about them thinking they're in the right school with the right subjects, but that they cannot identify themselves with their classmates. And that can seem somehow strange because 5-6 students can come to see me from the same class and say the same thing, right? They all feel alone and seem to think that all the others have someone to talk to (H3).*

Many counselors experience that loneliness may be one of the most difficult problems for high school students to handle because there seems to be a kind of taboo attached to it. In contemporary Denmark, where the main requirement is to be active, goal-oriented, socially visible, and popular [2, 26], it may be especially hard to talk about feeling lonely:

> *In the last two or three years, I think loneliness has been an ever-increasing problem. Before that, they approached me with challenges like stress and assignments and... Now I think that loneliness, is definitely top one of things they come to me with (...) And it's not because we do not have stressed students today, we certainly still have (H3).*

Many of the high school counselors we interviewed are concerned about the degree to which loneliness preoccupies students and about how common it is. And they find it hard to handle:

> *If they say, 'I suspect I have depression' or if they talk about symptoms of anxiety, then it is pretty easy to say: 'You need to go to your doctor'. But what do you say to a young person who is lonely? I actually think that's harder, right? ... There is not necessarily anything wrong. They just don't thrive (...) Sometimes you can find some explanations... But often they are just not really happy, and they think it is difficult when everyone else has a lot more fun than themselves (H7).*

In general, the high school counselors note that the feeling of not being popular is an important concern of the students they meet in counseling. The feeling of inadequacy is described by, among others, Alain Ehrenberg [43], who is concerned exactly with the distance between what societies expect, and what individuals can live up to. Bjønness [18] for example describes how students experience a discrepancy between what is expected from them as students and friends, and what they can do or perform. This discrepancy, according to the counselors, is made even more present for the students as a result of the increasing role of social media.

4.6 Social media

Counselors both at high schools and universities generally agree that much of the academic and social imperative for success, and the related stress and loneliness, may relate to the emerging culture of documenting and presenting oneself through social media. They note that the way young people interact has changed a lot and that platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are used to receive positive feedback from friends [44]. This creates an environment of comparison and competition, which, for some young people, may be hard to live up to [33].

Many of the counselors argue that social media may contribute to the feeling of being alone:

> *We have talked about in the student counselor group that... it is harder to be young today. Because there is a requirement that you must be on social media. You cannot just opt out. And it is 24/7 that you are on communities on social media. The phone must be switched off during teaching, but as soon as the break is there, they pick it up - because they must check if there is something they have to comment on (...), and that puts pressure on them (...) Fear of missing out, right? Especially among the group of students who want to perform well (H5).*

Some counselors are concerned, that young people who feel that they are already marginalized may feel that social media amplifies their sense of marginality:

> *They typically have a class chat on Messenger or Facebook - and when they have written on the chat 'Is there anyone who wants to join something' and they get no answer - they can see that everyone has seen their questions and then of course they feel extremely humiliated to have asked and no one answers. And then maybe someone else asks something and then everyone answers all of a sudden (...)They know very well, intellectually, that it is a snapshot and that it is not necessarily the whole reality, but they still have the feeling that they are never in those pictures (...) those who are lonely, they also have a tendency to withdraw so they are not included in those class chats, they end up opting out of everything (H3).*

Counselors at both university and high schools are concerned with the felt requirement among students to be on social media all the time:

> *We are more and more experiencing those "FOMOs" - fear of missing out - tendencies. It is rare that one simply experiences a student who takes the consequence and erases himself – it is mostly as if the mobile phone is being tattooed on their hand. It sits there constantly, and it must be on constantly. They are so scared of missing something. FOMOs are here to stay. One should preferably look like someone who is constantly in touch and constantly busy, all the time, fresh, and smart (U12).*

Besides providing a means to become included, social media is also about promoting oneself, showing that one is both having fun and doing well in work and studies. Some counselors talk about certain students as 'overachievers', who want to show their success in all aspects of their lives [3, 21], but that even among the students, who do not fit into this description, there is a kind of tacit requirement to engage in this self-promotion. Several counselors find this hard to resolve, and many relate this hardship to the fact that their own youth experience was so different from what the students experience today. They find it difficult to fully understand and live up to technological changes and the student's perceived need to constantly engage with social media.

We have until now described recent changes from the perspective of educational counselors, but the tendencies described above are also central in our interviews with students as described elsewhere [12, 18, 39]. In the next section, we discuss how the counselors understand some of the different coping strategies used by students.

4.7 The emergence of new coping strategies

Many students in both high school and university do not seek counseling [21, 39]. Such students often do not expect that counselors could be helpful in solving the struggles they deal with, and some students understand seeking help as admitting to not being in control of things. Students who do not seek counseling sometimes seek alternative strategies, outside the educational system [21]. However, counselors have noted that even though the students do not approach the counselor to talk through their problems, they sometimes ask the counselor's advice about how to get a doctor's note, a diagnosis, or a sick leave, to give space and time to deal with what they are going through:

> *Many students take sick leave or get a doctor's note so that they can postpone their exams or papers. This is another way of saving time in the system (U3).*

While the counselors acknowledge that these can be necessary solutions, several of them suggest that these strategies are sometimes used to deal with a situation that perhaps could have been helped in other ways:

> *With certain diagnoses, students get more time for an exam, and this can of course really help those who need it. But I can't help wondering if some of the diagnoses that are made, might be strategies for coping with an educational system (U1).*

The counselors seem to acknowledge that these kinds of strategies may be used as ways of dealing with an educational system that often does not encompass enough time and flexibility. In some ways, this might be understood as related to processes of (bio)medicalization [45, 46]. This is not necessarily because students and counselors see their problems as pathological or belonging to the medical

realm but because they have figured out that medical documents and explanations may constitute a more legitimate and productive way to achieve help. As this university counselor notes:

> *Problems with non-wellbeing take up more and more space in our work (...) earlier on a diagnosis had negative connotations... today it provides access to various resources (U10).*

But while some students choose to cope with challenges such as concentration, time pressure, procrastination, motivation, and self-confidence via the official healthcare system, counselors note that others choose to acquire and consume pharmaceuticals non-medically [18, 20, 39, 47].

> *I have had a few students, in the last 6 months, who have said that it is difficult to get an appointment at the psychiatrist's office and that many want to get an ADHD diagnosis because then they have access to the medicine. I asked one of them if he knew people who did that, and he said yes. He did not think it was because they felt they had ADHD, but rather in order to get access to the drugs (U7).*

Using doctors as access to prescription stimulants for non-medical purposes corresponds with what previous studies have shown [48] and can be understood as yet another version of turning more general problems into medical ones [2, 15, 46]. Several scholars have pointed to the blurred boundaries between enhancement and treatment in the use of pharmaceutical enhancers [49, 50] and research has documented how the knowledge about such practices spreads fast in and beyond student populations through peers, as well as on social media [48, 51]. While there is not much survey research in a Danish context, a bi-annual survey focusing on student life and well-being shows that 7% of students use different substances to handle pressures, including caffeine pills, beta-blockers, prescription stimulants, and alcohol [19]. Many of the counselors are aware of the non-medical use of Ritalin and other ADHD medicines but, they have so far been more focused on cannabis use, particularly in high school settings, which seems to be somewhat normalized among Danish students. Most of the counselors do not seem to worry much about the use of cannabis, and they also meet students who thrive despite using cannabis. Jens (H19) says that some students may experience pressure, but in his view, that is not because they use cannabis. On the contrary, Jens says: "Rather smoke cannabis and be a part of a group, than be lonely". Counselors may also experience cannabis use as a problem though, for example when it is used because the young student cannot afford to buy medicine for their conditions:

> *I have experienced some students who smoke some cannabis because they cannot afford their prescribed medicine, or who have forgotten to buy it. Maybe they just moved from their parents, and just can't get it done (H8).*

At universities, the use of pharmaceutical enhancers like Ritalin is a topic of concern, but most counselors think that there are more cases than reported, because they expect that students would not come to them and talk about such use:

> *Many students would be ashamed to use study drugs. When you read about the culture, for example in American universities, they are very open about their use of study*

> *drugs. But most of our students would feel that it was cheating. So, some students might do it, but they would keep it to themselves. They would not tell us (U 13).*

Previous research confirms that, in a Danish context, students tend to keep their non-medical use of prescription stimulants a secret, also from counselors, because it is not normalized and accepted to the extent that it is in a North American context but also because most of the students do not conceptualize their use of such drugs as problematic [52]. While counselors recognize that using substances to manage student pressures occurs without them knowing much about it, they do not isolate this 'misuse' from other coping strategies, such as doctor's notes, sick leaves, or, as this high school counselor points out, self-hurting behavior:

> *If not all, then at least a very high percentage of our students have found some strategies to either relieve their 'pains' or get a little recognition. And it is not only drug misuse. It can also be 'cutting'. Or other kinds of self-inflicted pain. Eating disorders also. But probably the most common is drug misuse (H21).*

Many counselors make a link between study reforms and the indications that more students use performance-enhancing substances, suggesting that the system pressures young people into 'boosting' themselves with substances:

> *One could imagine that progress means that one says: "Well, when we are now more pressured in relation to the fact that we have to pass the exam on the first attempt, I just take some Ritalin or an extra-large handful of caffeine pills to be able to handle it". You may realize that we have a new phenomenon, but whether it means pulling the behavior in one direction or another, you do not know until you see it happen (U13).*

But some counselors recall that substances were also used years ago when they were students themselves:

> *I remember we used caffeine pills back then. In a way, it is not that different from what students are doing now, but I guess there is a difference between caffeine and ADHD medicine. And there is a difference in how we felt back then, and how I see the students feeling now. When I was a student, caffeine pills were not even illegal (U1).*

While what this counselor suggests implies that functional drug use [50] is not a new phenomenon, the particularities of the drug use may well be very different nowadays. None of the more experienced counselors recall such discourses on 'mental well-being' or 'being the best version of oneself' that currently dominates the focus among many young people.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have illustrated some of the common challenges that exist among Danish high school and university students from the perspective of educational counselors. While students often ask counselors for help with problems that relate to overall struggles with pressure and perfection, our study also reveals how

recent changes in discourses about performance in Danish society, reforms of educational structures, as well as technological changes affect not only students' lives, circumstances, and struggles but also how counselors are (and are not) able to live up to new demands and roles.

This illustrates, as some theorists argue, that individuals are less bounded than earlier [24, 25], but also that rather than unboundedness, it may be a matter of new kinds of boundedness. It seems that both students' and counselors' narratives confirm that rather than fewer boundaries for individuals, new ones are emerging. Both student's and counselor's narratives indicate that the main obligation is to perform well and to present, build, and promote oneself (also on social media) as an efficient, goal-oriented, and socially competent individual [10, 26, 28, 53]. These new requirements seem to create new challenges both for young people, especially the youngest students, in the Danish educational system, as well as for the counselors' ability to understand and help. There is a concern among the counselors about the growing number of diagnoses and loneliness among students, and how this development relates to recent reforms in the educational system, and to the more general development towards 'the performance society'.

Given the quite unison concerns in much research, as well as among counselors and students in our Danish context, we find that more attention should be paid to not only the consequences of the increasing pressures to perform which seems to influence the well-being of young people, but also to the political and cultural structures in which these pressures exist.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 5

Enabling Meaningfulness with Young NEETs in the Nordic Region

Anna Karlsdóttir

Abstract

This chapter focuses on diverse possibilities to engage in mobilizing young adults to meaningful activities within an ever larger and more varied group of marginalized youth in the Nordic countries. A pan Nordic study, commissioned by the Nordic Council of Ministers committee of officials for sustainable rural regional development in 2017–2019, was driven by the need to better understand the situation of these marginalized young adults. This chapter is based on this Nordic project and will present some local and regional processes with serious mismatch problems relating to youth education and validity in the local and regional labour market in the Nordic countries. We ask what characterizes the group of youth and rising number of young adults in the age 18–30 that seems to lose meaningfulness during their education and drop out, and who do not engage in training and have hard time becoming employed. What explanations do other studies on NEETs (not in education, employment, or training) provide? Which initiatives to mobilize young people have worked and in what context in the Nordic countries, so far?

Keywords: early school leaving, Nordic region, NEETs, youth, mobilizing, re-engagement, motivation

1. Introduction

The working title of the project, which this article is product of, is "A rural perspective on spatial disparities of education and employment outcomes" conducted within the Nordic Thematic Group on Sustainable Rural Regional Development. In this group of officials and representatives from individual Nordic countries, we were wondering what could explain rural youths' situation in the local and regional labour market. Their engagement varied substantially from one region to another. How come there were mismatch problems, the skills needed in the regional labour market were not being met by their competences [1, 2]. There has been substantial national discussion in each of the Nordic countries on why dropouts from school vary so much in between regions. While we do not hold the ultimate evidence as to why, all research in the field points to the idea that early school leaving has significant societal and individual consequences. In each of the Nordic countries, there had been debates previously on why there were rising school dropouts from secondary school and why the regional variation was so significant. We have not come to terms with all the

combination of factors explaining why but many previous studies conclude that dropout rates are a mix of personal and societal factors. However, they are costly for the state and regional authorities, the society as a whole because they can lead to long-term negative consequences for numerous people. Staying a bit longer in school, even just a year longer, even without graduating can mean an income increase in lifetime earnings by 4–10% [3]. Negative implications for individual early school leavers may mean long-term unemployment, in the worst cases risk of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, many of the personal costs may not be immediately observable but gradually impoverish and deteriorate the mental health among the persons involved [2–4].

2. Early school leavers and NEETs (not in education, employment, or training), why and who are they?

A longitudinal study conducted in each of the Nordic countries for 15 years (1993–2008) on youth unemployment and inactivity concluded there were significant differences between countries. It focused on cross-country comparison of school-to-work transitions and labour market outcomes in four Nordic countries [5]. Many early school leavers where either in work or enrolled in a study programme when at the age of 21 [5]. This means that early school leavers do not necessarily end up unemployed. Dropouts from compulsory schools do follow different trajectories and these combined with family background and support may be strong predictors of where you end up in the labour market [5]. Demographic development consequences on youth often relate to disruption between school and community. Therefore, the likelihood of leaving school early increases, depending on vulnerabilities in social class, gender, and ethnicity [6–8]. They are intersectional and intertwined into broader social backgrounds like family and community where the school and persons are situated. They do not exclusively explain early dropout but may contribute to understand the social process dynamics that are generated by a mixture of structural conditions and individual decisions [2, 9, 10].

Some of the risks are directly linked to a weak social background. Also, young males seem to be at higher risk of getting disengaged. Furthermore, pupils with immigrant background are more exposed to drop out early [11]. Danish and Finnish studies also found that parents' income levels and educational background seem to affect aspirations and performance among youth in education [12, 13].

Many studies acknowledge that the social and economic status of youth has an impact on the propensity of dropping out from school [6, 7, 14]. However, it is important not to underestimate the spectrum of various social and economic conditions that can affect early school leaving. Employment situation, unstable housing conditions, bad health conditions, and residence stability vs. moving around are important stressors or enablers affecting young people's choices or no choices. Furthermore, it cannot be underestimated to have parents' backup to become educated. If parents have negative attitudes, and children lack supervision, and there is in general little interaction with children and youth in their daily lives, this may harm the schooling experience [11]. Finnish, Danish, and Swedish research point to the fact that there is a social inheritance factor among youth most exposed to social disadvantages. Children of parents in weak labour market positions, with low incomes and basic education, have higher probabilities of dropping out of education [15, 16].

The 18–24-year-old school dropouts, by sex, between 2012 and 2017 were mapped in the Nordic countries based on available statistics disaggregated onto a regional

level. In the map, you see the early school leaving rates and comparing the maps it turns out that the rates have dropped in this five-year period. More youth is staying in schools. However, in Denmark and S-Finland dropout rates among young males have been on the increase. In general, males are more prone to dropping out, even if the gender gap is narrow. Three regions in Norway (Hedmark, Oppland, and Trondelag) show most significant improvement in declining dropout rates. Young women in Sweden showcase increased tendency to drop out from school, seemingly due to various causes triggering mental health challenges (**Figure 1**) [2].

In Iceland, the gender gap is noticeable. Young males have 10 times higher risk of dropping out than females. Some of the explanations rest on grades, lifestyle priorities, and too loose requirements from the schools [17]. While females perform well, males underperform them in academic achievements demotivating their school curriculum ambitions. Many Icelandic schools are flexible in terms of students coming and going, but in effect it affects and causes lack of compulsion. While females' reasons for leaving school early may be caused by forming a family main reason, for males it is finding a good job. Overall, in Iceland, a country where unemployment rate is almost nonexisting, and lack of labour is almost constant, the attractiveness of the labour market influences motivation to stay for a long time in the schooling system. Thus, there is a significant economic incentive, which at first means for many combining work with studies, and eventually may lead to work ruling life, rather than educational choices [18, 19].

Other factors mentioned by various studies being the main trigger for students to leave school are lack of interest and boredom in school, experience of mocking, feeling low, or being broke [20].

In Norway [21], boys and girls are even in performance, so there was no statistical significance in probabilities of early school leaving [22].

There are minor gender differences in early school leaving in Sweden and Finland suggesting other factors at play. More recent longitudinal and qualitative study from Norway addresses the need to shift focus from socio-economic background and gender as a reason onto looking at dropping out as an interaction between the person and the system. Young people who are allowed to tell about the experience in their own words say that there was a long preceding time where this possibility was roaming in their minds, in some cases years before they ended up leaving school. Social interactions between the students and the teachers and other representatives of the structure have to be considered and taken into account as part of understanding why people end up leaving school [21]. From a gender point of view, it is necessary to move beyond the binary gender understanding, framing that the males are losing to the other gender, the female—but look to broader perspectives like impacts of student's social backgrounds on how they are tested, marked, and graded [23]. Swedish students with immigrant background leave school earlier at more than double rate than native Swedes [24]. Even if nonobservable in statistics, there is also tendency among younger and younger primary school pupils to stop attending school and become long-term school avoiders. However, much further research on that is needed. Seemingly segregation and inequality are on the rise in Sweden [25]. A debate on privatization of schools in Sweden and the marketization of premises of education has at times been loaded in Sweden, underpinned by supporting studies [26]. Increased competition with socially segregated schools as an effect is considered to be a negative development for many pupils. Schools compete internally to attract the best students and reject the weakest ones, with the aim of boosting their reputation and thus expanding their pool of customers. Additionally, students from advantaged backgrounds benefit

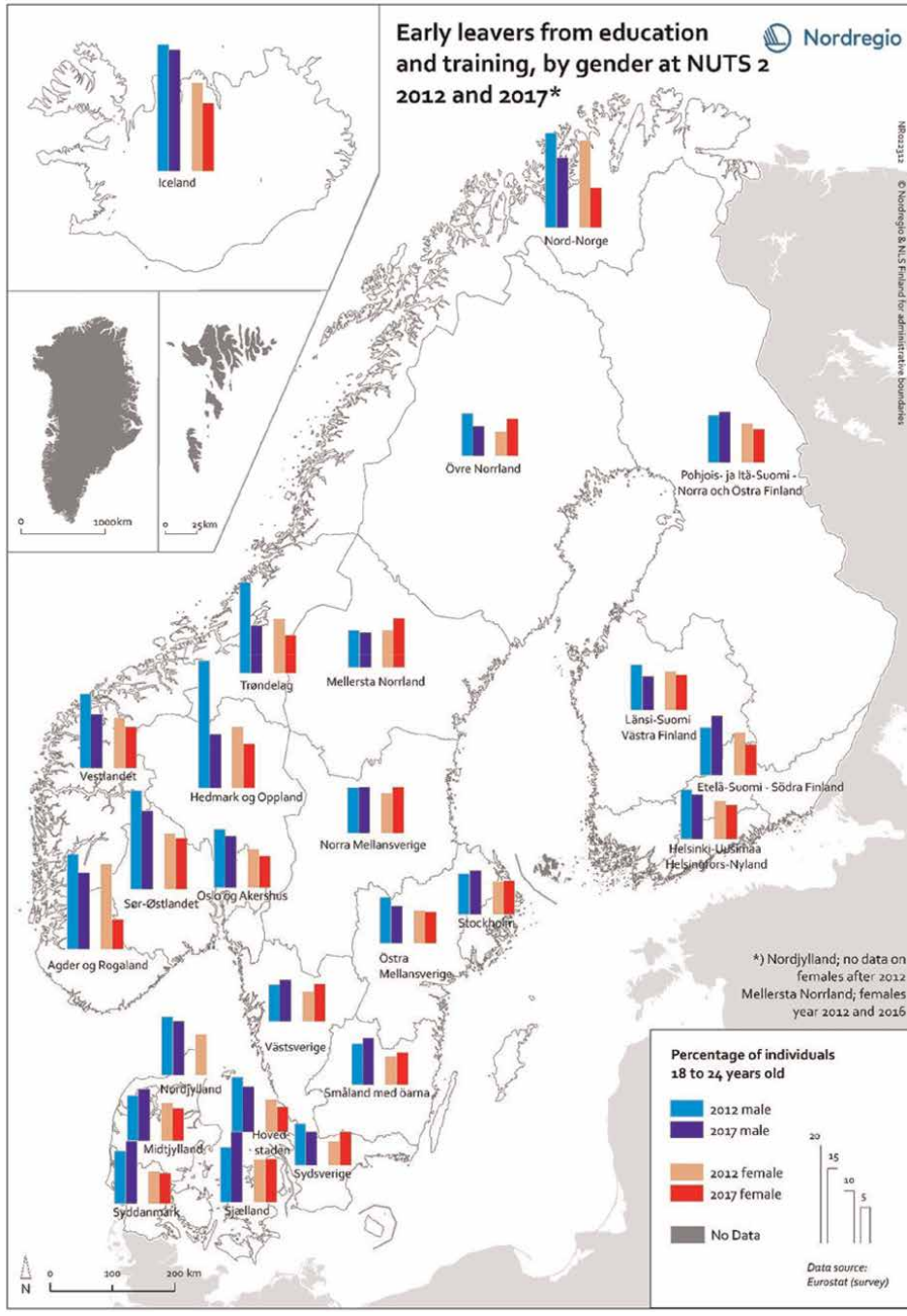

Figure 1.
Dropouts from education and training, by sex, during 2012–2017.

from segregation because the best schools are found in their neighborhoods [26]. These priorities spur inequalities and have implications not only within urban areas but also between urban and rural areas. Rural youth experiences reduced educational opportunities because of competition. They find themselves in a dilemma of staying or

moving to big cities to continue their careers. This may challenge education possibilities for some young people. Affording the expenses of commuting besides covering living costs far away from family and home is not available to all pupils [26].

Although early school leaving rates in the Nordic countries are not strikingly high from a European perspective, the issue remains a concern. Not least because formal education is fundamental to accessing the labour market. The link between early school leaving and NEETs is thus clear. In fact, research highlights the higher probability for school leavers to become NEETs [27, 28].

3. Who are the NEETs?

An emerging group of young people who fall out of the established systems is the so-called NEETs, an abbreviation of not in education, employment, or training. The NEET rate means it is the share of youth population not enrolled or involved in education, employment, or training (NEET) [2, 29]. This group has existed for decades and is in danger of social marginalization.

The literature on NEETs is extensive in both defining the term conceptually [30–32] and identifying what are the relevant factors causing the situation of being NEET [33–35]. Although they are different groups, NEETs have in some cases been included in the category of early school leavers [36]. The relationship between these two groups is evident because, usually, leaving school without a qualification may address significant barriers for young people to join the labour market and, thus, they may risk becoming NEET [27]. Because of the continuity of that process, there are similar underlying factors that help to explain why young people become marginalized even in affluent societies.

One key methodological issue encountered when researching the group of young NEETs pertains to the definitions of the concepts of young and NEETs. Being aware of the heterogeneity of a diverse group, even if categorized as NEETs in the statistics, is essential. Despite how the system perceives or categorizes them, they are a diverse group of human beings. These young people may have little in common other than the trauma of not being accepted which interrupted their straight transition into adulthood [32, 37, 38]. **Figure 2** shows the percentage of NEETs in four Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway) by age and degree of urbanization and regions domestically. The overview showcases that Sweden and Norway have less NEET ratio than their neighboring countries Denmark and Finland. We can identify two trends. The first is that NEET rates tend to remain low for the 15–19 age group. Most likely because major part of young people are still enrolled in education. However, NEET rates increase steadily for every age group, so that those aged 25–29 years are the most affected. The second trend is that cities systematically show lower NEET rates than towns and suburbs, and rural areas in the Nordic region (**Figure 3**).

4. Different types of challenges characterized

Why is it important to understand that there are different underlying causes for why young people face marginalization in school, hence drop out and possibly deal with reduced functionality for a time or even rest of their life? Our approach is socio-geographical, in that we want to understand the distribution of young people who are not thriving in the Nordic welfare societies. Our point of departure was to investigate

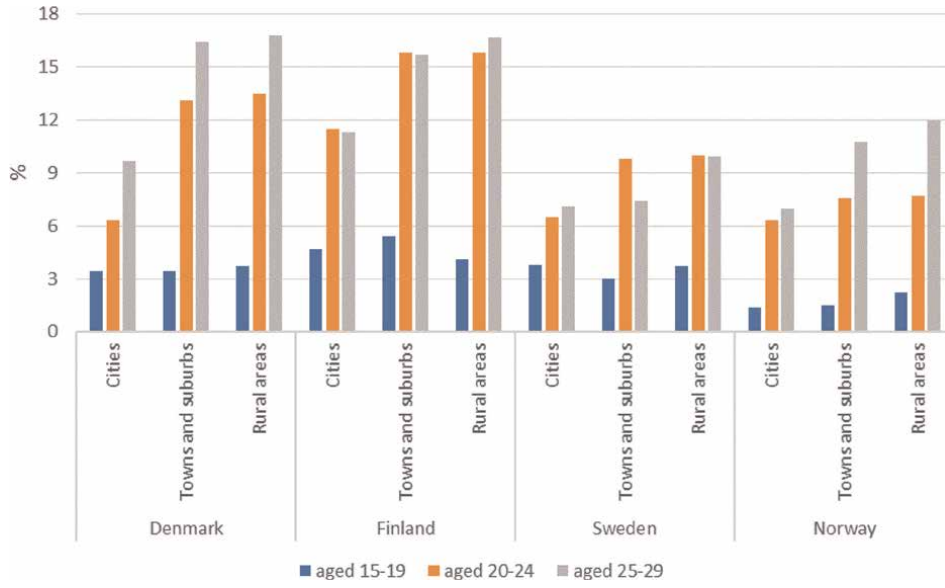

Figure 2.
Percentage of NEETs in Nordic countries by age and degree of urbanization, 2017. Source: *[2, 29].*

regional spatial differences of match making as many of the regions where NEETs have been on the increase are also facing shortage of labour in certain sectors. The focus and evidence of an emerging rise in declining mental well-being among young people has furthermore been most investigated in urban areas, but we also have evidence that this situation has been growing in the rural areas. Spurring this research therefore fills a gap in research knowledge otherwise dominated by focus on urban youth. The study would merely be topographic if not for wanting also to understand and find some socio-psychological explanatory frameworks asking why. We have thus sought to enhance our understanding beyond the conventional disciplinary focus of spatial regional variations. Numerous studies have tried to figure out how NEETs are, but fewer have given meaningful explanations that prove useful as tool to develop measures helpful for the group(s) in focus. Since part of our task was to explore initiatives taken to mobilize and re-engage young people. In our approach, we rest ontologically on an understanding that humans and the young involved are equipped with several qualities and talents that may best be described as multiple intelligences which indicate that there are many ways of learning and knowing [39], but that there are conditions in their environment that may prohibit them from becoming thriving citizens.

Ontologically we rest on the understanding that humans nondependent of age need to feel that what they do is meaningful. We relate to studies done among young Greenlanders whose suicidal rate is uncomfortably high [40] in global comparison. It bases its theoretical framework on the work from Yalom [41], where he describes the four major ultimate concerns that resonate with us. These are death, meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom. These are an inescapable part of being human and in young people's lives a crucial part of the formation towards adulthood [41]. Losing meaning deserves more attention in a society that changes rapidly and moves from being manageable to being experienced as opaque. Intricate structures are often

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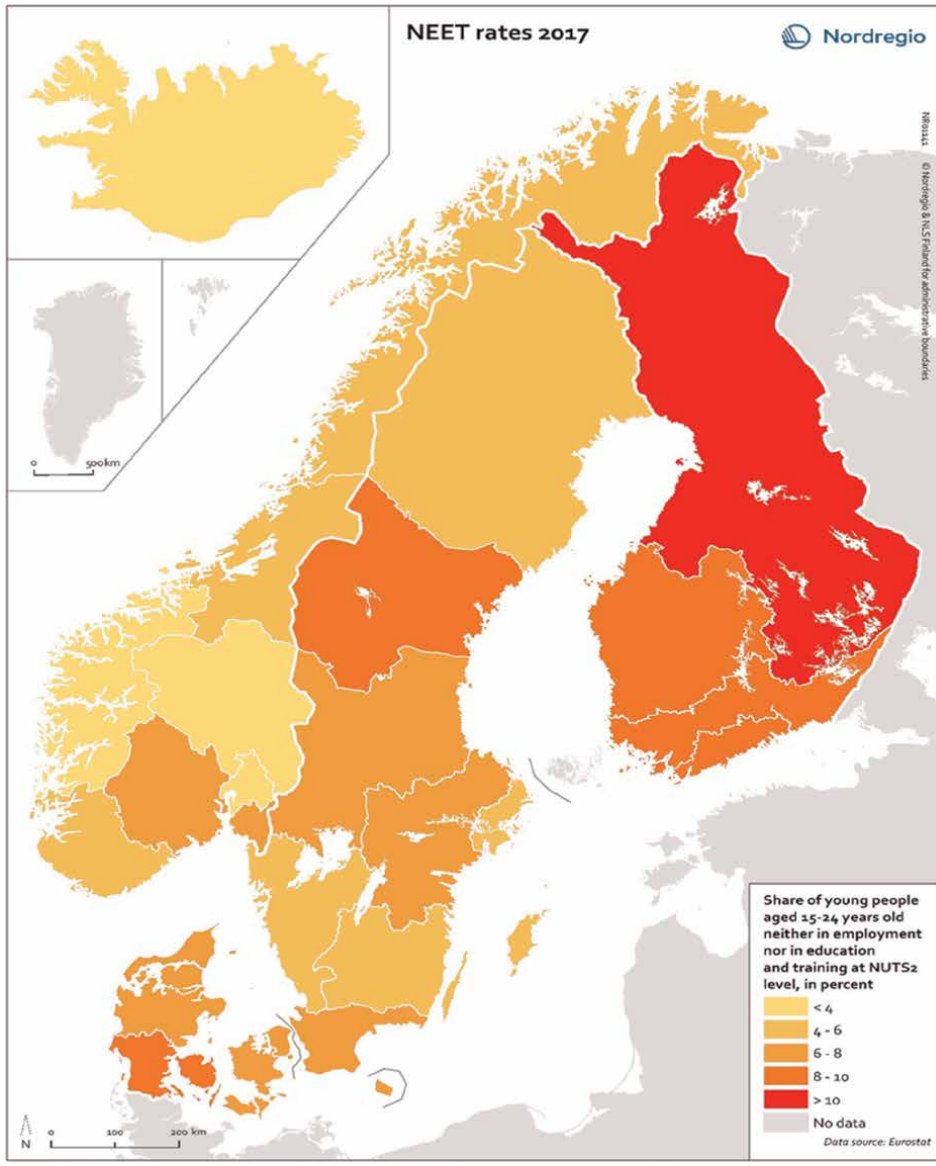

Figure 3.
NEET rates in Nordic countries, 2017.

characterized by this basic condition [40]. We as humans seek a meaning when some insurmountable, incomprehensible, unjust, senseless things happen in our lives [40].

Aaltonen, Berg, and Ikäheimo suggested a framework we have found useful [2, 42]. They identified three groups of NEETs according to young people's education, work experience, and general situation in life and life history, which provide our explanation framework to underlying causes of becoming a NEET [37, 42].

Education has long been considered a bulwark in hard times, but during recessions even young people with good educational merit may lose out and their income possibilities be hollowed out, making their progression in the labour market more difficult leading to more youth unemployment in general. This resonates well with the

definition of the first group called 'victims of recession'. They have merits but where they live the jobs available do not fit them or are simply elsewhere. They are hit by living in a rust belt or where crisis has hit, and they become stuck without enablers to help them reskill or make a living. Thus, they become entangled into a negative spiral that transforms into a feeling of being useless. Many may lose perspective of meaning over time if no measures are taken to improve their situation [37].

The other group is named 'worker-citizens in the making'. They are minor deviations, in that they are fully functional but have abrupt educational or vocational experience. Some of their bad relationships with schooling may be caused by minor neurotic deviations on a spectrum from dyslexia, dyscalculia to attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or mild end of the autism spectrum. Due to these deviations, they may have experienced bullying in school or being mocked at. Their self-esteem towards formal educational pathways is at a low, and also in social relations. Many among this group have changed from one school to another without succeeding in graduation but reasons for leaving school or vocation may be varied. The most likely reasons given are difficult relationships with peers in class or mental health issues like anxiety. We have qualitative evidence from our informants that they desired to turn back on track but felt they did not have what it takes, due to former traumatic experiences. They wondered if they should just have pulled themselves together. However, they were not able to [37].

The last and third group is described as 'troubled'. This group has dealt with different types of mental health challenges. The mental health issues vary on a spectrum from debilitating depression to affective paranoia and in worst case schizophrenia. The length of time experiencing difficulties varies. Some have from an early age been dealing with not really functioning within the school structure or in life in general, others became sick when they reached adulthood. In some cases, the reason for being so troubled is caused by deprivation of parental protection while growing up [37]. The majority of people who are in this situation have been faced with a life of uncertainty where homelessness, physical abuse, or unstructured families dominate daily life. Therefore, schooling or training, or just exercising hobbies come second to other more pressing issues. Their rehabilitation will at first have to focus on adapting to normal life and carrying out something that may spur interest but maybe it is not full occupation, which may set them back if too strict requirements are set too fast. It may be a huge challenge for these individuals to understand how to help themselves to various needed services to enable their rehabilitation. Therefore, they need long-term stability. Incidences like shifting personnel in the mental health care or the consultant helping with how to get by—may set this group back to ground zero. Their instability is not dealt with promisingly if building up trust is not part of the process in the client-advisor relations [2, 37].

5. Methodology

The methodology in our study is of mixed methods combining statistical spatial data (regional and local statistics harmonized to a Nordic or European scale) and qualitative methods in the form of semistructured interviews and field visits.

Following the literature on the causes for marginalization of young people, we mapped the areas in the Nordic countries where youth unemployment and NEET rates were the highest. Hence, we extracted the statistical spatial data out of national statistical agencies in each of the Nordic countries. On a cross-national level, we

examined a range of statistics and maps with overview of the Nordic region to get a better idea of regional variations in share of youth unemployment, of early leavers from education and training, of young people neither in employment nor in education, regional variation in lower secondary educational attainment level, and foreign born youth with low education, unaccompanied minors, of recipients of social transfers among 20–29 years, and regional variations in share of the population at risk of poverty (income below 60% of the national median disposable income after social transfer). For most statistical data, we looked at changes between 2014, 2016, and 2017 (the work was ongoing in 2018 and 2019). We focused on spatial disparities between urban, small towns and rural areas and whether they could be detected clearly in the statistical data. Thus, we were seeking answers and indicators on where there were regional or spatial variations in smaller towns, communities, and rural areas across the Nordic region. To identify areas where youth unemployment was high, we used Eurostat's indicator that expresses the number of unemployed persons aged 15–24 as a share of the labour force of the same age at the Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics – Level 2 (NUTS 2 level) (yth_empl_030) [29]. To identify areas with high NEET rates, we used Eurostat's indicator corresponding to 'the percentage of the population of a given age group and sex who is not employed and not involved in further education or training' (edat_lfse_22) [29]. Eurostat's definition of 'not employed' includes unemployed or inactive persons, and the definition of 'not involved in further education' refers to persons who have not received any education in the 4 weeks preceding the survey [43].

Once we identified these areas, we could make a socio-geographical analysis of the state of the Nordic region in relation to the NEETs in the beforementioned age group. One important question in our study was what is being done and seemingly working in re-engaging this group of citizens. By plowing through programmes offered by regional and local authorities across the Nordic countries and gaining information from various officials involved in regional development work in their respective countries, we found several projects that had been, or were being, carried out. We contacted their managers to learn how the projects worked and about their aims. In some cases, we visited informants and project leaders, social workers or teachers or mentors and saw the facilities and some of their activities in action. Others we had to interview on the distance. We did formally over 25 interviews with responsible managers of initiatives for young people fitting the NEET criteria. Interviews were conducted in English, and four of the national languages in each of the Nordic countries; Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and Icelandic. We did not master Finnish, Sami languages or Faroese or Greenlandic and in these cases, we spoke Danish or English. The interviews were semistructured, following a list of topics we wanted to get answers to. We also made field visits to 12 initiatives in five of the Nordic countries. Our aim was to scope all possible measures that work regardless of whether they are initiated by state, regional, or labour market actors, or by public–private partnerships.

Even if our study represents a contribution to the literature on attempting to include a group of varied marginalized youth, there are limitations to our study. We have not chosen to focus specifically on ethnic minorities or specific groups within the group of NEETS, which may prevent a more detailed insight into specific challenges and possibilities of mobilization We chose to focus on the whole array of varied groups of NEETs including people in highly differing life circumstances. Another of the limitations of our research is that few of the projects had been evaluated from internal or external sources. Only four out of 30 initiatives in all the Nordic region (including Greenland, Faroe Islands, and Åland). Some of the projects were more

systemic, in that they were part of a long-term nationwide programme. Others were supported by the European Social Fund and thus short in their time span, allowing for a maximum of 3 years. With more short time frame to perform the risk is that the endeavors and the learning processes involved get lost in too narrow focus on initiating rather than securing achievements in re-engagement for the long term. Therefore, the re-engagement approaches sketched in this article should not be taken as absolutely successful ways to work with marginalized young people.

With this combination of methodologies, we intended to show a range of projects that have been initiated in the Nordic countries that are working or have worked and especially projects that had grown from regional or municipal authorities. Our point of departure was that good lessons learned in few places would have the option of inspiring other regions with some identical or similar challenges in part of their youth population.

These re-engagement approaches can be seen as examples of initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of marginalized young people. We reckon that the people we are focusing on are diverse and vary in what motivates them as evident from Aaltonen, Berg, and Ikäheimo's attempt to articulate three distinct groups of NEETs. What sparks us as human beings is different and thus our ontology rests on multiple talents of human beings [44]. We simply cannot see any evidence that there should be any one model to fit all. Therefore, we identify three types of re-engagement initiatives.

6. Findings on how to engage young people meaningfully: types of project initiatives

In the Nordic countries, many policy interventions have addressed and supported NEETs in the last decade. There are local, regional, and national projects to bring this group of young people into education and employment. Our findings in this subchapter are based on interviews with over 30 supervisors or social workers engaged in re-engaging unemployed youth, dropouts, or youth with mental problems. It helped understand the varieties of approaches to re-engaging NEETs.

In Denmark, both national and regional authorities have gone in recent years to great lengths to address ways to re-engage marginalized young people. Guidance centres are an example of public authorities' efforts. They are obliged to contact up to 25-year-old early school leavers because of a reform in the unemployed youth benefit system from 2004. The aim of the guidance centres is to guide youths through different offers of education programmes and, to begin with, find the best suited education programme, training place, or employment for every student [45]. The main types of challenges for young people who drop out in Danish rural areas are lack of role models. They grow up in socially deprived small towns where the unemployment rate is high but there is a need for upskilling. Also, there are groups of people with mental problems and diagnosis or radicalized youth who are on a trajectory towards criminality. Two different examples of measures in Denmark were repeatedly mentioned by informants as being successful in their goal of re-engaging youth.

A project manager in East Denmark in region Sjælland with high unemployment explained how they worked with marginalized young people. In their project Educational Track to Work, early school leavers, unemployed, or young people with poor mental health were the focus group. Marginalized young people have in many cases faced lack of guidance in their lives, because they come from broken families, and/or they have not integrated well at school.

> A lot of these young people start and stop their education many times, but they do not finish any education, which is a problem. (Project manager, Denmark).

The project attempted to provide guidance to complete education and apprenticeship through different approaches to motivate the involved. This could be activities like exercising physically, just relaxing, talking, or playing games. In this way, encounters between the guides and people could feel more relaxed, they gained mutual trust, but first and foremost they were based on the individual needs expressed by the youth involved. The young people felt heard.

The other project operates six centres around Denmark (four of six in rural parts of the country). It is built on the ideology of consequence pedagogics and practises its ideology, which can be shortened to: We go to action, we take responsibility, we look ahead. This way of addressing re-engagement of young people has proved effective in reaching out to and engaging the most vulnerable part of the youth. The director claims that the young people they take care of are the people who in all other instances have given up on engaging them in training. In TAMU (as it is called), those who engage in the programme are individually consulted and given real work opportunities in training positions, provided with housing and food three times a day and almost military discipline. TAMU enables young people in the age 18–30 with little prior formal education to become considered valid citizens in training. Some of the people who have had social mobility experience through TAMU were being sacked by all other instances of the system because they had criminal background or history of substance abuse. Some have been marginalized due to social or mental illness diagnosis, but TAMU has decided to believe in their abilities. The headmaster who is among our informants said that they train the young people's social skills simultaneously parallel to giving them hands-on work experience in 18 different sectors of work life. It is important to equip TAMU youth with skills of self-determination, self-help, accountability, credibility, respect, cooperativeness, and receptiveness. One of the students with a Hells Angels background, an earlier inmate in prison convicted of both violence and drug trade, told that it rescued his life that the programme managers of TAMU saw him as a person beyond his tattooed body. Staying in the programme has helped him achieve a feeling of accomplishment in his life for the first time, as kind of the last wakeup call, as he expresses it. Many of the companies that are engaged in recruiting young people from the programme express positive experiences. Trade unions are also part of the programme, and an important incentive is that municipalities remunerate companies involved in this important pathway of re-engagement and rehabilitation [46]. In both projects, the municipalities are important funders because they provide part of the trainee salaries.

The first and second approach, even if different, makes young people feel more comfortable and helps them feel active and feel they accomplish something when they are in an informal environment.

Both programmes' ways of dealing with marginalized young people could be termed as 'activating or empowering approach' not only because they rely on physical activity to re-engage young people but they also place a certain degree of responsibility upon them. Most of the examined project initiatives we have encountered are within this approach (see **Figure 2**).

In Sweden, various governments have been involved in attempting to reduce youth unemployment with special focus on NEETs at least since the year 2000. Also, few regional initiatives have evolved more recently in the last 10–15 years. To combat high youth unemployment, three regions got extra financial support from the

European Union's (EU's) Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and European Social Fund between 2014 and 2020. The regions favored were Southern Sweden, Central Norrland, and North Central Sweden. Focusing on NEETs they provided assessment of training traineeships and apprenticeships and enabled start-up support for young entrepreneurs as well as offering them qualitative vocational education and training.

As per the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) that conducted a survey among 6000 young Swedes, the findings revealed in general a need to increase inclusion and boost a sense of belonging to society. Furthermore, the study showed that over one-sixth of respondents had been bullied or frozen out, and one-third remarked that they had experienced abuse or felt they had been treated unfairly. This affects confidence in other people. Over 14% of respondents seldom or never confide in others, boys to higher degree than girls. However, girls marked they were more often bullied and had been ostracized [2, 46].

One of our informants in a visit to one of the youth centres in a small Swedish town told many young people felt marginalized and therefore dropped out, even if only dealing with minor learning challenges in the school. He claimed that the way schools were run and managed left no capacity to teachers or supervisors to care for the students at times when they were vulnerable. In many cases, they felt left out, hence dropping out of school education. It seems like they do not bother and cannot cope with students who are in anyway different, he said.

This resonates with other findings from the interviews with several social workers. Schools often lack resources to prevent early school leaving. The system thus omits pupils at risk of leaving school because they become invisible in the crowd. One of the social workers felt they lack strategies to follow up and detect earlier groups at risk of staying away from schooling. She told about a boy she was seeking solutions with because he was not functioning in the school. A solution was found in engaging him in apprenticeship in a company, but it did not work out there either. He stayed home for 3 weeks without the school even registering he was missing. There is a lack of strategies and follow up on how to discover these problems early (Social worker, Sweden).

After 3 weeks had gone by, he called the school to speak to his teacher, but the teacher had left for another job in a different school. He had been totally forgotten. He was devastated and felt nobody missed him or cared about him (Social worker, Sweden).

Among the critiques on school reforms in Sweden is that streamlining has been prioritized so highly that individual differences and needs in learning or engaging or spurring good relations with students with minor learning challenges are not practised to the needed extent. Furthermore, the critique against school reforms implications is that the system has become far too rigid to respond to cases like the ones described above. The social workers know that teachers' 'time is very limited' and thus the responsibility is transferred to individual student, with whom some of these with biggest challenges have no ability to react and improve their situation. That's the big problem too, the one who does not make a sound. If students start a fight they will get noticed, but the quiet ones just slip under the radar all the time. (Social worker, Young in Gävleborg, Sweden).

One of the exceptions of programmes dealing with this is the project Young in Gävleborg (a county in East Sweden). The whole county and municipalities coordinate efforts with local schools and each school's affiliated mentors have been specifically trained and are informed about what is going on in each of the classes. This means they can act when needed so they will without weeks passing by contact students who have stopped showing up. They initiate contact, meet up, and talk, and

assign a coach who will work with the young person in solving issues needed. They create a relaxed atmosphere in this contact to prevent a sense of stress or that things need to be speeded up while evaluating the young person's more pressing issues. After that, the coaching session will focus on improvement in health, family, finances, friends, and at work depending on what is needed in each individual's case. These five areas tend to have deteriorated at the point when the young person is about to give up after a long history of continued failure. In many cases, the focus is on improving health. Health is generally a big concern among the young. "They come to us and express they have bad health. Our approach is to sit down with them on a blank sheet and write down with them different health concerns. These may be about sleep disorder, eating, lack of exercise, etc." (Social worker, Young in Gävleborg, Sweden). The solution lies in laying out an action plan drafted together with them individually and it must rhyme with the young person's desires and goals. The action plan consists of a development plan for activities where each youth's strengths and weaknesses are also identified. Mentors work with an action plan, drafted in accordance with the youngsters' desires and goals, consisting of the development of activities directed at identifying youngsters' strengths and weaknesses.

The way this project worked could be termed not only as an 'empowering' approach but also as the 'caring approach' because of the two approaches emphasized. Showing the person genuine care and attention and making plans with them that enable them to break out of the bad cycle are important. In first place, the project acknowledged some cracks within the education system, whereby vulnerable young people could fall and in most cases the pupil is derailed because of minor unfortunate incidences in the beginning that have escalated.

Many of the re-engagement initiatives we encountered in other parts of the Nordic region had a similar way of approaching their youth—by engaging in identifying the problem with the individual by listening and then finding solutions in order to boost the self-worth and self-confidence in a direction so the person would be better equipped to be re-introduced to the education system, training, or work and with multiple activities attempting to minimize thresholds and anxieties involved. We identify it as a caring approach.

Finland is the only Nordic country that had in 2019 a national legislation (*Nuorisolaki 1285/2016*) that requires municipalities to employ social workers who are proactive in seeking up marginalized young people. While Finland has relatively high completion rates in school, many young people go from education into unemployment [47] and therefore part of the NEETs may belong to the group 'victims of recession'. Finland has good experience with the proactive outreach work with youth that falls out of the system [48]. One-stop guidance centres, or low-threshold services, have been developed in Finland to address young people out of work, training, and education—and support them in re-engaging. The guidance centres offer a diversified support to young people. Young people are offered general guidance services and specific education, social care, health care, and employment services to advance emotionally, socially, and professionally—all in one place and without the burdens of bureaucracy.

In one of the centres, located in an old railway garage and workshop, the Jyväskylä Rock Academy is located. Developing the creative talents of vulnerable young people is as they see it an effective way to foster their hard and soft skills. The academy provides all the required resources to start and develop music careers and they are also running a broader arts academy where young people can perform other art-related activities, such as theater acting, dancing, circus, or poetry, to name a few. Regarding a low-threshold approach, the managers explained that the centre is open to all

youngsters who are interested. They offer an open to all free space in the cultural house. Youth may start their encounters by playing billiards or listening to a concert. They can come and talk, ask for help on anything, and they will be met with understanding and staff who attempt to solve things with them. Providing these services and activities they have the responsibility of engaging in their own activity, hence their own self-development. Also, this approach helps them to engage in social practices they are motivated to engage in.

One important aspect of the work overall is dialog circles. They meet regularly with the headspace principle and act as peer support groups (i.e., the NEET discussion group that meets once a week). The only ban is zero tolerance on substance use (alcohol or other drugs).

Regarding proactive outreach work, the centre has two strategies. The first is to keep a close cooperation with schools. When a student has not been attending school for few days, social workers call student's home and go to see what is happening. The other strategy is going patrolling the streets in search of marginalized youngsters who might need social workers' help, which has its perks:

> Sometimes they think those workers are police and sometimes they run from them (Project manager, Finland).

Inspiring and mobilizing through arts is the distinctive component of this centre, which in fact works as a cultural centre. The main way the centre works with marginalized young people is through, i.e., composing music and creating video clips:

> Mainly the creativity work is what we do in order to engage young people (...) It's basically we are helping young bands to edit their first music video, but also young musicians come here and tell them mostly what not to do in their musical career. (Project manager, Finland).

The managers stress that by engaging in creative activities youngsters realize their potential and that helps them to re-engage in social life. In addition, because of the open attitude of social workers and the sharing of experiences with other youngsters in similar circumstances as them, their social trust is boosted (**Table 1**).

		Creative approach	Activating/Empowering approach	Caring approach
W-Sjælland	DK			
Sjælland Lolland	DK			
Jammerbugt	DK			
Hjørring	DK			
TAMU	DK			
Laukaa, Äänekoski, Konnevesi	FI			
Jyväskylä Rock	FI			
Veturallit Jyväskylä	FI			
South Savonia	FI			
UngResurs Åland Nordland	NO			

		Creative approach	Activating/Empowering approach	Caring approach
Mosjøen	NO			
Oppland & Hedmark	NO			
Trysil	NO			
Hedmarken	NO			
Hordaland	NO			
Alta, Finnmark	NO			
Ung Gävleborg	SE			
Plug In Gävleborg	SE			
Hornsudden, Strängnäs	SE			
Motala	SE			
Motala	SE			
Haparanda-Tornio	SE			
Majoriaq Kujalleq	GL			
Sapiik - Ilulissat & Nuuk, Qaqortoq	GL			
Sandavágur	FO			
Fuglafjordur	FO			
FabLab Westman Isl Virkið	IS			
NW-Iceland	IS			
VIRK	IS			

Source: Karlsdóttir et al. [2].
Color yellow signifies creative approach, color red signifies activating/empowering approach, color green signifies caring approach.

Table 1.
Three approaches to re-engagement of marginalized youth in Nordic projects in different Nordic countries.

7. Discussion and conclusion

As we anticipated in the Methodology section, the aim of this article was not to find the ultimate successful ways to re-engage marginalized young people but rather explore a variety of the initiatives taken in some Nordic countries to mitigate exclusion and marginalization of youth.

Through the description of the activating/empowering, caring, and creative approaches to re-engage young people, we aimed to pinpoint the relevant causes behind young people's marginalization and ways to mobilize. Some of the interviewees mentioned socio-economic disadvantage, gender, mental health, or substance abuse as factors pushing young people off the edge. This reflects the research findings across the Nordic countries on the matter.

Several possible structural factors may contribute to early school leaving and later push youngsters to end up as NEETs. As described, they are caused by various factors or combinations thereof. Socio-economic conditions, gender culture, unintended

outcomes of school reforms, and school closures play a role as well as mental health problems that seem to be on the increase. Also, school reforms in educational systems that prioritize marketization as a management model have had segregation effects, even if unintended. Poor youth, boys, and immigrants are at greater risk than their advantaged counterparts, girls, even if girls in increased number show signs of anxiety. In any case, both socio-cultural and structural factors influence the performance possibilities of different youth groups in this case.

We have in this chapter focused on young people not in employment, education, or training—NEETs. All the Nordic countries are faced with marginalized or ostracized youngsters, or a hidden youth or an inactive youth group for various reasons. While being a heterogenic group with various characteristics that we hardly manage to grasp entirely, we divided them for analytical reasons into three types of challenged youth: victims of recession, workers in the making, and the troubled. This analytical framework was helpful because we have evidence-based reasons that each of these different groups needs different approaches in supporting them.

We have witnessed that while some of the challenges among young people are minor challenges to begin with, there are often responses that either do not respond to the problems or it takes too long time. By the time help is at hand, the initial problems would have grown to become much more complicated to solve. That means an increased risk for every young person facing unnecessarily long-term social exclusion. If not dealt with it may, in future to come, give rise to several social and health-related problems that could have been avoided and can extend far into adulthood. Therefore, early intervention is important. Also, interventions that focus on the user, thereby placing the person involved at centre [2].

The relevance of our study does not limit itself to the period we studied NEETs in the Nordic countries. Implications of COVID-19 in challenging well-being of young people around the world are well acknowledged. Poor mental health in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic has been well documented in adolescents; however, less is known about the longer-term effect of the pandemic [49].

There is a saying that it does take a village to raise a child. It could not be more true when it comes to the needed coordination and cooperation between state actors, labour markets, regional authorities, the unions, and private actors. However, the picture we provide is not complete and merely highlights good examples of some of the actions initiated and practised. As previous studies point out, there is still limited knowledge on what types of measures work and are most effective for different groups with different needs. This also counts for effects of tools and measures attempting to include the most vulnerable youth. Furthermore, there is also a need for further comparative and cross-national studies [50].

The criteria for success in re-engaging young people are not carved in stone. Several perspectives are crucial for motivation—not any one model. Low-threshold services and the provision of a range of support expertise appear vital. Individual placement and support also. Orienting the actions towards identified needs with the user in place is also crucial. The projects we have researched are various. Some of them build on individual consultations focusing on listening to individual needs. We have seen this approach highly prioritized in many Finnish initiatives. This approach also seems to spread as an emerging trend in many of the other countries and regions we have focused on. It underpins the importance of finding motivations that always rest with the individuals [38]. Therefore, efforts should be aimed at the individual. After all, young people are heading towards adulthood so they are unbecoming youth because they are in transition. Because the group of NEETs has for various reasons had challenges in the transition towards adulthood.

While we have studied various multifaceted initiatives, we have also been acquainted with the idea that this is about investing in young people [2]. We should be careful in not overestimating the investment aspect of socially rehabilitating this vulnerable group, while this investment idea for the future transfers focus from future social burden to something more promising. We should also focus on the preventive potentials for a group that with some help can become more well-functioning in employment, education, and training. Young people are diverse. The most important vision is they can constitute an important part of society and that they should be enabled to pursue their life goals individually and collectively. By giving them meaningful options to re-enter and be reincluded in pathways of employment, education, or training, an important goal is met with. Helping them become valid citizens. Therefore, it should be of high priority to motivate their engagement in ways that mobilize them and enable them to flourish. Whether it is about approaching them with engagement that is empowering, creative, or caring or a combination is a question of what they need to find meaningfulness in their lives.

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the Authors.

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Chapter 6

Everyday Aesthetics and Attractiveness of the University Campus

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Abstract

With the long period that students spend on the university campus, it becomes a familiar part of their daily routine. Many parts of the campus transform into mere functional spaces accommodating students' activities. It is therefore a challenge to identify and investigate a suitable framework for studying the aesthetical value and attractiveness of these familiar parts. It is also questioned whether there is a relationship between students' specialization and their appreciation of the aesthetical value and attractiveness of these familiar spaces. Using the framework of everyday aesthetics, this research investigated the students' appreciation of the aesthetical value and attractiveness of the Engineering Campus of the University of Bahrain. The study revealed that familiar spaces on the university campus have different levels of aesthetical value that affects their attractiveness. Familiar outdoor spaces proved significant in this regard more than buildings. The study also found differences between architecture and engineering students' appreciation of everyday aesthetics in familiar spaces and their attractiveness. The study is the first to develop a theoretical framework for the use of everyday aesthetics to investigate the aesthetics and attractiveness of familiar spaces at university campuses and opens the door for further future research.

Keywords: everyday aesthetics, aesthetics pleasure, attractiveness, university campus, students, Bahrain

1. Introduction

Aesthetics of the everyday life [1] or everyday aesthetics (EA) [2] appeared at the turn of the 21st century as a sub-discipline of aesthetics that made a shift in aesthetics thinking towards the objects and practices of everyday life [3–5]. It has been the subject matter of fierce arguments among aestheticians in the last decades. Some believe it has been originated in western aesthetics thought before the 19th century [6]. Others see it as a reaction to the concentration of aesthetic philosophies on art objects. It was thought that the separation between aesthetic experience and everyday life experiences was not justified [7]. It was also thought that the objective part of the aesthetic experience should be extended to include all life aspects. Aesthetics theoreticians

like Parsons, and Downey argue that EA can be considered within the frameworks of the aesthetics of art [2]. In this regard, Berleant introduces the concept of aesthetic engagement as the main framework for understanding art experience. Since people are always engaged in their everyday life, the same art engagement mechanisms apply to the aesthetical components of everyday life [8]. At the same time, Uriko Saito, Richard Shusterman, and Arto Haapala argue that art frameworks cannot be applied to natural beauty and social activities [2]. Carlson tried to decrease the gap between the abstract disinterestedness of art experience and the active engagement of EA through the understanding of meanings and concepts of EA experience. This cognitive approach depends on the details, relationships, activities, and sensory experiences of everyday life [9]. Within such an approach, landscape elements either hard or soft, urban street furniture and family relationships can all have their special aesthetics experience [10]. This experience can be found in all aspects of everyday life [11, 12]. The appreciation of aesthetics in all these diversified contents relates to the daily life practices. It needs the search for interest and specialty to discover their hidden aesthetics potential [2]. Some of the factors that can be used in this regard include grandeur, loftiness, magnificence, and expression [6]. It needs to be remembered that whatever these objects and activities are, and whatever are their aesthetical judgements, they are always parts and reflections of their social and cultural settings [6].

The significance of EA stems from its ability to improve the way how people look to the ordinary things in their life. This is an important drive for improving the quality of life and the level of public attitudes towards aesthetics [2]. The experience of EA is complex and immersive. It is open to everybody in the community, and it is a way for giving more value for life [13]. EA opened wide doors of new interpretations for the meaning of art and aesthetics and their connections with everyday life [14].

Mandoki defines EA as "the array of behaviors, values, and preferences related to human sensibility". She agrees with John Dewey's argument that EA experience depends on the rhythms, energies, and practices of the everyday [15].

Therefore, EA can be defined as the everyday aesthetics embedded in the values, activities, practices, and experiences that are positively appreciated by a community within its socio-cultural and spatio-temporal settings.

EA emphasizes the everydayness and ordinariness of objects, activities, and values that form the contents of everyday life. These everyday contents can be figured out as mundane, regular, repetitive, and unstructured [5]. But at the same time, EA also does not ignore the extraordinariness in these objectives and values. It keeps a continuous and dynamic relationship between the two [4].

Saito broadened the space of aesthetics to include the appreciation of all sensuous and audiovisual experiences of any activity, phenomenon, or object [16]. This includes all aspects of the everyday life that form the subject matter of the everyday aesthetics and determine the realm of its application, experience, and appreciation. Within this huge collection of life events and objects, it is thought to differentiate between those parts that are designed and effected as works of art and the normal routine everyday parts. Felski provided some characteristics for EA like habituation, repetition, convention, and spontaneity [17].

Melchionne added other characteristics for the everydayness of these things. They include ongoing, common, and active [18].

On the other hand, there is a need to establish a clear and well-defined way for how to examine the EA experience in real life. Despite the extensive discussions of art and aesthetics theoreticians on the relationships and differences between traditional

philosophies of art and EA, little could be found on the scientific empirical means of EA applications. While a lot can be found on such means in visual arts and architecture for example, it is still gloomy and faint within EA. This introduces a serious challenge for the theory and its relevance to both aesthetics and everyday life. Several questions are raised here about a comprehensive framework linking the components of EA and its characteristics with its processes, measures, determinants, and the final aesthetics judgements. A thorough investigation has found that the studies in experimental psychology, psychology of aesthetics, industrial design, and even aesthetics of web design provided a lot on the specific variables and measures, and the processes and procedures of measuring EA in the landscape, urban design, product design, and internet web design. Unfortunately, these studies do not form a complete framework and theory, and much work is still needed to be done in this regard. These investigations are summarized in **Table 1**. They provide a clear, simplified and straight forward approach for EA.

2. Elements of EA

Saito in her discussion for the relationship between aesthetics of art and EA argued that EA elements include everyday activities, phenomena, and objects [16]. At the same time, Mandok added behaviors which are parts of activities, values which can be parts of phenomena, and preferences which are judgements of certain experiences and are parts of the appreciation of aesthetics [15]. Previous discussions above showed the agreement of EA supporters on not to include art works because they are not part of the everyday life. But this argument can be refuted by considering public art works in the streets and urban spaces. And the issue of architecture and urban design and street furniture of urban streets strongly challenge this argument. In addition, it is still not clear how to define the boundaries of the elements of Saito and Mandok.

3. Characteristic of EA

Some scholars tried to give some descriptive qualities with which the elements of EA can be recognized and defined. Flexi proposed that for anything to be considered within the domain of EA it should be characterized with habituation, convention, and repetition [17]. Melchionne added that it should be ongoing, common, active, and spontaneous [18]. Then Ratiu introduced that it should be also described as mundane [5]. Although these characteristics can look fine at the first glance; many questions arise about their exact meaning and their theoretical boundaries, not to mention the measures that can be used to examine them empirically. This is in addition to the fact that they are still scattered between the theoretical and empirical studies of scholars from different disciplines without a consensus that can put them all in one mold.

4. Processes of EA experience

Leaving the dilemma of the definitions and characteristics of the elements of EA waiting for more analysis and discussions, the need arises for understanding the processes of EA experience. Aesthetics is all about experiencing and appreciating aesthetical works and judging the level of pleasure in this experience. Berghman and Hekkert studied aesthetical experience and its processes, principles, and objectives in

1. Elements of EA		2. Characteristic conditions of EA Elements		3. Processes of EA experience		4. A Indicators of EA		4. B Schema representation
Saito [19]	Activities	Melchionne [20]	Ongoing	Berleant and Carlson [7]	Engagement	Tosaki [21]	Rhythm	flow
	Phenomena		Common	Berghman and Hekkert [22]	Sensation			Repetition
					Perception			Movement
	Objects		Active		Judgment			Mobility
Mandoki [16]	behaviors		Spontaneity					Fluidity
	values	Felski [23]	Habituation					Typicality
	preferences		Repetition			Zalta [14]	Grandeur	
		Ratiu [5]	Convention				Loftiness	
			Mundane				Magnificence	
			Regular				Character taste dignity quality expression	
			Repetitive				Taste	
			Unstructured				Dignity	
							Quality	
							Expression	
						Gao & Songfu [23]	Complexity	Richness
								Change and contrast
								Readability
							Imageability	Symbolic
								Uniqueness
								Visual impact

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1. Elements of EA	2. Characteristic conditions of EA Elements	3. Processes of EA experience	4. A Indicators of EA		4. B Schema representation
				Visual proportion	Openness degree
					Depth of field
					Shield
				Coherence	Elements-environment
					Atmosphere-landscape
				Naturalness	Proportion-natural
					Continuity-natural
					Interactive mode
				Historicity	Narrative
					Sense of atmosphere
				Orderliness	Management
					Behavioral activities
				Ephemera	Timeliness
					Climatic
					Seasonality
5. Determinants of Aesthetics Pleasure					
Blijlevens et al. [24]	Presence		Grasping		
	Inventive		Professional		
	Density		Complexity		
	Clear		Well Finished		
	Averageness		Appropriate		
	Legibility		Dynamic		

1. Elements of EA	2. Characteristic conditions of EA Elements	3. Processes of EA experience	4. A Indicators of EA	4. B Schema representation
		Up to date	Harmonic	
		Designed	Understandable	
		Special effects	Categorizable	
		Clean	Meaningful	
		Convenient	Comprehensible	
		Easy orientation	Coherent	
		Creative	Fluent	
		Symmetrical	Typical	
		Distinctive	Orderly	
		Elicit	Easy To Use	
		Familiar	Structured	
		Novel	Varied	
		Goes together	Conceptual	
		Elated	Powerful	
Jacobsen and Beudt [25]		Symmetry	Enclosure	
		Complexity	Order	
		Proportion	Style	
		Color	Contour	
		Form	Openness	
		Sound	Enclosure	
		Context	Vegetation,	
		Figuration	Uniformity	
		composition	Scale	

1. Elements of EA	2. Characteristic conditions of EA Elements	3. Processes of EA experience	4. A Indicators of EA	4. B Schema representation
Sauer and Sonderegger [26]	Performance			
	Usability			
	Attractiveness			
	Affect			
	Workload			
	Quality			

Table 1.
General framework for EA.

industrial design which represents a supply line for everyday life objects [19]. They argued that the aesthetical experience goes through 2 important processes, perception, and sensation before coming to the aesthetical pleasure which is the final judgement. But the argument on which comes first, perception or sensation still needs further consideration. In the field of environmental aesthetics as outlined by Berleant and Carlson, they argued that engagement is an important process necessary for the appreciation of environmental aesthetics which is part of EA [23]. This engagement precedes the state of aesthetical judgement and pleasure.

5. Indicators of EA

Criteria, indicators, and measures are the tools usually used for the evaluation of both the subject matter of the aesthetics experience in addition to the subjective, cognitive, and psychological aspects of the experiencing people. Tosaki in his search for a theory of rhythm in the visual arts presented it as a tool for composition for the composer and as a tool for measurement for the listener or the viewer [20]. He discussed how rhythm produces different layers of audiovisual effects. He argued for rhythm itself to be a schema despite the complexity it has in composition and in schematic presentation in the perception of the audience. Therefore, it is argued to consider rhythm itself as a general indicator of aesthetics quality that produces different perceptual schemata or schema representations like flow, repetition, movement, mobility, fluidity, and typicality. Following, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy edited by Zalta introduced 11 values that create the aesthetics quality and can be considered as general indicators for it [6]. They include grandeur, loftiness, magnificence, character, taste, dignity, quality, and expression, and provide the chance for the development of different measures that practically and empirically would help to assess the aesthetics quality. Finally, Gao and Songfu in their study for the aesthetic appreciation of urban landscape in London concluded 8 indicators for landscape aesthetics [22]. They are complexity, imageability, visual proportion, cognitive object, naturalness, historicity, and diachronic variability. These important qualitative indicators of the aesthetical quality are inherently part of the aesthetical entity. As part of the aesthetical experience, they create schemata representation in the cognition of the audience. These schemata representations participate in the aesthetics appreciation process and the generation of the aesthetics pleasure. Observing these schemata as measures in the aesthetical entity would therefore insure the creation of more satisfactory aesthetical environment.

6. Determinants of aesthetics pleasure

It is important to point out that these determinants of EA represent the objective part related to the aesthetics subject matter or the components of the EA. This means that they are measures for the aesthetical quality of the aesthetics material. As such, there is a need to link them to the indicators of EA discussed above where each indicator will be connected to its suitable measures. Attention should be paid to differentiate them from the schemata representations that are subjective and relate to the experiencing audience. Blijlevens et al., in their work for developing a scale for aesthetic pleasure in designed artifacts, listed 40 measures covering a wide range of aesthetics qualities (**Table 1**) [27]. At the same time, Jacobsen and Beudt found that aesthetics pleasure in the visual arts

and the built environment is determined by 10 different factors (**Table 1**) [21]. More recently, Sauer and Sonderegger used another set of six determinants to study visual aesthetics satisfaction of an everyday product (**Table 1**) [28]. The list of all these determinants or measures that affect aesthetics pleasure is quite long. Some of the measures are repeated between groups and some others look subjective. Emphasizing what have been mentioned on previous factors and variables, these also need to be well defined and delineated. Not to mention that certain determinants can be used for certain aesthetical settings. More importantly, some of these measures are broader than limits of a measure and they need several measurements to give right results. This is the case of attractiveness in the list of Sauer and Sonderegger [28].

7. Attractiveness in the built environment- a tool of aesthetics appreciation

In aesthetics, attractiveness is a state of relationship between the quality of objective aesthetical environment and its responsive personal perception. Generally, attractiveness can be defined as the state of being pleasing and arousing interest and engagement [24]. This relates to the objective qualities of the environment. On the other hand, it refers to the strength and quality of pleasurable emotional response towards this environment [25]. Numerous studies on the urban environment, urban psychology, psychology of design, and psychology of aesthetics dealt with the issue of attractiveness, some from the subjective personal side and others from the objective settings of the environment. Wahlberg used 35 urban attractiveness measures for the study of town center attractiveness in Sweden [26]. Functional elements, urban design elements, and architectural elements were included in the measurement process. Adkins et al. provided another extensive list of aesthetic measures for the study of the attractiveness of urban walking environment [29]. It also covered different features of the built environment like roadways, street furniture, and green structure. In the same direction, Bolleter used nine variables for the measurement of attractiveness of public open spaces. They included walkability, shading, water features, lighting, sporting facilities, flora, and fauna [30]. These studies and the like do not look at attractiveness as an indicator of EA within which these urban environments are components. They lack the vision of the comprehensive approach outlined above and merely look at the urban environment as a functional machine. Looking at the urban environment through the proposed comprehensive framework establishes a strong relationship between the different components and their everyday life settings, features, and aesthetical experience. This framework provides a better chance for the study of attractiveness on the university campus as part of the everyday urban environment.

8. EA in the university campus

Many universities around the world pay great attention to the aesthetics qualities of their campuses and spend huge budgets for this purpose. The reason behind this is that the aesthetics quality of the campus is the best way to build its character. This is sometimes done through the installation of artworks that can attract the attention of the students and visitors. Aesthetical quality of the campus can also be created by the architectural design of the buildings and the urban design of places and spaces. This is in addition to landscape design as well [7]. The aestheticization of the campus

enhances its attractiveness and improves its education environment [5]. This attractiveness exerts an important effect on the students to decide where to meet and entertain, what activities to do and how, their social behavior and interaction, and their sport activity [4]. attractiveness strongly affects the students' attitude towards the university and their sense of belonging [31]. Attractiveness is also influential in attracting and affecting the staff and the visitors [32]. Zhao et al. studied the attractiveness of campus landscape using indicators like visual forms of the landscape [33]. Increasing vegetation coverage and natural waterscape on campus would improve both aesthetic quality and recreational preference. Landscape, therefore, has a strong attractiveness for the students and deeply affects their academic and social development. They referred to aesthetics pleasure as a drive of attractiveness that encourages the students to spend more time in the university and to improve their academic and social conduct [34]. They also made a link between aesthetics appreciation of landscape design of the campus and outdoor recreation activities of the students and proposed several measures for attractive landscapes like shapes, colors, and spatial arrangements. No reference was made to EA or its applications. As a result of this shortcoming, they argued that recreation activities have a preference for aesthetics appreciation and therefore their hardscape design requirements have preference for landscape aesthetics requirements. This highlights the need of introducing EA as a design framework to improve the quality of everyday life where functionality does not mean decreasing the aesthetics quality. There is a need to introduce aesthetics in the curriculum to enhance aesthetics thinking and behavior of the students [35]. This would make a shift in the students' understanding of attractiveness dimension of their university campus. The urban environment of the university campus represents the everyday life atmosphere for the students. To what extent this everyday environment is considered attractive for the students is a problem that needs to be subjected to empirical examination. As it has been considered before, attractiveness is an indicator of EA that represents the tool for measuring the appreciation of the aesthetical quality. It helps to understand the aesthetical environment and its relationship with the users. As far as research methods are concerned, the study of the aesthetics experience and appreciation of university students for their campus can only be possible and practical by dividing the campus into different zones according to spatial or functional differentiation. The everyday life activities inside a university campus are numerous and they happen on daily bases in same places and spaces with the same persons for a long period of time. They include lessons in the classes, labs, auditoriums, and open spaces. All these functions fulfill the conditions of everyday aesthetics as outlined in the above framework.

9. EA in Engineering Campus, University of Bahrain

The Engineering Campus (EC) of the University of Bahrain (UOB) was established in 1965 in Isa Town and gradually it accommodated all faculties of the university (**Figure 1**). It continued until 1987 when a new modern and large campus was established in Skhair 16 km to the southwest. All faculties moved to the new campus except the engineering faculty which continued in Isa Town until recently. The campus' architecture reflects 20th-century modern contemporary style (**Figure 2**). The landscaping is very poor with many areas left with bare untreated soil. Pavements, sidewalks, and shading elements are old-fashioned and outdated (**Figure 3**). Softscape includes large old trees of different types and palm trees with small areas of grass and

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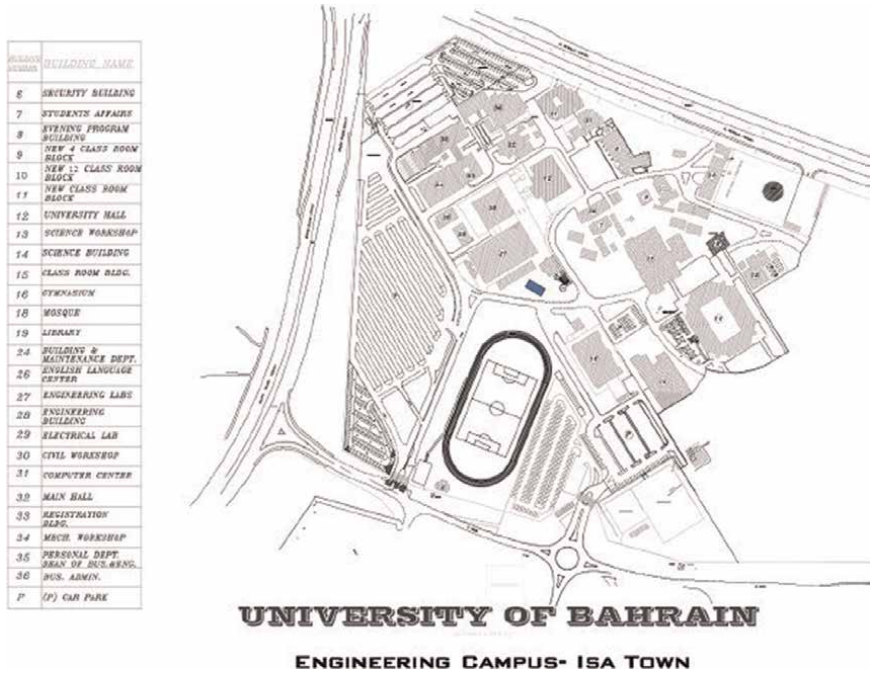

Figure 1.
University of Bahrain, EC Isa Town, master plan showing Bashayer Cafeteria in blue in the middle.

Figure 2.
Building of the Deanship of Engineering.

Figure 3.
Hardscape elements.

shrubs (**Figure 4**). Some works of art and architectural models are temporarily placed through the campus at the end of semesters when students of architecture and interior design finish their projects (**Figure 5**).

10. Methodology for measuring EA and attractiveness in EC, UOB

10.1 Variables of measurement

In search of a suitable means to examine the attractiveness of the EC at UOB, there was a need to simplify the general EA framework as presented in **Table 1** outlined above. This was necessary due to the level of existing aesthetics knowledge and awareness of the students. The simplified framework presented in **Table 2**. A physical object was thought to be more easily perceived by the students as EA object than activities or phenomena. It was decided to study Bashayer Cafeteria, its building, and the space in front of it. EA characteristics and processes apply to this building and its space. From the measures of EA cognitive object, historicity, and rhythm were used. The schema representations of these measures would be easily perceived by the students. A group of EA pleasure determinants was chosen including attractiveness. Direct, simple, and clear measures of these determinants will thence be used in the questionnaire given to the students.

Figure 4.
Softscape elements.

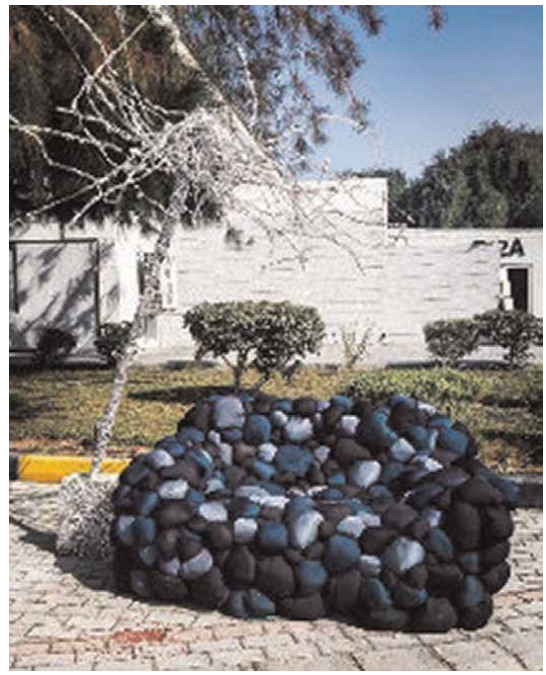

Figure 5.
Student's works of art at public display in EC.

Elements of EA	Characteristics/ conditions of EA elements	Processes of EA experience	Measures of EA	Schema representation	Determinants of aesthetics pleasure
Objects	Ongoing	Sensation	Cognitive object	Elements-environment	Usability
	Common	Perception		Atmosphere-landscape	Attractiveness
	Active	Judgment	Historicity	Sense of atmosphere	Quality
	Spontaneity		Rhythm	Flow	Symmetry
	Habituation			Repetition	Proportion
	Repetition			Movement	Color
	Convention			Typicality	Form

Table 2.
simplified framework of EA applied to the study of EC at UOB.

10.2 The object: Bashayer Cafeteria

Bashayer cafeteria is a small humble and minimal single space single floor building (it will be referred to as a "building" hereunder) that was constructed temporarily to provide food and beverages services for the students and the staff. The building has a wooden structure with rectangle plan and pitched roof (**Figure 6**).

The structure rests on bare soil with large trees around and concrete pavements leading to it and providing setting areas with tables and chairs for the students.

Figure 6.
Form of Bashayer Cafeteria.

Figure 7.
Bashayer Cafeteria main entrance and front space.

Everything in the building and the surrounding space is quite spontaneous without any indication of visual or art design or any planned settings. The only different thing in this setting is the color of its main façade which is bright navy blue (**Figure 7**). An interior partition has also the same color that distinguished it from the white color of the whole interior space around (**Figure 8**).

The space in front of the cafeteria and around it (it will be referred to as "space" hereunder) is an ordinary un-designed space distinguished by large old trees (**Figure 9**). A paved area with interlocking concrete paver blocks is provided with plastic tables and chairs for the use of students. These tables and chairs can normally be found on the bare soil anywhere around the cafeteria. The cafeteria opens at 8:00 am and closes at 18:00 pm with the end of the academic day. No restriction of any kind is imposed on the use of the cafeteria or the space around it. The cafeteria and its space are always busy with male and female students from all levels and

Figure 8.
Bashayer Cafeteria interior.

Figure 9.
The space in front of Bashayer Cafeteria showing its naturalness with softscape and hardscape.

specializations. Some social and cultural activities are organized from time to time. For the special mixture of the Bahraini society of nationals and expatriates and Sunni and Shiite Muslims, it is normal to find students of different ethnic, social, religious, and cultural backgrounds. No discrimination of any kind can be found in all campuses of UOB. Bashayer cafeteria is no exception.

10.3 Students' sample

Quasi-experimental research was used to study the aesthetical experience of the students at Bashayer Cafeteria. The aim was to investigate their appreciation for its EA and to measure its attractiveness.

Non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used to determine the sample of the students participating in the research [36]. Despite the disadvantages of this sampling, it was used to suit the limited resources of the research team. This is in addition to the fact that the main purpose of the research was to arrive at tentative conclusions that would be subject to further testing in the future. The size of the sample was 60 students used randomly from the total number of students in the college of engineering which was 4200 students. This number represents 14% of the engineering students which is quite an acceptable sample size [36]. No consideration was given to differences of any kind between students in the sample including gender, academic level, or cultural, economic, and social backgrounds.

10.4 The experiment

Likert questionnaire was used with a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. The main purpose of the questionnaire was to study the EA in the building

	Eng. students		Arch. students				
Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	***df***	***t***	***p***
Everyday aesthetics knowledge	1.87	1.22	4.20	0.81	58	−8.72	0.000
Building aesthetics significance	1.63	1.03	4.27	0.69	58	−11.60	0.000
Building color	2.73	1.41	4.13	1.04	58	−4.37	0.000
Building material	2.83	1.58	4.00	0.98	58	−3.44	0.001
Building texture	2.50	1.46	4.10	0.80	58	−5.27	0.000
Building height	3.17	1.53	3.83	0.87	58	−2.07	0.043
Building everyday aesthetics	3.10	1.37	3.77	0.86	58	−2.26	0.028
Building attractiveness	1.87	1.22	4.27	0.69	58	−9.35	0.000
Space aesthetics significance	3.80	1.37	4.20	0.81	58	−1.38	0.174
Space landscape aesthetics	3.80	1.37	4.07	1.01	58	−0.86	0.396
Space softscape aesthetics	4.10	1.16	4.57	0.57	58	−1.99	0.052
Space hardscape aesthetics	3.80	1.37	4.00	1.14	58	−0.61	0.543
Space attractiveness	3.87	1.38	4.30	0.65	58	−1.55	0.126

Table 3.
Independent samples t-test comparing engineering and architecture students for different variables (N = 60).

and space and to measure their attractiveness. The questionnaire included general questions on the specialization of the students and their knowledge of aesthetics and EA. The main variables used in the questionnaire are presented in **Table 3**. The experiment took place in the space on the same day to avoid spontaneous remission of the students or any change in their attitudes. The experiment included students in the different specializations of the faculty of engineering and architecture students. It was intended to arrive at equal number of students in each group of students. These two sample groups were independent with no relationship or influence between the subjects in each sample. The students in each sample were randomly chosen from the population of engineering and architecture students.

11. Results and analysis

The results of the survey were analyzed using statistical Independent Samples t-Test using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Two hypotheses were presumed. The Null hypothesis (H0) assumes that there was no difference between the means of architecture students and engineering students (H0: μ section 1 (Engineering students) = μ section 2 (Architecture students) or the difference of the means is equal to zero). The alternative hypothesis assumed that there were differences between the means of architecture and engineering students (H1: μ section 1 (Engineering students) $\neq$ μ section 2 (Architecture students) or the difference of the means is not equal to zero). μ_1 and μ_2 are the population mean for section 1 and section 2 respectively.

11.1 General observations

Table 3 shows the means of students' evaluations of their EA knowledge and their appreciation of EA and attractiveness of Bashayer cafeteria. Engineering

students were far beyond architecture students in their knowledge of EA. Engineering students also gave less appreciation for the building EA and attractiveness compared to architecture students. In contrast, engineering students' appreciation for the space came closer to that of the architecture students. Their appreciation of the attractiveness of the space came also greater than that of the building and closer to architecture students. It is also noticed that the standard deviation of architecture students is less than 1 in all the variables except building color, space landscape aesthetics, and space hardscape aesthetics. This explains that their evaluations were closer to the means. On the opposite, the standard deviation of engineering students is greater than 1 in all the variables which explains that their evaluations where further apart from the means

11.2 Testing the hypothesis

Table 3 shows the results of t-test comparing variables of interest between students of engineering and architecture. In other words, there was a statistically significant difference between the means of engineering and architecture students' evaluations of EA knowledge and EA attractiveness of Bashayer cafeteria.

12. Conclusion

EA has been getting increased attention and proved greater importance in the analysis and modeling of aesthetics in real life. This research aimed to provide a simplified model for EA that can be easily understood and used especially by architecture researchers. The dilemma of theoretical and philosophical discussions between contemporary aestheticians and art philosophers has been going on for long without providing well-defined framework for the practical and empirical analysis of EA in real-life settings like architecture and urban design. Disciplines like experimental psychology, psychology of aesthetics, and industrial design have been dealing with a different aspect of EA more precisely and practically but without considering the general framework of EA. The proposed comprehensive model benefited from the works of both sides and brought several of their factors together. Still, this model is in needs of further examination and development to clarify and fix the connections and interrelationships between its parts. The model also provides a chance for the development of a well-articulated theory of EA. The case study of the EC of UOB proved the importance of the model for the study of attractiveness on university campuses but within a defined framework of EA. Although both architecture and engineering had approximately the same frequency of daily use of the cafeteria and its space, the results of their appreciation of EA came totally different. Engineering students were very little aware of building's aesthetics. Engineering students rated the attractiveness of the building below average while the attractiveness of the space came above average. On the contrary, architecture students show considerable awareness of aesthetics and EA and its importance. This can be referred to as the special visual and aesthetical education and training they have in the department of interior design and architecture. The research opens the door for future research to develop EA and to provide the necessary details for the study of attractiveness within it.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest

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Section 3

Community Engagement and Wellbeing

Chapter 7

Young Canadians' Desire to Change the World and the Adults Who Support Them

Heather L. Lawford, Heather L. Ramey, Yana Berardini, Christa Romaldi and Nishad Khanna

Abstract

Generativity involves care and concern for future generations as a legacy of the self. It is a central developmental task in midlife for both individual well-being, and for a functioning society. As such, opportunities to foster generativity in youth have lasting benefits. There is growing evidence examining correlates of generativity with youth. To date, however, these studies rely mostly on university samples, and are somewhat homogeneous with respect to demographic representation. At the same time, youth engagement supported by adults has also been linked to youth identity development (generally considered a precursor to generativity) and has been identified as a positive feature in youth programs. While youth engagement likely benefits generative development, there is no empirical research to date linking them together. Therefore, in this chapter we present survey findings from over 600 youth of diverse backgrounds, from a community sample, aged 12 to 28 years old, who participated in various youth programs across Canada. Our literature review and research findings highlight the importance of fostering youth generativity and note that youth programming supported by adult allies is a fruitful context for this task.

Keywords: youth engagement, adult allies, generativity, community, youth programs

1. Introduction

Generativity involves care and concern for future generations as a legacy of the self [1]. The development of generativity includes the integration of building skills (agency) and contributing to others (communion). Thus, generativity is a key milestone for both individual well-being and a functioning society. Research has highlighted the importance of generativity in youth. Findings point to associations with well-being, moral identity, and community involvement [2]. These findings, however, typically include relatively small sample sizes, an over-reliance on university samples, and are somewhat homogeneous with respect to demographic representation. At the same time, youth engagement with support from adult allies has also been linked to youth identity development [3] and has been identified as a positive feature in youth programs [4].

In this chapter, we examine early generativity in a community sample of approximately 600 youth participating in youth programs from across Canada. We discuss correlates from across a broad range of demographic and background factors, including ethnicity, perceived income, gender, and LGBTQ+ status. Further, we examine associations with youth engagement including perceptions of adults' collaborative support in community programs. Throughout this chapter, we discuss how generativity and youth-adult partnerships inform social contexts such as community-based youth programs.

1.1 Early generativity

Generativity, the seventh of Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, is defined as concern for future generations as a legacy of the self [5]. Generativity carries broad meaning and can refer to motivations, behavior, and even a sense of identity [6]. In midlife, generativity is a core developmental task. As such, it is not surprising that it has been consistently connected to overall well-being, a strong sense of morality, good parenting, career satisfaction, and healthy relationships. Beyond individual benefits, generativity is essential for cultures and societies to grow and thrive [7].

Given the importance of generativity in adulthood, it follows that we should also understand the earlier manifestations and developmental course of generativity in young people [5]. Our own research has been charting the validity and correlates of young people's motivations to be generative, as well as contexts that might support the development of generativity. Overall, generative motivations have been found to be stable in adolescence [8] and associated with positive outcomes for young people, such as higher self-esteem, lower depressive symptoms, higher levels of empathy, and positive identity development [2].

There have also been several studies linking early generativity to youth's involvement in their communities [9]. For example, findings from a large longitudinal sample from Ontario, Canada pointed to stable and strong associations between generativity and community involvement from ages 17 to 23 [10], and in a follow-up study between ages 23 and 32 years [11]. Therefore, adolescents who are more generative may be more involved in the community as they age.

Connected to community engagement is the finding that generativity is embedded in social identities. Often the social groups we identify with inform where we point our generative efforts, and our experiences within our identities inform the traditions we look to uphold or dismantle, and the changes we hope to bring to society. When social identity groups face significant harm and barriers due to stigma or perpetuation of colonial violence, their generative priorities might focus on ending intergenerational cycles, protecting the vulnerable in their community, or dismantling negative stereotypes with more positive lenses demonstrating strength and resilience [12]. For example, researchers who conducted interviews with Indigenous youth ages 15 to 17 years in Hawaii found strong themes of generativity through the preservation of their language, values, and traditions to benefit future generations [13]. In a sample of older LGBTQ+ adults, another study found that generativity themes were salient when participants discussed the difficulties that they faced through the AIDS/HIV pandemic, the stigma that led to barriers to healthcare, concerns for personal safety, and an absence of positive role models [14]. These individuals turned injustices into positive legacies through advocacy work, caring for others, and sharing their stories and history with the next generation. Similarly, a study interviewing Black Americans who survived World War II found that these Americans leaned on their

experiences of suffering in the war to define their generative purpose in the present [15]. Thus, it is important to consider the context of history and cultural backgrounds within our social identities when trying to understand individual motivation and expression of generativity. For these reasons, it is worthwhile to explore a number of micropopulations that have sustained ongoing trauma, and face a real threat to their culture, language, and traditions. Here, generativity often becomes a central task operationalized as preserving a group's history and traditions, as well as advocating to end systemic injustices that continue to cause harm across generations. This aligns with other research that finds that people who experienced extremely negative events might express their generativity through actively working to end the cycle of harm, which Kotre termed "intergenerational buffer" [12].

Generativity is intergenerational, with central generative activities including parenting, mentoring, and teaching [16]. In fact, it has been noted that generativity is a useful theoretical lens for studying intergenerational relationships [16]. Moreover, it has been suggested that intergenerational programming could support the growth of adult generativity [17]. Thus, considering that both adults and youth have capacity for generativity, youth engagement in programs that involve youth-adult partnerships may be an important and unique context for both fostering and achieving generativity.

1.2 Youth engagement as a possible context for the development of generativity

Youth generativity in the context of youth engagement and youth programs is not well understood, though the importance of adults' generativity in working with youth has been established [18]. In a previous study, we found that the extent to which youth felt engaged psychologically in their favorite activity (e.g., sports, volunteer, religious) was associated with generative motivations [19]. This study, however, did not examine the intergenerational contexts of activities. Both youth and adults note that adult generativity supports youth success in contexts where youth are participating in decision making. Youth engagement is the meaningful involvement of a young person in an activity outside of the self [20]. Youth engagement in the context of community programs typically involves groups of youth working together, in partnership with adults, on projects intended to improve communities, promote social justice, or contribute to a cause [21].

There is much in the developmental context of youth programs that might promote positive development. Larson and colleagues [22, 23] have long noted the rich developmental contexts that community activities afford youth. For some time, research has demonstrated that participation (i.e., physical or virtual presence in programs and activities) is necessary but not sufficient to developmental change [24]. Engagement goes beyond participation; researchers and theorists have discussed a variety of factors, such as affective and cognitive engagement, and youth voice in decision-making, that may constitute 'engagement'. Thus, adults play a key role in youth engagement in sharing decision-making responsibilities, honoring youth voice, and learning from youth.

Youth engagement in youth-adult partnerships is almost certainly multidimensional, involving a variety of factors that could result in developmental change, including the emergence of early generativity. Collaborative relationships are one aspect of youth engagement and, as is typical in youth work, these relationships do not need to be of lasting duration or require a certain level of intimacy. Instead, they likely require that more senior partners in youth-adult relationships work to bring with them a stance that begins with safety and unconditional respect [25]. Those collaborative relationships might allow young people to learn and practice skills and to share their knowledge with others. They

might also allow youth to make decisions with support and encouragement. As youth-adult partnerships are often focused on social change (e.g., social justice initiatives), in addition to these collaborative spaces, youth-adult partnerships are settings that can help promote young people's agency, voice, program ownership, and ability to make a meaningful impact [20, 21]. In these settings, young people can see themselves as active participants, take on new responsibilities, explore their identities, and enact their values, all while being exposed to older generative models. In other words, youth engagement in these settings, where youth's potential can be seen and understood as valuable, might reasonably be an ideal setting for youth to explore themselves and their ability to impact the world and thus develop their generativity.

1.3 Youth engagement and generativity in diverse populations

It is possible that links between youth generativity and engagement differ, depending on demographic and other differences among young people. Little research exists on population differences even in research focusing on adult generativity. Research that does exist on these differences does not paint a consistent picture. Studies have pointed to some gender differences in how generativity relates to agentic and communal motives [26]. Research has found higher levels of generative concern among African Americans compared to White Americans [26]. Finally, work mentioned earlier has found strong themes of generativity in micropopulations such as sexual minorities, or different cultural groups, using qualitative approaches [13–15].

Regarding youth engagement, the picture is again unclear. Youth advisory councils have tended to engage more privileged youth [27, 28], youth in some ethnic communities may be reluctant to participate due to a lack of inclusive practices in many programs [29], and youth participation in programs can decrease as youth age and gain more autonomy over decisions to participate [30]. All of these findings suggest that youth engagement should differ, to some extent, based on demographics or group membership. In our own research, we have not found youth engagement to differ by age or gender [31], or LGBTQ status, ethnicity, immigrant status, or rural or urban residency, although we have found that youth with higher perceived income or socioeconomic status reported more engagement [3, 32]. Other studies have focused on engagement in afterschool programs and youth's civic engagement and have found mixed results. Researchers conducted a latent profile analysis of middle school aged youth participating in a voluntary after school program [33]. They found that youth fell into three categories: moderately engaged, affectively engaged, and disengaged. When they tested for differences in youth-level characteristics, none of the characteristics (grade level, gender, race, and ethnicity) predicted profile membership. Research on civic engagement, involving prosocial and political involvement in communities, suggests that experiencing discrimination can prompt some youth of color to become highly engaged in community social action, while others become disengaged [34].

Links among youth engagement and generativity might also depend on youth differences, but current research is scant. A large meta-analysis found a wide variety of youth outcomes were predicted by afterschool program participation. Interestingly, individual youths' characteristics and demographics did not moderate those associations [34]. In our own work, we have found that having input in decision making in an activity was associated to positive outcomes for youth, and this association was stronger at younger ages [8]. This previous work suggests that the strength of association between engagement and generativity might depend on one's age, but certainly more research is required to uncover this.

1.4 Purpose of study

In this chapter, we examine early generativity in a community sample of approximately 600 youth participating in youth programs from across Canada. We discuss correlates from across a broad range of demographic and background factors, including immigration, race, gender, and LGBTQ+ status. Further, we examine associations with degree of youth engagement, and perceptions of adult support in community programs. Our chapter discusses how generativity and youth engagement inform social contexts, such as youth programs in community.

In this chapter we explore the following:

1. How does youth engagement relate to generativity?

2. Are there demographic differences in the strength of association between generativity and engagement (e.g., age and gender)?

2. Method

Participants were recruited through the Students Commission of Canada's (SCC) partner programs and organizations. As a Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (CEYE) and a large, national organization, the SCC develops and runs programs, conferences, and events for young people in partnerships across Canada. In 2011, in partnership with youth workers, academics, and youth, they developed the 'Sharing the Stories' research and evaluation platform, which helped to integrate youth's voices into action. The Sharing the Stories platform is available to all partner organizations, helping them gather the voices of a broad range of youth, including those who might be furthest from opportunity, including low-income, racialized, gender-diverse youth, or other marginalized youth populations in Canada. Ethics approval was granted by the institutional Research Ethics Boards of the principal investigators.

Data reported here includes all participating youth (N = 627) who completed the youth engagement, generativity, and demographic questions anytime since 2015. Participants completed this survey electronically (68%) or by paper (32%). Participants were between the age of 12 years and 30 years, with a mean age of 18, and 60% were under 18 years of age. With respect to gender, 6.5% identified as non-binary, 58.2% identified as girl (woman) and 35.3% identified as boy (man). About a quarter (26%) identified as belonging to a sexual minority. Most participants identified as primarily North American (27.6%), Asian (20.3%), African (10.5%), Indigenous (10.4%), and Caribbean (11.5%). Further, 12% opted not to disclose their identity. Other groups were represented by less than 1% of the sample. Approximately 14% of participants reported more than one cultural/ethnic group, with the most commonly cited group being North American (5.7% of the sample; the rest cited <1%).

The survey included two measures of youth engagement, and one measure of generativity. The first youth engagement scale indicated adult-supported collaborative learning and decision making (5 items; e.g., "I feel like adults and peers and learning from me.", "I participate in the decisions about group activities.") A second youth engagement scale indicated adult-supported agency and voice (5 items; e.g., "I am involved in discussing issues of respect, conflict, or discipline" and "Adults support me without being condescending or assuming that I need or want their help"). Items were developed over a number of years, through collaboration with youth and staff

at partner organizations, and findings on the development of positive youth-adult relationships in youth participation efforts and youth's right to be heard in organizational contexts [35–37]. Youth generativity evaluated willingness to leave a legacy behind. It was measured with three statements: "I have knowledge and skills that I will pass on to others"; "I think about ways to help others become leaders"; "I feel it is important to help people younger than myself". All responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater engagement or higher generativity. The set of measures took about 15 minutes to complete.

3. Results

3.1 Preliminary results

We first examined correlations among all of our variables, found in **Table 1**. We found that older youth and young women reported higher youth engagement, and that Indigenous youth reported lower levels of engagement. We tested gender differences in generativity using a one-way ANOVA with three levels. The ANOVA indicates a significant difference, $F(2,547) = 5.97$ $p < .01$, where women ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .68$) indicated higher levels of generativity than men ($M = 4.01$, $SD = .87$), and non-binary youth ($M = 4.24$, $SD = .82$) were not different from any other group. Other potential differences in youth engagement, based on demographic or background factors, were not significant.

Our correlation table indicated that engagement and generativity were related, moderately, in a positive direction. In other words, our evidence indicates that youth who learned and worked well together with adults also reported higher levels of generativity.

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. age	18.17 (4.38)							
2. SES ($ wants needs)	3.79 (1.11)	−.29**						
3[t]. Indigenous	10%	−.04	−.08					
4[t]. LGBTQ+ status	25%	.13**	−.05	.07				
5[t]. Immigration	27%	−.10*	.11**	.13**	.04			
6. Engage1 (learn/ decision making)	3.63 (0.83)	.24**	−.04	−.10*	−.01	−.06		
7. Engage2 (respect/lead)	3.76 (0.82)	.24**	−.05	−.08	.01	−.07	.67**	
8. Generativity	4.17 (0.76)	.31**	−.08	−.10*	.04	−.10*	.58**	.53**

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.
** indicates p < .05. ** indicates p < .01; [t] for each of these groups 1 indicates pro group membership 0 indicates non membership. See results below for more information on engagement variables.*

Table 1.
Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

3.2 Associations between generativity and youth engagement

As preliminary steps to the test of our main hypothesis, we confirmed that our measurement model loaded as expected, with the youth engagement and generativity items loading onto their respective latent variables, and that the measurement structure was consistent (i.e., demonstrated strong invariance) across gender, LGBTQ+ status, and age (under and above age 18) [32]. The engagement items loaded onto two separate (but related) latent variables. The items in the first variable (Engagement 1) were connected to collaborative learning, exploring, and decision making (e.g., "I participate in the decisions about group activities".) The items in the Engagement 2 latent variable centered around leadership and respect, collaboration and partnership (e.g., "Adults support me without being condescending or assuming that I need or want their help"). In this preliminary step, the model performed as expected, indicating that we could move forward in testing our exploratory research questions.

We tested our full model, including age, gender, immigration status (youth born in Canada vs. those not born in Canada), Indigeneity, and perceived income as predictors. Demographic variables that did not contribute were then dropped from the model. Only age and gender remained as controls, indicating that young women and

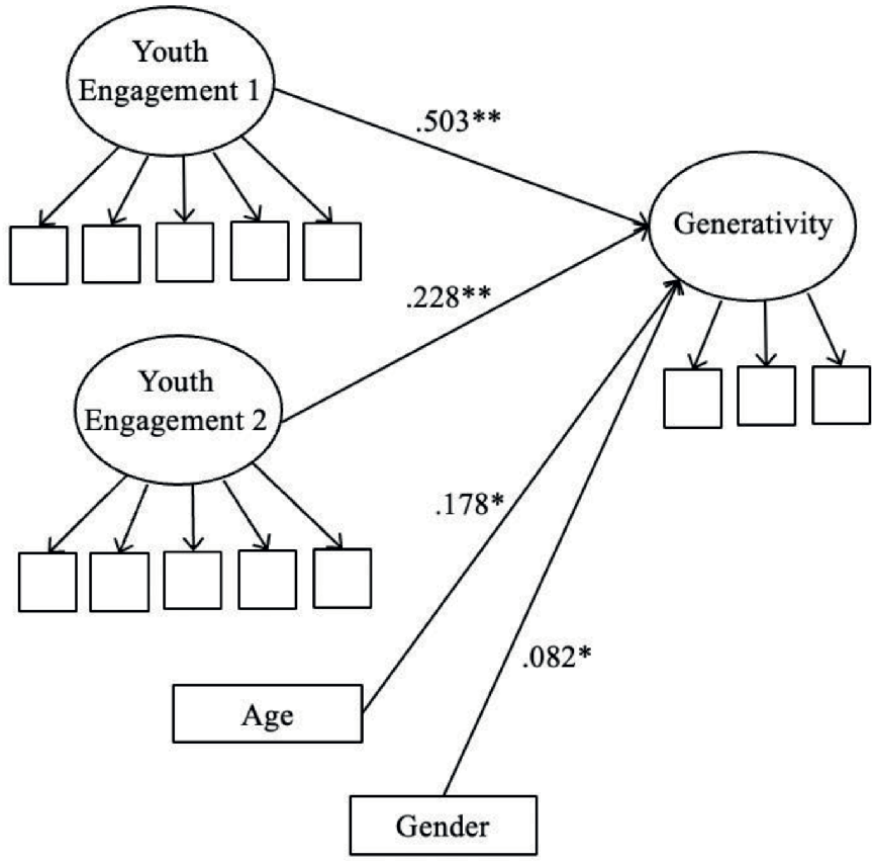

Figure 1.
Model of youth engagement and generativity.

older youth had higher generativity, when included along with the two youth engagement variables in the model (see **Figure 1**; CFI = .95, RMSEA = .052).

3.3 Are there demographic differences in the strength of association between youth engagement and generativity?

Based on our findings that age and gender served as significant controls in exploring links between youth engagement and generativity, we tested interactions. We explored interactions between both of the youth engagement variables and both gender and age. We then dropped non-significant interaction terms, until we arrived at a final model in which youth engagement 1 interacted with age. We conducted linear regressions in order to interpret these interactions and we split age into two groups: over and under 18. The regressions indicated that generativity was moderately associated with engagement for youth over 18 years old ($\beta = .20$, $p < .10$) and more strongly associated with engagement below 18 years old ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$).

4. Discussion

Increasingly, researchers have found that generativity matters for young people, but research to date has depended on samples that were less diverse and relied heavily on post-secondary student samples. Moreover, while youth engagement has been identified as a promising context for generativity, to our knowledge, no empirical studies have tested this.

Our community sample revealed some interesting patterns regarding generativity. First, the overall mean was quite high (4.17/5). This aligns with other research that reports relatively high scores in youth samples, using a different measure of generativity. Furthermore, our generativity scale was correlated positively with age, which again is not surprising. It was surprising to find that youth who identified as Indigenous, and those not born in Canada (the site of the study) reported slightly lower generativity scores compared to the rest of the sample; those associations did not hold in the larger model. It should be noted, however, that generativity is a multifaceted construct, and measuring it at a population level is challenging because cultural context is extraordinarily important in generative expression. Further, the small amount of research on generativity in Indigenous populations showed that generativity was expressed in themes of reconnecting culture. Considering the items from our scale focus on leadership and individual impacts on the next generation, our measure was perhaps not nuanced enough to capture the most meaningful aspects of generativity in certain cultural and experiential contexts.

Next, our test of associations between youth engagement and generativity revealed that our hypothesis was supported. There was in fact a moderate to strong association between generativity and elements of engagement including leadership and opportunities for decision-making, and positive collaborations with adults. It has been noted that activities provide unique opportunities for young people to build the skills and capacities to prepare them for adulthood. Given that generativity is a central developmental task in adulthood, our findings might provide further support for this claim [22]. Activities which include opportunities for decision-making, leadership, and where adult allies are supportive and collaborative with youth seem to be associated with higher levels of generativity. While these data are correlational, we suggest that this association is likely bi-directional,

in that potentially more generative youth might demonstrate better readiness and interest in these types of activities.

Our results showed that the association between engagement and generativity was stronger for younger people compared to older youth. As we age, opportunities to connect with our generativity grow, and the potential for community programming is less salient. This also aligns with previous research that found that opportunities to provide input into programming was associated with more developmental benefits for younger compared to older adolescents [5].

Overall, this study demonstrates that generativity has important implications in a diverse sample of young people. Moreover, this preliminary evidence indicates that we need to do further work into how youth engagement opportunities can foster generativity.

4.1 Strengths and limitations

It is important to keep in mind the limitations of this work. These findings do not present well established measures of youth generativity, as more robust measures of youth generativity do not currently exist [2]. As well, a small number of established youth engagement measures exist, representing different facets of youth-adult partnership and youth [21].

It should be noted that these data are correlational and therefore do not give any information regarding the direction of the association. We suspect the association would be bidirectional: settings that are conducive to youth engagement and healthy youth adult partnerships support the growth of youth generativity, and generative youth are better able to engage and get support in these settings. In order to confirm our hypotheses, longitudinal research is needed.

Despite these limitations, the study also carries some important and unique strengths that advance our understanding of youth development. One strength is that we used a community-based sample, and we were able to explore individual demographic differences in ways relatively unexamined in past studies. This approach, however, underlined the importance of cultural context in understanding generativity. Much more work needs to be done using multiple approaches to understanding youth generativity in diverse populations. This could include asking young people about not only future generations, but also about preservation of cultural history, traditions, and practices. Moreover, qualitative work would support a more nuanced and contextual approach to this inquiry.

5. Conclusions

Caring for future generations and building our capacity to do so matters for youth and adults alike. In this work we presented evidence suggesting that youth engagement in settings where they have decision making opportunities and are working with supportive adults might be an important context to foster early generativity. We are also calling for further research to explore in more nuanced ways how and why young people from various backgrounds and experiences express their generativity.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 8

Religiosity, Spirituality, and Well-Being in Emerging Adulthood

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Abstract

This chapter analyzes the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in emerging adulthood. A primary contribution of this analysis is an examination of possible mediators. The examined mediators are satisfaction with life, meaning in life, and perceived health. Participants in the study are 319 Romanian social sciences students, aged between 18 and 24 (Mage = 19,87, SDage = 1,39), urban (82%), mostly female (76%), and orthodox (74%). The results of the study confirm that religiosity and spirituality are important protective factors. Well-being is higher for emerging adults who rate their mental health highly, and this appears to mediate the religiosity-well-being relationship. Implications for therapeutic practice and communication between counselors and clients are discussed at the end of the paper.

Keywords: religiosity and spirituality, health, meaning in life, satisfaction with life, well-being, emerging adults

1. Introduction

Religion has been considered for a long time an important psychological factor that can influence many people's lives under multiple aspects [1–3], providing an identity, useful social support, and a coherent framework for finding answers to existential questions [4]. Religion offers to some individuals a higher level of satisfaction with life [5, 6], helps reduce depressive symptoms and anxiety levels, increases optimism level, and enables them to better emotionally adapt to difficult times [7, 8], overcoming traumatic experiences and loss [9]. Previous research showed that religiosity and spirituality are both strongly associated with mental health [10, 11] and well-being [12, 13].

2. Religiosity and spirituality

The distinction between religiosity and spirituality has long been debated within the psychology of religion, a science with "a long past but a short history" [14], and "long on data and short on theory" [15]. For decades, even though the most relevant papers in the psychology of religion [8, 16–20] have approached the history of the

domain, its topics, main concepts, and dimensions of religiosity and spirituality, they have failed to offer an integrative framework or a conceptual model that would allow researchers to think, integrate, and develop new theories and hypotheses [21].

Different definitions have been given to religion over time. Starting with Allport's [22] famous contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, the first one refers to individuals who live their religion and see religious faith as a goal, and the second denotes the use of religion strictly in a utilitarian sense, for the attainment of social gains. While Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi [23] regard religion substantially as "a system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed toward such power" [p. 1], Dollahite [24] refers to it as "a covenant faith community with teachings and narratives that enhance the search for the sacred" [p. 5], and Peteet [25] emphasizes upon "the commitment to beliefs and practices characteristic of particular traditions" [p. 237].

Spirituality has also captured several views over time, from Peck [26] quoting Elkins et al.'s perspective of "a way of being and experiencing that comes about through the awareness of a transcendent dimension and that is characterized by certain identifiable values regarding the self, life, and whatever one considers to be the ultimate" [p. 10], to Doyle's [27] "search for existential meaning" [p. 302] or Armstrong's [28] "presence of a relationship with a Higher Power that affects the way in which one operates in the world" [p. 3]. Today's increasing tendency of embracing spirituality over religiosity can be explained by looking at the individualistic times we travel and analyzing the decrease in traditional authority and the continuous rejection of cultural norms, especially by the younger generation.

Mirroring the scientific literature, in time, the public's perception of the two terms has long evolved. Therefore, today, the great majority of individuals refer to religion as primarily being associated with religious practices and engagement, so to say with the organizational aspects of faith, while spirituality tends to be associated with the subjective search for meaning and for the sacred in a diversity of traditional and nontraditional settings: from prayer to meditation, from church, synagogue, and mosque attendance, to feasting and religious document study, to monastic life and walking in nature, sexuality, social actions, psychotherapy, or listening to symphonic compositions [29]. Despite the long debates over the definitions of religiosity and spirituality, most authors today agree that both spirituality and religion are complex, latent, multidimensional, and multilevel concepts [30] and tend to agree that the blind distinction between religiosity and spirituality is "a dangerous road to be traveled" [31, 32]. Even though religion has long been regarded as dogmatic and rigid, static, and institutional, based on faith, and measured through practices and religious engagement, spirituality was seen, in opposition, as subjective, emanating from personal experience, based on self-determination and personal development, functional, and dynamic. Not without difficulty, bridging points have been identified between the two converging views under concepts like a sense of meaning and purpose in life [33], connecting to self, to others, and to the transcendent [34, 35] or the belief in a unifying force [36, 37]. We have to agree that both religiousness and spirituality can be understood as active processes of self-discovery and self-transformation.

By overcoming the prejudicial labeling of religiousness and spirituality and embracing a wider image of the two sides of one coin, psychology of religion studies could align, as Park [38] says, with the latest trends emerging from positive psychology, medicine, and neuroscience.

3. Religiosity, spirituality, and health

Multiple studies have analyzed the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and health. *American Psychologist* has dedicated an entire 2003 issue to it and recent clinical psychology and psychotherapy handbooks encompass increasingly results coming from the psychology of religion into their psychological and medical practices. Recently, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being has been investigated, with multiple studies showing that religiosity and spirituality is still a crucial resource during difficult life events [39–41]. In a meta-analysis, based on 75 studies (ranging from 1990 to 2010), approaching the relationship between spirituality, religiosity, and other psychological variables in adolescents and emerging adults (N = 66.273), Yonker et al. [42] have found that religiosity and spirituality have a positive effect on health, with significant effect sizes of religiosity and spirituality on risk behavior, −.17, depression, −.11, well-being, .16, and self-esteem, .11. In line with these results, Green and Elliot [43] found that religiosity has a strong effect on happiness and health, regardless of religious affiliation, religious activities, job satisfaction, marital happiness, social support, or financial status. Other studies have shown there is a link between religiosity and spirituality constructs, such as closeness to God [44, 45], motivating forces [46], religious support [47, 48], and religious and spiritual struggle [16, 49, 50]. McCullough et al.'s [51] meta-analysis, based on 42 independent samples, has shown a significant positive correlation between religious involvement (especially church attendance) and lower mortality. Attending worship once a week tends to have an effect on a higher life expectancy of 7 to 14 years [52]. Comparable results were found by Lucchetti et al. [53] and Powell et al. [54] who have shown that religiosity and spirituality reduce the mortality rate by up to 24%.

Other studies, especially cross-sectional ones, have drawn the conclusion that people with higher religious involvement tend to engage less frequently in sexually risky behaviors and substance abuse, while in some cases exercising more and following a healthy diet [55–61]. In a longitudinal study, expanded over three decades, Strawbridge et al. [62] found that, especially for women, weekly attendance at religious services is associated with improved mental health, more satisfying social relationships, and marital stability. Other studies [63] indicate that religious families benefit from stronger social support and report lower divorce rates and more stable social climate, with positive parental practices and better child adjustment.

The link between religiosity, spirituality, and religious coping has been studied extensively and authors like Pargament [8, 41] and Lee [64] have shown that religious and spiritual people tend to use coping mechanisms more effectively, enabling them to deal with stressful situations and to maintain a higher level of general health and life satisfaction.

The meta-analytic research conducted by Smith et al. [2], based on 147 independent studies (N = 98.975), identified a modest negative correlation of −.09 between religiousness and depressive symptoms, with the results not being moderated by gender, age, or ethnicity. Still, for those individuals who avoid difficulties through religious activities and blame God for their tragedy, higher levels of depressive symptoms were registered. In other words, these are people with negative religious coping and extrinsic religious orientation. Braam et al. [65] found similar results after developing a longitudinal study in the Netherlands, with a representative national sample of 1840 people aged between 55 and 85.

Religious participation was also found to be a strong protective factor against suicide, even after controlling for gender, age, race, marital status, and social contact frequency [66]. People who attend worship places regularly are four times less inclined to have suicidal thoughts and attempts, even among clinical populations.

Attitudes toward forgiveness, which are important in most religious and spiritual traditions, may have significant consequences on health by reducing rumination, facilitating the emergence of positive emotions and more adaptive coping strategies, and, therefore, reducing the level of chronic stress [67, 68]. Moreover, religious and spiritual people use preventive medical services more frequently and report higher levels of treatment compliance [69]. Like religiosity, spirituality has been shown to have strong links to both mental and physical health [70, 71].

In conclusion, research approaching the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and health [7, 56, 72, 73] uncovered five main potential complex and multifaceted mechanisms that seem to be consistent across cultures and countries:

1. Behaviors. Religious and spiritual persons support healthy behaviors (such as physical exercise, walking in nature, relaxation, meditation, mindfulness, and yoga) and discourage tobacco and alcohol consumption, drugs, excessive eating, and nonmarital risky sex.

2. Physiological states. Religiosity and spirituality can bolster general health through positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, enthusiasm, gratitude, contentment, compassion, hope, and awe.

3. Coping mechanisms. In the face of adversity and stressful life events, people displaying a higher degree of religiosity and spirituality feel more equipped to deal with the hardiness of life, relying on meaning, life satisfaction, optimism, and self-esteem.

4. Social support. The believers tend to have a larger support network, providing more fulfilling relationships with others, offering them assistance in diverse situations, feeling a sense of belonging to a community, and experiencing a higher group cohesion. Places of worship integrate families, support volunteering and community building, enable the organization of large events, and facilitate tangible exchanges like help and advice.

5. "Psi" mechanisms or positive energies, which even though they do not have full support within the scientific community, are increasingly appealing to the public and used as explanatory mechanisms in alternative therapies.

   Still, most studies conclude that these mechanisms are interdependent, and their methodological designs try to isolate and control variables, to test more and more complex mediation and moderation models.

As Oman & Thoresen [56] say: "The present is an extremely exciting time for the emerging transdisciplinary field of religion, spirituality, and health. [...] Many psychologists and religionists, but perhaps not enough, are moving beyond earlier mutual stereotypes and learning to collaborate. Only through such collaboration, we believe, can we apply the fullest range of knowledge and wisdom to fostering human health and well-being in the context of today's dire global needs" [p. 455].

Even though most of the studies focus on the positive influence of religiosity and spirituality on well-being, some of them also cover the downsides, such as refusing to receive medical treatment, to vaccinate children, to accept blood transfusions [69], or becoming victims of physical and sexual abuse [74, 75].

Given the difficulties in operationalizing the complexity of the meanings of spirituality and religiosity, few empirical studies on well-being have concentrated on the spiritual aspects of behavior. Most studies based on national samples have used a single dimension of religion, like religious attendance, due to the fact that researchers fail to come to a common ground when they speak of religiosity and spirituality dimensions and their relationship, either positive or negative, to subjective well-being [76]. Therefore, recent studies signal the importance of approaching the link between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in a multidimensional manner [47, 77].

Bearing that in mind, the current research measures religiosity and spirituality based on ten subscales, in a sample of Christian urban emerging adults, with a university background. Satisfaction with life, meaning in life, and perceived physical and mental health are used as mediators in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

The study of religiousness in youth sets a series of challenges due to age, as well as ample physical and cognitive development, changes in relation to the social environment, autonomy, and societal expectations. Emerging adulthood is an age proposed by Arnett [78], as an accurate description of individuals ages 18 to 24 (extended afterward to 29), from industrial societies. It is characterized by multiple attempts at exploration and examination of potential trajectories, a process that eases the stabilization of roles and engagements in areas like personal relationships, work, and perspectives on life. The five aspects defining emerging adulthood are: identity exploration, being self-focused, dealing with a high level of instability, "feeling in-between," and experiencing a sense of multiple possibilities for the future. Moving away from family, gaining autonomy, and developing relationships with diverse people holding different worldviews and opinions may intensify individuals' identity exploration providing them with a safe space to explore and to renegotiate their religiosity [79]. It is an age when youth redefines their relationship with religiosity and spirituality, tries to answer manifold questions regarding the transcendent, tries to experiment with multiple orientations, and seeks individual answers to spiritual quests.

Which is the role religiosity and spirituality play in potentiating subjective well-being and how emerging adults' health can influence this outcome is the main question of our study.

4. Research objectives

The main objective of the study revolves around testing the mediating role of meaning in life, satisfaction with life, and health in the relationship between emerging adults' religiosity, spirituality, and well-being. Three mediation models will be run to see which of these three mediators explains a higher percentage of the above-mentioned relationship.

H2: Meaning in life mediates the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in emerging adults.

H3: Emerging adults' perceived physical (H3a) and mental health (H3b) mediates the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

5. Method

5.1 Participants

Participants in the study are 319 Caucasian social sciences students, aged between 18 and 24 (Mage = 19,87, SDage = 1,39), urban (82%), predominantly women (76%), and orthodox (74%). Answers were collected online. All participants have completed an informal consent and have been informed concerning the privacy of personal data.

5.1.1 Measures

1. *Brief multidimensional measure of religiousness and spirituality* [47], encompasses three dimensions of religiosity: emotional/subjective, behavioral, and cognitive. The scale has been used extensively for different age groups, including adolescents, emerging adults, and elderly [80–82]. It includes 10 subscales: daily religious experiences, organizational religiousness, commitment, private religious practices, beliefs/values, forgiving, religious and spiritual coping, religious support, overall self-ranking, and meaning. The first dimension, the emotional one, includes daily spiritual experiences (six items, Cronbach's a = .87) [83]. The second one comprises behaviors referring to organizational religiousness (2 items: 7,8), commitment (items 9,31), and religious practices (items 10–14). The third dimension—cognitive—includes seven items (Cronbach's α = .80): values/beliefs (items 15,16), beliefs about forgiveness (items 17–19), and meaning (items 34,35). The overall religiosity and spirituality self-ranking were assessed through two items (32,33). Answers were registered using a Likert scale from one indicating the lowest level to four, six, or eight (the highest).

2. *Perceived health* was assessed using two items: 1. In general, how would you label your physical health? 2. How would you label your psychological health? Answers were registered on a nine-point Likert scale (from (1) terribly rickety to (9) excellent).

3. *Life satisfaction scale* [84], composed of five items, scored from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree), with excellent psychometric properties (Cronbach's α = .87). The overall score ranges from 5 to 35, with higher levels indicating sterling life satisfaction. It is one of the most often used scales for testing life satisfaction and its psychometric properties have been tested by multiple researchers [85–87]. Poff et al. Diener [88], who gave a wide definition to life satisfaction, seen as "a conscious cognitive judgment of one's life in which the criteria for judgment are up to the person" and the scale has been designed to assess the life satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole, not focusing on different life domains.

4. *Meaning in life* [89] is a bidimensional scale, including the presence of meaning (5 items; ex. "My life has a clear sense of purpose," Cronbach's a = .83) and search for meaning ("I am seeking a purpose of meaning for my life," Cronbach's a = .88). Answers are registered on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) completely false) to (7) completely true. The scale has good internal consistency, has been translated to more than 20 languages, and is used extensively in ample

research, in studies like Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [90], or the International Wellbeing Study, conducted by Aaron Jarden, president of New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology [91].

5. *The well-being scale* [92] consists of 18 items, three statements for each of its six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents rate statements on a scale of one (indicating strong disagreement) to six (strong agreement). Cronbach's α = .75.

6. Results

6.1 Preliminary analyses

Descriptive statistics and the correlation matrix of study variables are presented in **Table 1**. All scales present good psychometric properties. Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness and Spirituality has a Cronbach's α of .95, perceived health .66, satisfaction with life .87, presence of meaning in life .83, .88 for search for meaning, and .75 for well-being. Almost all correlations were statistically significant, except the one with age.

6.2 Measurement models

The confirmatory factor analysis indicated a main factor for Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness and Spirituality explaining over 43% of the variance, one for life satisfaction (68%) and two factors for meaning in life, in accordance with the literature [89], namely, presence of meaning and search for meaning.

	Observed variables	**M**	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1	Age	19.87	1.39	1						
2	Religiosity	89.48	27.66	.010	1					
3	Satisfaction with life	25.77	6.35	−.022	.300**	1				
4	Presence of meaning	15.91	4.25	.008	,345**	.560**	1			
5	Search for meaning	17.93	4.87	−.086	.056	−.129**	-,240**	1		
6	Physical health	6.50	1.40	.031	.171**	.362**	363**	−.130**	1	
7	Psychological health	6.20	1.73	.057	.203**	.569**	.509**	−.163**	.510**	1
8	Well-being	77.48	10.25	.151**	.190**	.527**	.497**	−.148**	.322**	.473**

*Note. N = 319, *p < .05 (two-tailed), ** p < .01 (two-tailed).*

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for observed variables.

6.3 Mediation analysis

Using Hayes PROCESS 3.4, we ran the mediation analysis, running the fourth model (**Figure 1** and **Table 2**) [89, 93].

H1: Satisfaction with life mediates the relationship between emerging adults' religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

After running Hayes model of mediation, we can observe that for a sample of 319, the effect of religiosity and spirituality on satisfaction with life is statistically significant, a = .06, $t_{(317)}$ = 5.60, 95% CI [.04, .92], p < .00. Same for life satisfaction's effect on emerging adults well-being, b = .83, $t_{(316)}$ = 10.30, 95% CI [.67, .99], p < .00. After introducing satisfaction with life mediates in the model, religiosity, and spirituality loses its effect on well-being (c' = .01, $t_{(316)}$ = 0.70, 95% CI [−.02, .04], p = 0.48). Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness and Spirituality's indirect effect on well-being through satisfaction with life is statistically significant, IE = ab = .05, 95% CI. Results show that 71% of the total effect of religiosity and spirituality on well-being is explained by the satisfaction with life and only 29% operates directly.

H2: Meaning in life, with its two components, presence in life (H2a), and search for meaning (H2b) is a mediator of the relationship between emerging adults' religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

The mediation analysis shows a direct relationship between religiosity and spirituality and meaning in life (a = .06, $t_{(317)}$ = 5.77, 95% CI [.04, .08], p < .00), and between meaning in life and well-being (b = .37, $t_{(316)}$ = 3.65, 95% CI [.17, .58]. p < .00). After introducing meaning in life in the mediation model, religiosity and spirituality holds its effect on well-being (c' = .04, $t_{(316)}$ = 2.22, 95% CI [.00, .08], p = .02), indicating that the meaning in life cannot be considered a mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being. Therefore, we have decided to run the mediation model separately for the two dimensions of the scale: the presence of meaning and search for meaning. It was only the presence of meaning

Figure 1.
Simple mediation model for satisfaction in life as a moderator for the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

	Predictor	Mediator	Criteria	Estimate	95% CI
1	Religiosity	Satisfaction with life	Well-being	.05	[.03, .05]
2	Religiosity	Presence of meaning	Well-being	.06	[.04, .08]
3	Religiosity	Mental health	Well-being	.03	[.01, .09]

Note. $^{*}p < .05$.

Table 2.
Unstandardized indirect effects with bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals.

that has proved to be a mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being (IE = ab = .06, 95% BootCI [.04, .08], p = .02), explaining 88% of the total effect (R = .49, F = 52.01, p < .00) (**Figure 2**).

H3: Emerging adults' perceived status of physical (H3a) and mental health (H3b) mediates the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

When analyzing physical health as a mediator of religiosity, spirituality, and well-being, we have identified a direct effect between religiosity, spirituality, and physical health (a = .01, $t_{(316)}$ = 3.09, 95% CI [.00, .01], p < .00), also a direct effect for the relationship between physical health and well-being (b = 2.17, $t_{(316)}$ = 5.57, 95% CI [1.40, 2.94], p < .00), but when introducing the mediator, the direct effect between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being was held (c' = .05, $t_{(316)}$ = 2.60, 95% CI [.01, .09], p < .00) and, therefore, we had to reject the hypothesis (**Figure 3**).

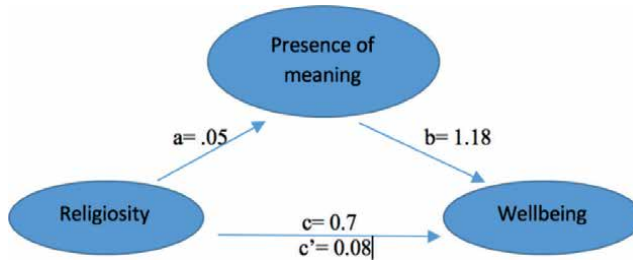

Figure 2.
Simple mediation model for the presence of meaning as a mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

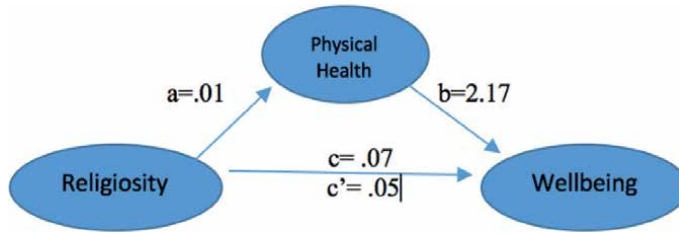

Figure 3.
Simple mediation model for physical health as a mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

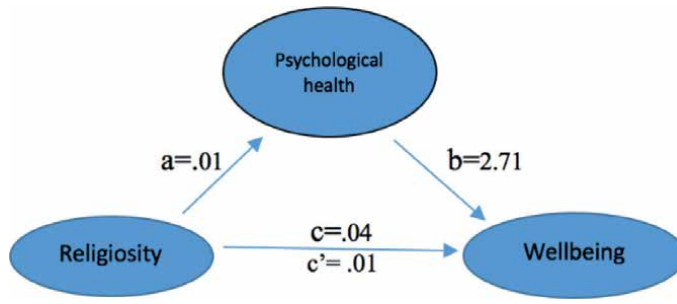

Figure 4.
Simple mediation model for psychological health as a mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being.

For H3b, although the perceived mental health status proved to be a good mediator in the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being, the data showed a direct effect of religiosity on mental health ($a = .01$, $t_{(316)} = 3.45$, 95% CI [.58, .02], $p < .00$) and a similar one for students' mental health and well-being ($b = 2.71$, $t_{(316)} = 8.67$, 95% CI [2.09, 3.32], $p < .00$) (**Figure 4**).

After introducing the perceived mental health as a mediator, the indirect effect of religiosity and spirituality on well-being is .03, 95% BootCI [.00, .09]), representing 79% of the total effect ($R = .47$, $F = 40.19$).

7. Conclusions and discussion

Hypotheses H1, H2a, and H3b are supported, indicating that satisfaction with life, presence of meaning, and perceived mental health status are mediators of the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being, explaining similar percentages of the relationship with 71, 88, and 79%, respectively. Even though previous studies show that meaning in life mediates the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being, the results do not fully sustain this conclusion. One explanation would be that emerging adults are at the age of defining their identity, searching for meaning in life, exploring identity statuses, and for those who have already found a purpose in life, religiosity, and spirituality can provide an enhanced well-being. These individuals feel the need to identify the meaning and the significance of their existence, a mission beyond the daily agenda, and the fact that they can find a life goal that satisfies their expectations, dreams, and hopes, seems to be enough to ensure them a comfortable psychological well-being. Religion, through its teachings, beliefs, commitment, spiritual experiences, and practices, can shape their purpose in life. It helps emerging adults frame their identity facets in a coherent image, congruent with their vision of the world. Religiosity and spirituality can offer a coherent framework for finding answers to existential questions, as Elliott and Hayward [4] assert.

Satisfaction with life could be the missing link between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in emerging adults. Individuals reporting higher religiosity and spirituality tend to appreciate more positive aspects of their lives, to be grateful for what they have, and to be satisfied with the conditions of their lives more than those who do not use this filter. Religion insists upon forgiveness and making peace with the past.

It is therefore understood why the perceived mental health status mediates the relationship between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being, as those who identify with a better mental health tend to assign it to religiosity and spirituality and to translate it in terms of subjective well-being, due to the fact that they see themselves in a positive light, have meaningful relationships with others, embrace their flaws and try to integrate them in a coherent life story, they find that they benefit from unconditional support when dealing with difficult problems, hold faith that someone is watching over them and guides their steps toward positive actions. Still, one must take into account that holding responsibility for his/her life and using free will ties with a strong sense of duty for oneself and others.

8. Limitations of the research

Next to its contributions, the current study has several limitations. First, it is a cross-sectional study, testing differences between, not within individuals,

the reason why the results could reflect more the characteristics of the sample, related to the moment of the research, to the composition, cultural, social, and religious characteristics of the sample. Based on a relatively homogenous sample of university students, predominantly orthodox, urban, and educated, caution is recommended in trying to generalize the results to the entire category of emerging adults. Even though mediation models test direct links and effects, longitudinal studies with several waves of collecting data could be more efficient in capturing these relationships and could supplement the knowledge volume with valuable insights.

9. Implications and future research perspectives

Studying the link between religiosity, spirituality, and well-being in emerging adults allows career counselors, personal development advisors, psychologists, and psychotherapists who are less inclined to embrace religious phenomena to understand their clients' perspective and to use a wider analysis grid. By framing the ten subscales of Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness and Spirituality, psychologists can find valuable anchors for building the therapeutic relationship, for developing topics of discussion and therapy, according to each client's characteristics and situation. This way, they can better understand the needs and concerns of their clients, identifying the role of religiosity and spirituality in reaching, and maintaining psychological well-being. Discussing with them about life satisfaction, meaning in life, and other aspects related to psychological health could open a window of opportunities for implementing effective therapeutic strategies.

The results support Moreira-Almeida et al. [94] perspective, who claim that through gaining a better understanding of the importance of religious aspects in individuals' lives, psychologists and counselors will be better equipped at providing mental health services, and through rigorous research, new ways of relieving pain and suffering can be found. Following Pargament's line of work [8], this chapter has shown that religiosity and spirituality influence our mental health and well-being. An in-depth understanding of religiosity and spirituality will allow psychologists, counselors, and other mental health providers to fulfill their mission of alleviating suffering and helping people live meaningful lives [94].

Numerous studies have shown that religiosity and spirituality play a significant role in enhancing individuals' psychological well-being, but given the fact that religiosity and spirituality are multidimensional, latent, and multilevel concepts, lines of investigation need to be expanded, mediation, moderation, and structural equation modeling and big data studies need to be conducted in order to advance knowledge in the field. Using Herzog's typology of emerging adults' religiosity [95] and using more heterogeneous samples could provide a more nuanced image of the phenomenon. A better collaboration between researchers coming from different areas and fields of research, with different cultural backgrounds, looking at an old topic from a new angle, setting aside all preconceptions and stereotypes, and focusing on research implications for individuals' well-being is welcome.

In today's increasingly polarized societies, where religion still plays a significant role, religiosity and spirituality can act as integrating factors, offering psychological comfort and well-being, and gathering public opinion and debate around a common ground, like finding meaning and purpose through the cultivation of positive values.

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Chapter 9

How Can Social Expectations and Related Stress among Adolescents and Young Adults Be Better Coped with through Practicing Yoga?

Ingunn Hagen

Abstract

In this chapter, I discuss how practicing yoga was experienced by adolescents and young adults and how such experiences seem to contribute to better coping with stress. As a contextualization, I will describe the current challenges for young people, such as social expectations and norms related to school/education, social media, and their life generally. Practicing yoga seems to allow for a "time out" from social expectations, tension, and stress, and thus create space for personal development. The discussed results are drawn from our qualitative study of adolescents and young adults, examining the potential of yoga practice for coping with stress, and the ability to improve mental health and increase well-being. The sample size consisted of 14 adolescents and young adults in Trondheim, Norway, in the age range of 12 to 29 years. There were two major themes identified in the data material: 1. yoga as a self-developmental activity, and 2. yoga as a "break" or sanctuary from social and societal demands. I will be paying attention to the second theme here. I conclude the chapter, that yoga is facilitating the way adolescents and young adults deal with societal demands and stressful expectations, which seems to improve their mental health and well-being.

Keywords: young people and social expectations, yoga for coping with stress, yoga as a sanctuary, yoga as "time out", qualitative yoga research

1. Introduction

The young generation in Norway, like elsewhere, experiences a lot of pressure to perform well, in school and other areas of life. This leads to feelings of stress, tension, and reduced well-being. In this article, I discuss how the social expectations and stress experienced by young people may be better coped with by practicing yoga. The discussion is based on our study of how yoga is experienced by adolescents and young adults, and to what extent practicing yoga seems to contribute to psychological well-being. As

a background, we will discuss the current challenges for adolescents and young adults and how these contribute to daily stress and impair their well-being. Furthermore, we will address what yoga is and how research discusses how yoga potentially can contribute to adolescents' and young adults' mastery of stress in their lives and well-being. We will illustrate some of the benefits of yoga by sharing narratives from adolescents and young adult's experiences with yoga. The purpose of the study was to examine how practicing yoga was experienced and to understand how yoga may impact coping with stress and psychological well-being in everyday life for adolescents and young adults. Our interview material consists of 14 qualitative, semi-structured interviews with young people in the age range of 12 to 29 years old. Along with presenting the main results from our study, we will discuss and interpret the meaning of our findings.

2. Experienced pressure and stress among young people

There has been much focus on the increased pressures and expectations young people seem to experience in their everyday lives [1]. A recent study reported that mental health has been decreasing among adolescents and young adults during the last three decades [2]. For example, there have been increasing cases of anxiety and depression among young people, as well as lower levels of life satisfaction in the last decade. Experienced stress and depressive thoughts were especially prevalent among young females. These authors interpreted the stress levels and mental health challenges as related to a sedentary lifestyle in front of screens as well as the intense use of social media. Other major stressors for young people were issues of concern, like climate change, social injustice, and threats to democracy. For many, however, the major stressor was increased performance pressure in school, which Krogstad et al. [2] attribute to neoliberal ideology, which has brought more emphasis on competition in recent years.

Another study that focused on adolescents found similar tendencies of stress and mental health challenges, again attributed to performance pressure in school, but also to increased social expectations of success in other aspects of life [3]. As is the case for young people in many countries, most young people in Norway are heavy users of social media [4]. The social media platforms are designed for addiction, so adolescents and young adults often have a high degree of mastery over digital media, these media also, to various degrees, have "mastery" over them [5, 6]. Particularly, the use of smartphones for social media can result in norms of "being on" and constant social availability [7]. This may result in sleep deprivation and increased stress [8, 9]. Sleep deprivation over time may have a negative impact on emotions, and thus reduce young people's sense of well-being [10].

Thus, the lives of young people can be characterized by stress, pressure, and digital overstimulation, creating concern in how such pressures create stressful lives for young people [2]. Still, while stress levels vary, as pointed out by Bakken [11] young people typically experience pressure and stress related to education, and body ideals to look thin, fit, and have a six-pack stomach. Many also internalize expectations of being popular and successful according to norms conveyed by social media. Norwegian young people are heavy users of social media, which has increased through their use of smartphones during the last decade [4]. While difficult to measure, young people generally spend numerous hours in front of screens, both at school and in their leisure time. You hardly see a young person today without a mobile phone in their hand, and many feel expectations about being available 24/7 [5, 6]. The norm of constant availability together with an increasing lack of physical activity led to sleep problems, and both reinforced young people's stress levels and increased their problems [12, 13].

Still, young people themselves often attribute their stress levels and mental health challenges to the demands put on them in the education system. Particularly, young people with middle-class parents felt that the parents reinformed the pressure to perform well in school, and thus contributing to the young people relating their self-worth to their achievements in school [14]. For both the parents and the young people, the concerns were about future security in the form of future educational and job opportunities. However, most Norwegian young people were found to enjoy well-being and were content with their lives [11]. Still, there were identified numerous threats to well-being, such as higher drug consumption, more violence, increased feelings of loneliness, and generally less optimism about the future. Other risk factors were related to increased screen time and social media use, as well as more young people experiencing boredom and less well-being at school.

No wonder that "generation achievement" ("generasjon prestasjon" in Norwegian) has become a label for young people [15]. "Generation achievement" refers to a cultural climate of pressure, for example, in school, in sports, related to the body, and in social media [16].[1] School is the main stressor, but young people vary in how much it stresses them. Still, young people experienced it as important to perform well in school and higher education, as getting a job without having an education has become increasingly difficult. Thus, young people express that they feel pressure and a sense of stress related to their future possibilities for jobs and careers [11]. There is a sense of performance anxiety, and young people use words like worrying, sleep difficulties, a sense of hopelessness, and toil to describe how they feel. However, the concept of generation-high performance goes beyond expectations related to perform well at school. There are also expectations to perform well and be successful in other areas of life, like being good-looking, being fit and healthy, and being popular. There is a future disciplining, and a squeeze between educational pressure and other norms for success [15]. Many young people also feel that it is their own fault if they do not succeed in all areas of life, due to the general expectation that individuals have become responsible for their own happiness [12, 17]. Young people have a lot of choices, but the norms of success in all areas of life, reduce their experienced room for action, and induce stress and fear of not being good enough.

As we have seen, there is a general sense of stress in the lives of adolescents and young adults. But what is stress? The concept of stress was coined by Hans Selye, a medical doctor and endocrinologist who wrote numerous books and reports about stress, including the book *The Stress of Life* (1956). He defined stress as a "non-specific response of the body to any demand" [18]. Selye also linked how the body coped with stress to the hypothalamic-pituitary axis. It is important also to realize the psychological aspect of stress, that our perception of stress is in the "eye of the beholder:" what is perceived as stressful by one person, might not be perceived so by another person. For the one who is triggered by a stimulus perceived as a "stressor," there will be a stress reaction, which typically starts with an alarm reaction, then a resistance phase, and is often followed by an exhaustion phase. As the perception of stress varies it is also possible to define stress as an exaggerated response to a change in the environment, externally or internally [19]. Stress means activation of the sympathetic part of the autonomous nervous system, which can trigger fright, fight, flight or freeze reactions, with the release of related bodily hormones. While sympathetic activation is important to perform well, long-term experiences of stress will drain our mental and physical health.

[1] See also https://utdanningsforskning.no/artikler/2018/generasjon-prestasjon-ungdoms-opplevelse-av-press-og-stress/

3. Yoga and its potential impact

In the Western world, yoga is often associated with slim, female yoga practitioners in tight-fitting suits, because that is how yoga is often portrayed in traditional and online media. But yoga is an ancient Indian practice suitable for all people, both women and men, as well as for people of all ages. While many in the West associate yoga with physical exercises (asanas), which require a great degree of bodily flexibility, yoga also includes breathing exercises (pranayama), meditation, and more. In the book *Yogaboken. Pust og bevegelse,* the authors describe yoga as a classical, Indian philosophical system, which also includes a number of methods and mind/body techniques for bringing stillness and self-insight [20]. These techniques include the cultivation of feelings, thoughts, and actions. Moreover, the purpose of yoga is primarily to get to know oneself, to develop awareness, and the ability to perceive. Thus, yoga is about self-discovery and personal tranformation.[2]

Yoga has increased in popularity in recent years and 300 million people are now practicing yoga worldwide.[3] As a background to understand how yoga may contribute to well-being and stress reduction, I will describe some central aspects of yoga. Yoga is a Sanskrit word, which means union or uniting, referring to the union of body, minds, and spirit. The often-quoted definition of yoga is "yoga chittivrtti nirodhah," the second Sutra in the ancient, classical text, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. There are numerous translations of this definition, for example: "Yoga is about stilling the fluctuations of the mind" [21], "Yoga is the stilling of mental turbulence" ([22], p. 16). Modern yoga is very diverse, and there are many yogic traditions. However, a common trait in classical yoga is often Patanjali's eight limbs or Ashtangas. These limbs consist of: Yamas (social restrictions), Niyamas (internal disciplines), Asana (physical postures), Pranayama (control of life energy through breath), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (union or integration) (see [21]). Patanjali eight limbs can also be formulated in one sentence: "Yoga consists of observances, abstinences, posture, control of life force, turning the senses inward, concentration, meditation, and superconsciousness or reintegration" ([22], p. 16). This is the philosophical basis for yoga.

There are various aspects of yoga emphasized by different authors, but a common trait is that yoga is about getting to know yourself, and developing your ability for self-reflection [20]. Yoga can also be perceived as a lifestyle, or way of life. The Indian yoga teacher Gitananda writes: "I prefer that you accept Yoga as a way of life, a way of integrating your whole nature, so that all aspects of your life work in harmony, one with another" ([23], p. 1). The above-mentioned eight limbs of yoga are seen as a precondition for yoga as a way of life. The point of integration, as indicated in the Sanskrit word "yui" (union, as mentioned above), is also emphasized by Bhogal in his book *Yoga & Mental Health & Beyond. A Guide to Self-Managemen*t, where he writes: "Yoga literally means 'Integration' at all levels of existence. Yoga is both 'State' and 'Process'. As a process, it is a means to Integration. As a state, it is a psycho-physiological balance, signifying a holistic personality integration" ([24], p. 2). Cook-Cottone [25] emphasizes that yoga philosophy views the experience of self as dwelling in two worlds: an inner world of thoughts, emotions, and sensations and the outer world where we interact with and relate to others. When yoga increases our integration, this will promote a more harmonic relationship to the external world, as we become less

[2] See for example https://viniyoga.com/about/what-is-viniyoga/

[3] https://www.thegoodbody.com/yoga-statistics/

susceptible to social expectations, and often closer to our "true selves." Thus, yoga can be described as a tool for self-development.

Others have portrayed yoga as a process of conscious evolution through creating a four- or five-fold awareness: This is awareness about the body, mind, and emotions and a meta-awareness, which presupposes an awareness about one's lack of awareness [23]. Yoga can also be defined as "skill in action," which increases one's life mastery capacity, resilience, as weak as emotional balance. Practicing yoga can contribute to balance in the autonomic nervous system, by activating the para-sympathetic part, which is the basis for rest and digestion, more than the sympathetic part, which induces activation and sometimes stresses. The goal of yoga is to achieve autonomic balance, as neither sympathetic nor para-sympathetic dominance is ideal [26]. Thus, yoga has the potential to improve all aspects of our health, including emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual [27]. Some authors, such as Gitananda [23] also point out that the goal of yoga is Samadhi or Cosmic Consciousness. Similarly, according to Yogendra and Hansaji "yoga primarily means samadhi, and not union" ([28], p. 4). To these authors, Samadhi is about concentration, in other words our mind is concentrated, content, focused, and stable. In her recent book *Hva er yoga?* (What is yoga?) Wiel [29] acknowledges the diversity in definitions and understandings of yoga. However, she also emphasizes that in yoga one is learning to cope with stress by learning how to regulate oneself.

3.1 Yoga for coping with stress: some research findings

Yoga is an ancient body-mind practice, now regarded as an effective tool to promote general physical and mental health, especially to reduce stress [30]. Several review articles report that people experience a significant reduction in stress after doing yoga [31–34]. Based on the review Sharma suggests that "yoga appears to be a promising modality for stress management" ([34], p. 59). According to Riley and Park [33] both experimental and clinical research refers to yoga as a stress reliever. The latter authors suggest—based on their review of research on yoga and stress, that the psychological mechanisms that may relieve stress when doing yoga include: a more positive attitude toward stress, self-awareness, improved coping mechanisms, more appraisal of control, increased calmness, and also mindfulness, spirituality, and (self) compassion.

If one is to reduce stress among young people through yoga, it is important to understand the causes of stress and how yoga might help to reduce stress [35, 36]. Batista and Dantas [37] found yoga to be one of the most powerful agents for controlling stress. In their recent review article, similarly, a review study of the benefits of yoga for children and young people concluded that practicing yoga improved their ability to cope with stress and reduced their experience of stress and anxiety [38]. In another study of young people, "Students had particularly positive opinions regarding the beneficial effects of yoga on stress, sleep, and relaxation" ([39], p. 1). Another study on yoga in school [40] reported the following psychological benefits for students: "many cited stress reduction; many used yoga to manage negative emotions; and some propagated more optimism" (p. 171). As we mentioned earlier, stress is also about perception, Frank et al. [41] suggested that yoga (sports) reduced the perception of stress and accompanying mental health symptoms, such as anxiety and depression.

Wang and Szabo [42] found that many types of yoga had positive effects on stress reduction, at least in healthy adult populations. However, they recommended

that one needs to find out about the long-term impact of stress, and also understand the underlying psychological mechanisms causing stress. The latter point is emphasized by Park et al. [36] who suggest that it seems established that yoga reduces stress, but there is a need to understand better the underlying mechanisms. What is the reason for this improvement in the ability to cope with stress and also to feel less stressed? Based on a meta-analysis of 81 articles on how yoga works, Ross and Thomas [43] find that yoga has a positive effect on physical and mental health by downregulating the so-called hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and the sympathetic nervous system. Yoga's impact on better regulation of the sympathetic nervous system and the HPA system is also confirmed by Pascoe and Bauer [30] in their article with a systematic review of the research on the effects of yoga on stress and mood. They also find that yoga contributes to less depressive and anxiety-related symptoms. The yogic contribution to reducing sympathetic activity, which means less experience of stress and more experience of calmness in body and mind.

In a recent review article on the effects of yoga on young people, Miller and the co-authors [44] conclude that yoga is a promising intervention in relation to children and young people. One of the reasons is that especially breathing exercises (pranayama) and focus on breathing when doing physical yoga exercises (asanas) have an impact on the autonomic nervous system, by reducing sympathetic activation. Young people will therefore feel more relaxed as they are in more para-sympathetic (or rest and digest mode). Thus, yoga can also help to increase attention and the ability to regulate cognitive (thinking), emotional (emotional), and somatic (bodily) impulses and experiences. Practicing yoga can also increase young people's contact with their own body, mind, emotions (feelings), and reaction patterns (see [45]). Based on this study of how yoga can contribute to teenagers' and young adults' mental health and well-being, Hagen et al. find that practicing yoga can increase self-awareness, the ability to self-regulate, and the ability to cope with stress.

4. Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to examine how practicing yoga was experienced by young people. The title was "Yoga to promote young people's mental health and well-being?" Originally, we intended to focus on teenagers, but due to recruitment problems, we broadened the sample to adolescents and young adults. We formulated the research question: "How can yoga impact coping with stress and increase psychological well-being in everyday life for adolescents and young adult?"[4] The approach was individual semi-structured interviews, resulting in data that were analyzed through thematic analysis [46, 47].

5. Research design and methodology

In line with the purpose of this study, a qualitative research design was employed. Qualitative research is idiographic (as opposed to nomothetic), as it samples and explores specific instances in detail. Thus, qualitative research focuses on exploring what *can specifically* be the case, and not necessarily what *is generally* the case. The

[4] The study was performed in 2015, as a "research practice" for senior bachelor students.

aim is to produce knowledge allowing for analytical generalization, which "involves a reasoned judgment about the extent to which the findings of one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation" ([48], p. 297).

5.1 Recruitment procedure and sample characteristics

The interviewees were recruited by a "snow-ball method" and were approached by researchers based on their participation in yoga courses at two yoga centers. There were 14 interview participants, adolescents and young adults in the age range of 12 to 29 years. There were four young men and 10 women. These individuals had varied amounts of yoga experience, ranging from learning yoga and practicing it for at least 5 weeks to practicing yoga for several years. Mainly, their yoga practice consisted of hatha yoga—asanas with a focus on breathing—and some guided meditations.

Data was collected through qualitative semi-structured phenomenological lifeworld interviews [47, 49]. The purpose of this type of interview is to gather descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee, with the intent of interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. An advantage of this style of interviewing is its flexibility in the order and formulation of the questions posed, so that one can follow-up on interesting themes that emerge in the interview situation (probing). The interviews were performed based on an interview guide, consisting of open questions, based on insights from yoga research, inspired by yoga practice performed by the project's lead researcher and supplemented by questions from the other members of the research team based on their research interests. In order to secure a report with the interviewee, we informed the participants of our aims with the interview (**Table 1**).

Gender	Age	Interviewees' fictional names
Male	15	Adam M15
Male	15	Brage M15
Male	25	Carl M25
Male	27	David M27
Female	12	Eva F12
Female	14	Fiona Fl4
Female	18	Grethe F18
Female	23	Hilde F23
Female	24	Inger F24
Female	24	Julie F24
Female	25	Karin F25
Female	26	Liv F26
Female	28	Marit 28
Female	29	Nora 29

Table 1.
Overview of participants.

6. Data collection

Data was collected by means of semi-structured phenomenological life-word interviews [47, 49] in the spring of 2015. The purpose of this type of interview was to gather descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee—"the world as it is encountered in everyday life and given in direct and immediate experience, independent of and prior to explanations" ([48], p. 32)—with the intent of interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.

The interviews were conducted with the aid of an interview guide, consisting of open questions. The guide was for the most part only loosely adhered to, primarily serving the purpose of a checklist to ensure that the intended and desired overarching issues were explored during the course of the interview. The questions of the interview guide were derived from the following set of research questions: (1) Why do the participants seek out yoga? (2) How do the participants experience the yoga practice? (3) What effects do the participants experience that yoga provides? (4) How do the participants view yoga in an overarching social and cultural context? In order to secure a report with the interviewee, a script informing the participants of the aims of the research as well as their rights (e.g., their ownership over the information they provide) regarding the interview was recited.

The interview guide was adhered to more strictly for those participants who had only a limited amount of experience with yoga. For the participants who had more experience the interview guide was more loosely adhered to in order to cover the general research questions. For experienced participants, we opened up with the question "what is your history with yoga?" This question is in retrospect deemed as having proved highly useful. In the interview situation, it elicited rich descriptions where the interviewees were allowed to situate yoga within their own lifeworld and in their own words. This question provided a rich set of leads that were followed up on with further questions aiming at clarifying meanings and exploring connected topics. All of the interviews, with one exception, were conducted in Norwegian, the one exception was conducted in English. Most of the interviews were conducted with two researchers present, with the lead researcher being present in all but one of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted at times and places that were convenient for the interviewees. Parental consent was obtained for interviewing participants below 18 years of age. The interviews were transcribed primarily orthographically, which is considered appropriate when the analysis focuses on what is being said, rather than how it is being said. However, specific nonliteral meanings were attempted to preserve by the use of brackets noting non-textual irregularities that might have been intended to serve as linguistic devices serving communicative purposes (e.g., laughter, pronounced uses of intonation and/or dialect to express irony or self-distancing).

7. Data analysis

The collected data material was analyzed employing thematic analysis [46, 50, 51]. The purpose of thematic analysis in general is primarily to describe and summarize a set of qualitative data in rich detail. The purpose of the current analysis was to construct an understanding of how yoga practice relates to stress and well-being by detailed mapping and examination of a limited selection of meanings. As such, it constitutes a selective analysis focusing on generating themes centrally relevant to address the predefined research question. The interviews were analyzed making use

of the Nvivo 11 Pro software for Microsoft Windows. The data was analyzed by coding for the specific meaning yoga had for the interviewees.

Thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke [46] consists of six stages: (1) data familiarization, (2) initial generation of codes, (3) searching for themes based on initial codes, (4) reviewing of themes, (5) defining and naming of themes, and (6) the writing of the report. While this report is written in English, the analysis is performed on Norwegian interview transcriptions, except for one case where the interview was conducted and transcribed in English. While the overall meaning is conveyed, some of the nuances in meaning can be lost in the process of translating between the two languages. Themes were developed from the perspective of and employing sensitizing concepts like stress and well-being.

8. Findings and discussion

8.1 Yoga as sanctuary from social and societal demands

How yoga relates to perceived social and societal pressures is a highly significant theme running through the data material. Most of the participants describe how they perceive society and their social context in remarkably similar terms, characterizing society and their social contexts as being dominated by a pressure to perform and as promoting and fostering competition. Furthermore, yoga is described by many as either locally as in itself a sanctuary from these demands, or as an arena for temporarily disengaging from them. Two examples from our interviewees:

> *"That I got a small, fixed time where I just had to relax and... not think about school." (Fiona, F14).*

> *"It is more like; you can empty your head. (...) Especially during the last thing, then you are not thinking about anything." (Brage, M15).*

"The last thing" referred to here was the closing part of the yoga class where participants practiced Shava Asana, a relaxing pose where one is lying down on the back, with the aim to relax or release tension.

Yoga as a sanctuary can also be viewed more generally, as the practitioners' accounts demonstrate evidence of employing techniques they have learned from yoga in their real lives as they face these demands during their everyday activities. The theme selected and elaborated on is one of the most central and pertinent to the research questions, and as doing the most justice to representing yoga as perceived by the research participants. The theme is considered well suited to summarizing the findings, as one of the themes incorporating salient topics brought up by the participants, as well as regarding how the data material relates to mental health and well-being. The theme chosen for elaboration and presentation in this chapter is "Yoga as a Sanctuary from Social and Societal Demands." Related to this theme, yoga as a "safe haven" and as a stress relief are important elements. The theme also overlaps with another central theme in our study, "Yoga as a Self-Developing Activity."

When analyzing the data, one realizes that the themes constructed can perhaps never do full justice to what is available in the data. Still, one gets the main insight into the way yoga is perceived as a way to deal with the pressure often experienced by adolescents in Norwegian society:

> *"Yeah… like not only with friends, but with everyone at school that you… feel like… yeah, is… you have to like be… in a certain way and dress in a certain way and such to be accepted, I feel. It is like very much pressure" (Grethe, F18).*

However, the reasons for continuing to do yoga is not necessarily the same as those they possessed initially when seeking it out. Yoga does show marked development and progression for some of the individuals in this sample. This is illustrated by describing yoga from start to finish, going through what initially brought these participants to try yoga, and how yoga has developed for some of these participants into an activity that allowed them to come in and stay in contact with themselves. In the words of one of our informants:

> *"It's like a breathing room where I just… forget everything else. Where I can, like, just be me. […] That I…yeah, just forget everything that has happened before and…what is supposed to happen, that I can just relax and… get a break. Catch up with myself." (Grethe, F18).*

> *"No, it is that you … you concentrate about only your body and how you feel so… do not think about other things and … just feel how I am right here and now and… yeah. Quite calm. No stress." (Grethe, F18).*

Other people reported seeking out yoga specifically as an activity for *relaxation and stress mastery.*

> *Grethe, F18: "It was because I'm a very stressed person, or I experienced a lot of stress in my everyday life, at school especially. And I had heard that yoga could help against stress… or that you become more relaxed. That's really why I wanted to try it."*

> *Adam M15: "It was because I thought it sounded very… relaxing, and as a way of removing stress during the day and stuff. Like, if there has been a long school day and then, then, just a lot of things that I found very boring so that I could just… like, forget all of that."*

This theme relates to some of the reasons why the practitioners originally sought out or continued to practice yoga. One reason mentioned by several interviewees was that yoga was a source of physical activity where performance was not in focus.

> *Karin, F25: "It appealed to me as … what should I say… a way of being physically active that was not … contingent on performance in a way."*

Several of the interviewees expressed that the focus on competition in sports was something that was experienced as stressful for them. For example, a mentioned reason for continuing to practice yoga was that it was a source of physical exercise where there is no focus on competition.

> *Liv, F26: I do not really quite remember what made me continue but I remember that … yes both that original experience of that it wasn't about competition, but that I was allowed to move my body.*

Quite a few of the participants in this study recount experiences with other forms of physical exercise where the joy associated with these activities was ruined by the increasing pressure to perform and to compete with each other. The emerging focus

on performance and competition was described as having turned these individuals away from more mainstream forms of physical activity and toward yoga. For example, one of the participants who is now a yoga instructor recounts her being driven away from football preemptively because she was afraid of being labeled as "bad" and sorted into the "bad team."

> *Liv, F26: "Because in football it's all about that [competition], they like split the teams into good and bad, and then I just had to quit. Because I was a bit like, that, I did not 't want to know if I was good or bad. That's something that you struggle with enough by yourself. You do not need anyone else telling you that you are not good enough to be with the good team in football. In yoga there was no focus on that."*

Another practitioner who has also become a yoga instructor reported that her source of physical activity, handball, was contaminated by an increasing focus on winning and performing where she was not allowed to participate when she wasn't among the better players on the team. Due to this, this source of physical exercise became increasingly dominated by and associated with negative experiences and emotions. Yoga offered a means of physical exercise not contingent on performance and not focused on competition where she was allowed to use her body.

> *Karin, F25: "During the last few years of handball there was a lot of focus on that the teams should win and lalala. And .. I wasn't the best on the team to put it like that so I was sitting a lot on the bench and it came to be that to be active, it ... moving and using the body and all that became sort of a negative thing because you did not really get to do it. And it was very obvious like, those are good and those are bad. And at yoga ... I do not know why I had an impression that ... I think maybe I had a friend that had been doing it or something like that they said like that there is no focus on anything but what you do yourself."*

A participant who had been practicing dance for many years also found herself driven away from it because it was increasingly being dominated by internal competition and pressure to perform. Yoga to the contrary was perceived by this individual as an arena where she is completely free from the scrutiny and the social evaluation of others, and as an arena where she could just focus on herself without being the focus of others. This feature of yoga practice was something that she greatly appreciated.

> *Grethe, F18: "I was doing dance before, and I enjoyed that a lot for... ten years. But, in that too there was a lot of pressure. You should be... you should just become better and better and, there was pressure on being best and... if you were good enough you got to stand in the front when we had a show and... So it was very like... and I just could not take that any more. So then I just decided to try yoga instead, and here it's like, you do not think about how the others look while they are doing those exercises and... that others... I just do not feel that the others are watching me, and how I'm doing and... how good I am. Everyone just focus on themselves. And that is really nice."*

This aspect of yoga, that it is an activity in which there is little pressure to perform, is perceived by one young participant and being communicated clearly during the yoga practice itself. Nobody is forcing you to do anything during the yoga classes, and this is reported as clearly perceived and might contribute to the practice being completely autonomously engaged.

> *Eva, F12: "I think it's a good thing. That... you can decide a bit for yourself. And if there is something that you do not feel like you can do or that is uncomfortable, in any way, that you have the opportunity to lay down and rather join when there are some things that you know that you can do and that you feel can be a bit easier."*

Yoga is an activity that itself is not contingent on pressure to perform and competition seems to make yoga itself a sanctuary from these features and demands from the reality that exists outside of the yoga classes themselves. When asked what is the most important about yoga, one of the participants described it as a haven from the rest of existence.

> *Grethe, F18: "To me right now it is to... have a haven where, where I do not need to think about anything else. I can just focus on me and to... take a break. To not... I do not experience any pressure here. Here I am... just me."*

Yoga offers an arena where the participants get to temporarily disengage from these social and societal pressures, including feeling watched and evaluated by peers:

> *Grethe, F18: "I like it here so much... I do not think that... here you do not think about how others do things and... I do not feel that they are thinking about how I am doing things either. I think that... that I do not have any friends that go here, I think it helps me, it's my place."*

These observations seem to demonstrate and point in the direction that yoga offers for these participants a sanctuary from perceived societal and social pressures, and that yoga is an arena where they get to temporarily disengage from them. This period of disengagement is experienced as rewarding as it alleviates negative emotions and promotes positive emotions. Disengaging also might facilitate functioning by allowing the participants to recharge their batteries in order to be able to meet these demands of society.

The fact that yoga is an arena where there is little focus on performance and competition by one participant described as yoga offering a contrast to the message that she perceives is being communicated by the rest of society.

> *Karin, F25: "I feel it offers a ... a kind of alternative way of seeing things. It offers ... it is a contrast to ... what I feel is a lot of society and then I do not know ... the whole collective where you ... from society you get all the time 'you are not good enough 'in commercials and media and so on to get better, where yoga in a way says 'no!', you are actually already good enough, you don 't need to do all of that."*

Practicing yoga can also be a way of disengaging from the stresses and demands associated with work and studies.

> *Nora, F29: "At work I'm too much in my mind, in my brain, so I'm just like ... it's not using my hands much, /Just have to think, think, think all the time [...] And when I'm doing yoga I'm fully, after that I'm just like switching on my body, and this is what gives my mind some rest".*

> *Nora, F29: "When/was doing my PhD, it was ... in the end it was crazy times, and (sighing) it was Just a lot of deadlines and, like, you really, ... you were just going crazy, and so on, and at least two hours per day, when I was going to the studio, it was like ... as*

> *soon I was closing the door of the studio, for at least two hours it was like nothing existed, it was just this ... like ... small room with other people. And for me it was like a light in the window because, there was too much pressure, too much stress, and at least these two hours was making me feel happy. So for me it was just like yea, a light of happiness".*

Another participant describes this break, this period of disengaging, as granting her energy.

> *Marit, F28: "You allow yourself to just be and not do anything. It is a break that grants me more energy. I think .. the brain is a muscle, and it also needs to relax. So it is a break for the brain".*

It is interesting to notice that experienced yoga practitioners seem to have divorced themselves from what they perceive as controlling regulations of society. Another interesting feature is how yoga for some of the individuals who initially engaged in yoga as a sort of physical therapeutic relief or exercise ended up finding something more in it, in particular a mental inner strength aspect, and also strength to resist societal norms and expectation.

> *Liv, F26: "I've met in the yoga community a lot that I that is something of that I appreciate the most. Adult people who, yea they are searching, they are in the seeker community, but they are also open and honest in their bodies. They are not so preoccupied by following fashion or following that which the rest of society necessarily says you have to do."*

Some of the younger participants seemed to experience and being aware of these demands just as much as the more experienced participants, but these demands were not internalized in the same manner.

Finally, we see an example of yoga being employed in everyday situations for emotional and behavioral self-regulation. One boy reported using techniques from yoga to emotionally self-regulate by improving his own subjective experience of a frightening situation he had to go through; being inside an MR machine.

> *Adam, M15: "When I was at an MR-examination, then I felt that I had a lot of use for it. Because then I started thinking about yoga and the lay-still exercises, rather than thinking that I was in e very tiny room. [...] Then I used it [yoga] to think about something else than that I was scared, so I used it to rather think about that I could just relax and... not be afraid for something that wasn't really anything to be afraid of."*

This interviewee was explicitly asked what yoga gave him in a situation where he was scared:

> *Adam, M15: I think it makes me much calmer than if I had not been to [yoga]. I have a way out if there is something that I do not like doing.*

This way it can be said that he sought the sanctuary from yoga practices during something he had to go through in his everyday life. The tools from yoga seemed to allow this informant to be calmer and cope better with a stressful situation.

Two yoga practitioners in our sample who are also instructors point toward a possible threat to well-being that relates to yoga as a sanctuary. One of the instructors

talks of yoga practice for some as being used as an escape from their troubles rather than dealing with them. These observations seem to point in the direction that yoga offers for these participants a sanctuary from perceived societal and social pressures, and that yoga was an arena where they could temporarily disengage from them. This period of disengagement seemed to be experienced as rewarding as it alleviated negative emotions and promoted positive emotions. Disengaging could also facilitate functioning by allowing the participants to recharge their batteries in order to be able to meet these demands of society.

9. Conclusory remarks

The theme emphasized in this chapter illuminated how yoga seemed to provide a sanctuary from social and societal demands. Our interview citations revealed that a number of the young people were experiencing various forms of pressure and stress in their everyday lives, that they felt a need to take a "time-out." Examples mentioned included social expectations related to school, peer pressure and norms, and the competitiveness in sports related to being good and contributing to the winning team. While doing yoga these individuals got to disengage from everyday stresses and demands, and yoga seemed to provide them with a break that allowed them to relax and recharge their batteries. The theme of yoga as providing a sanctuary is interrelated to another theme that could be identified in this data material, namely yoga as a self-developmental activity. The latter theme relates to functioning well and experiencing subjective well-being.

Performance pressure, especially in relation to perceived social and societal demands, was one of the dominant themes in this study. In this chapter, it was explored as its own dedicated theme named "Yoga as Sanctuary from Social and Societal Demands." A few of the interviewees in our study expressed a concern that yoga could let practitioners escape from their troubles rather than doing something about them. These potential pitfalls of yoga as a sanctuary, as the subjective emotional benefits reaped by mentally escaping from life, might prove detrimental to functioning. However, recharging batteries and developing different values do not necessarily mean escaping from troubles related to fulfilling social expectations. It could also empower these young people, such as when interviewees employed techniques learned during yoga practice in their everyday lives to cope with stress in better ways and with increased emotional and behavioral self-regulation.[5]

The "Sanctuary" through yoga provided the young people in our study with a space to relax, and also made them realize how stressed they were. For some of the interviewees in our sample yoga practice gained another dimension of intrinsic motivation by yoga offering relaxation, time out, and pleasant mental states while negating unpleasant mental states. With yogic tools for relaxation, it also became easier to look inward; getting to know themselves better. This "coming to know who they are" could potentially allow them to live more autonomously and authentically. By improving their self-awareness and by experiencing a break from social pressure and stress through yoga, it seemed that many of the adolescents and young adults in our study could face their life's journey ahead with more ease and inner strength. Thus, our study indicate that yoga has the potential to improve young people's mental health and well-being.

[5] For a more thorough discussion on the manifestations of self-regulation, see Hagen et al. [45].

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 10

The Psychology of Resilience: Empowering Athletes with a Potential Risk of Experiencing Sexual Violence in Sports

Marleen Haandrikman, Annemiek Fokkens, Miriam Oostinga and Nicolette Schipper-van Veldhoven

Abstract

A positive, caring and safe sports climate is essential for the healthy development of young people. One of the responsibilities of parties involved in organised sports is to create a safe sports climate, but in practice, difficulties in creating such a climate are still experienced nowadays. Implementing prevention programmes solely focused on coaches or the environment is not a comprehensive approach. Therefore, the biopsychosocial profile of athletes representing potential risks of experiencing sexual violence in sports can serve as a base to develop prevention programmes aimed at empowering athletes and stimulating their resistance towards sexual violence. In practice, this requires measures to make (young) athletes more resilient against the dominant position of coaches and other authority figures within sports. But how? To answer this question, the psychology of resilience will be reviewed to gain insights into the future development of these practical measures to safeguard athletes.

Keywords: safeguarding, safe sports climate, biopsychosocial profile, sexual violence, interpersonal violence, sports, resilience, empowering

1. Introduction

Sport is a popular leisure activity among young people. In the Netherlands, approximately 1.9 million young people (aged between 5 and 18 years) practice sports of which 1.3 million participate in organised sports at a club level [1]. Organised sport is, therefore, often regarded as the third educational environment — next to home and school — in which youngsters can physically develop and socially learn and have fun. This is substantively evident in the physical, mental and social effects of sports exercise [e.g., [2, 3]]. Thus, sports participation offers excellent opportunities for contributing to personal and social development and life skills [4, 5]. In this light, the

World Health Organisation [6] put guidelines in place to promote physical activity and sport among children and young people. However, there is another side to sports: an unsafe side [7], which can lead to negative outcomes such as depression, exhaustion, eating disorders and anxiety [8, 9]. Within the sports world, there is an obligation to protect athletes from harassment and abuse as it is embedded in the statutory governing documents of sport, including the Olympic Charter [10] and the IOC Code of Ethics [11]. All athletes have a right to engage in 'safe sport'. One particular form of unsafe practices in sports gained increased disclosure through the media affecting the public's attention to these events: sexual violence. Sexual violence 'includes a continuum of different behaviours, ranging from sexual harassment without body contact, to transgressive behaviours, to sexual violence with body contact' ([1], p. 2). Examples of sexual violence are making sexual comments or jokes, caressing the body or rape. Alongside, researchers who studied these events provided insight through prevalence research further strengthening the severity. Consequently, it became known as a worldwide issue in sports (e.g., in Sweden [8], the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany [9] and Australia [12]).

#MeToo, #SportToo and #CoachDontTouchMe: three social media initiatives asking for urgent recognition and action for sexual violence globally. In 2017, the already existing #MeToo movement rose through the respective survivors' disclosure of sexual violence practices conducted by film producer Harvey Weinstein. Through its increased attention, the movement popped up in a multitude of countries and communities as has happened to the sports community: #SportToo and #CoachDontTouchMe. Since then, notorious sports cases of sexual violence have come to light. For example, within USA Swimming, a dozen teenage female athletes experienced various forms of sexual misconduct by coaches over decades, and in British professional football, young male soccer players disclosed being sexually abused by their former elite coaches over decades. More recently, one of the largest sexual abuse scandals in sports history was disclosed within USA Gymnastics. Almost 400 gymnasts experienced forms of sexual abuse conducted by their coaches, gym owners, medical doctor Larry Nassar or other adults working in this community. And, unfortunately, this is not the end. To this day, more and more cases of athletes experiencing sexual violence in sports keep coming to light. This emphasises the importance of creating a further understanding of this phenomenon and knowing how to design interventions to safeguard athletes. To gain further insight into sexual violence towards athletes, it has been studied from different angles. One of these angles is the development of measures aiming to prevent sexual violence in sports. Until now, most of these measures focused on policies surrounding the entourage and sports itself: a social perspective [13, 14]. In other words, their viewpoint starts by looking closer at the influence of social structures within organisations and their respective social norms about sexual violence in the sports community (e.g., coaches grooming athletes). However, an important angle in developing these preventive measures has not yet become a focal point: personal risk factors for experiencing sexual violence in sports [15]. So far, scientific research barely focused on the emergence of sexual violence with the focus on the athlete himself despite the high prevalence of these experiences, and simultaneously, the importance of prevention through the empowerment of the athletes [15]. Therefore, it would be sensible to understand athletes' potential risks for experiencing sexual violence. Why are some athletes more prone than others? How to counterbalance these risks to empower the resilience of athletes? To answer these questions, a biopsychosocial profile is developed by

Van Voorthuizen et al. [16] to gain insight into potential biological, psychological and social factors of athletes resulting in a higher risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports. Through the identification of these factors, there is by no means the intention to place responsibility for experiencing sexual violence on athletes with a higher risk. It must be emphasised that this chapter contributes to the recognition of the vulnerabilities of athletes in sports to offer protection from becoming a potential victim through preventive measures empowering the athlete's resilience. This is important since being resilient to adversities contributes to mental health and overall well-being [17]. In the current context, resilience is desirable because it can counterbalance the vulnerability of athletes before, during or after sexual violent practices.

This chapter aims to add further definition to the biopsychosocial profile by elaborating on the identified biological, psychological and societal risk factors of athletes. By creating a further understanding of the existence of these risk factors, more insight is obtained serving to the recognition of vulnerabilities of athletes. Furthermore, to empower athletes at risk, the psychology of resilience will be applied to gain insights into future directions for developing preventive measures to safeguard athletes in sports.

2. Biopsychosocial profile

The biopsychosocial profile of Van Voorthuizen [16] (see **Figure 1**) is based on Engel's biopsychosocial model [18] and has been applied to topics closely linked to sexual harassment and abuse (e.g., mental and physical health [19, 20] and sexual health [21]). This multisystem perspective entails the general idea of sexual violence in sports, arising from a complex interaction of various factors: biological (e.g., sex), psychological (e.g., personality traits) and social factors (e.g., upbringing). In this paragraph, we critically assess the outcomes of the biopsychosocial profile of Van Voorthuizen [16] against existing literature to gain a further understanding of this profile. This will be done by explaining the origin of the risk factor, as well as reviewing the completion of this profile. The insights gathered in this paragraph can be used in the development of preventive measures aiming to empower at-risk athlete's resilience.

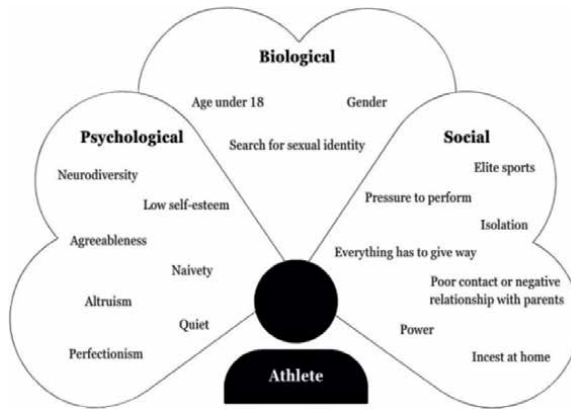

Figure 1.
The biopsychosocial profile.

2.1 Biological factors

The first category contains biological risk factors. These are biologically or genetically determined factors. The study by Van Voorthuizen et al. [16] found three biological factors, increasing the risk of athletes experiencing sexual violence in sports: age, gender and sexual identity.

2.1.1 Age

For youth, it is important to develop levels of autonomy to become independent individuals [22, 23]. By obtaining space to develop autonomy, their ability to make choices by themselves and take responsibility grows. Feeling encouraged by others in this process results in youth feeling heard and valued to be themselves, and sports environments are influencing this. By applying the athlete-centred approach in sports, actors contribute to their athletes' autonomy development (e.g., by providing options for exercises to be chosen by athletes). However, the autonomy development of athletes aged below 18 years is simultaneously a risk factor for experiencing sexual violence. Given diverse relationships of power in sports — for example, the coach-athlete relationship — youth athletes can be disempowered in developing and outing their autonomy [7]. Actors, with these power relationships, can influence the athlete's sports performance and personal life resulting in the athlete's dependency on these actors. Therefore, theoretically seen are young athletes at greater risk of experiencing sexual violence. However, support for this risk factor in recent research is still quite mixed. For example, a literature study by Bjornseth and Szabo [24] concludes sexual violence targeted at children is more prevalent. However, Parent and Vaillancourt-Morel [25] did not find support for this risk factor among their Canadian athlete sample. Therefore, it is necessary to further study this risk factor for it to be included in interventions.

2.1.2 Gender

According to Van Voorthuizen et al. [16], the athletes' gender did not differentiate between the risk of athletes experiencing sexual violence. However, there is a discussion about the difference in the prevalence of sexual violence among diverse genders in sports in scientific literature. Currently, the philosophy of binarism[1] is most frequently applied in studies about gender-based (sexual) violence. So far, several studies found results that females are more likely to report sexual violence compared to males (e.g., [27–30]). However, as stated by Vertommen et al. [29], it might be the case that sexual violence incidents by males are underreported, resulting in a lower prevalence (i.e., not equal to males not experiencing sexual violence in sports). Thus, the question arises whether it is the case that females are experiencing sexual violence in sports more often, or whether there is a difference in disclosure to officials. Additionally, the binarism dichotomy harmfully impacts all types of (cis- and trans-[1]) gender identities and expressions[2] in sports (e.g., [31]). Due to the underexposure, the

[1] This philosophy includes the existence of only two discrete and mutually exclusive gender options, namely referred to as male (he/him) and female (she/her) [26].

[2] Gender is a sociocultural construct that is an evolving identity and expression in many ways (e.g., behaviour, pronouns and hairstyle). Gender identity refers to 'an individual's personal, sometimes private, sense of themselves, while gender expression refers to how an individual outwardly represents their gender' ([29], p. 25).

risk of an unsafe sports environment for particular gender identities and expressions can occur. However, until now, determining gender identity and/or expression as a possible risk factor for athletes to experience sexual violence is still too complex given the limited overview in scientific literature.

2.1.3 Sexual identity

A third biological risk factor found is sexual identity. At the start of puberty, youth step on the path of their psychosocial development of sexuality [32] to explore their sexual identity to obtain clarity about their identity at the end of this path [33]. Their identification will either turn out as straight or as one of the identities of the LGBTQIA+ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other gender and/or sexual minority). However, the safety of sports of the LGBTQIA+ community is being challenged. Several studies found results of LGBTQIA+ athletes have significantly more experiences of sexual harm compared to non-LGBTQIA+ identifying athletes [29, 30]. Menzel et al. [31] found the existence of homophobia, and particularly transphobia, still a current problem in sports as experienced by almost 90% of LGBTQIA+ respondents in Europe. This is due to the cisheteronormative nature of many sports cultures that creates an unsafe sports environment for LGBTQIA+ athletes [34]. Cisheteronormativity within sports cultures advantages cisgender identities and heterosexual athletes [35]. This means that athletes who overstep sports culture's societal boundaries — accepting identification with cisgender identity and/or fulfilling the heterosexuality norm — are disadvantaged in sports participation (e.g., by prejudice, exclusion or ignorance). Unsafe sports environments for LGBTQIA+ athletes are formed by cisheterosexist policies of governments or other institutions, which leads to them becoming more prone to experience sexual violence. However, interestingly, this is a result of society's cultures and norms — with a cisheteronormative nature — setting social standards. Thus, this means the renormalisation of social standards in sports cultures will create an inclusive community for cisgender and LGBTQIA+ athletes.

2.2 Psychological factors

The second group of risk factors contains factors relating to an athlete's personality characteristics influencing how the athlete deals with life events. In other words, underlying individual dispositions influence the behaviour and experiences of athletes. Seven psychological factors increasing the risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports were found by Van Voorthuizen [16]: altruism, agreeableness, naivety, self-esteem, quietness and neurodiversity. With this, it must be noted that there is so far from no to little support in the existing scientific literature for these risk factors. Therefore, the explanation of their emergence is limited to a theoretical level and needs to be further researched.

2.2.1 Altruism

Athletes acting upon the needs of others without benefitting themselves are displaying altruistic behaviours. Athletes in the study by van Voorthuizen et al. [16] described their altruistic behaviour as being ready for others at the expense of themselves; they ignored themselves and felt the need to help others. Despite altruistic actions being taken with their best intent, it results in greater proneness to experiencing sexual violence. This is — based on a consequentialist perspective — due to an

imbalance of costs and benefits for the two individuals involved [36]. The costs are for the altruistic actor (i.e., the athlete) and the benefits for the receiver (i.e., the perpetrator of sexual violence). In other words, altruistic athletes offer themselves in their relationship with a (possible) perpetrator who takes advantage of their best intentions for humans. If situations like these keep occurring over time, altruistic athletes are likely to see this as normal behaviour. As a result, they might lose the potential to signal their risk of experiencing sexual violence. This, in turn, increases the risk of these athletes to experience sexual violence in sports.

2.2.2 Agreeableness

Individuals perceived as agreeable display different types of behaviours such as being kind, considerate, likeable, cooperative and helpful. They are often labelled as friendly and prosocial. Individuals who have higher levels of prosocial motivation offer more help to different kinds of victims across a wider range of situations due to their agreeable behavioural nature [37]. However, such as altruism, athletes who tend to behave agreeably could be easily misused given their prosocial intentions. These athletes can be primed to engage in any behaviour related to sexual violence — called grooming — due to their willingness to help and concern for others [38, 39]. The greatest risk for agreeable athletes to be groomed is at the stage in which perpetrators try to establish trust and friendship with the athlete [38]. After trust and friendship are established, the perpetrator breaks down the athlete's barriers to comply with sexual violence. For example, *via* the foot-in-the-door technique [40]. Perpetrators start building trust and friendship by first asking for something relatively small that is in all probability to be accepted by the athlete (especially if they tend to be agreeable). Hereafter, athletes are more inclined to accept further requests resulting in perpetrators increasing their requests to eventually reach their goal: sexual violence.

2.2.3 Naivety

Athletes likely to act naïve are at risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports. This risk factor is highly complex given its influence on expectations and explanations of actions and minds of the self and others (e.g., motivations, desires and beliefs) as part of an individual's cognitive development [41]. During the cognitive development in childhood, the underlying mechanism of naivety — Theory of Mind (ToM) — develops. It is 'the ability to reason about mental states and understand intentions, dispositions, emotions and beliefs of both oneself and others' ([25], p. 206). In other words, it helps an individual understand others by correctly interpreting cues of their mental state and making sense of actions (i.e., mindreading). This information provides insight into how to respond to the other. However, this so-called mindreading is difficult for people whose behaviours are influenced by naivety. They might find it difficult to make the right choices, are too optimistic or have trouble with overseeing consequences in social interactions. Despite their best intent, these people are often perceived as gullible, silly or (too) trusting in others. Difficulties in correctly estimating others result in an increased opportunity to be groomed and to experience sexual violence. Athletes might not perceive the perpetrator's grooming actions as wrong since perpetrators ensure athletes believe that they want it themselves as well [24]. Thus, important cues of awareness of possible grooming or sexual violence practices may remain unnoticed by athletes likely to act naïve.

2.2.4 Self-esteem

The development of self-esteem in individuals is a life-span trajectory and is a relatively stable — but not fully invariable — trait while an individual goes through life. An individual's self-esteem is formed by their subjective evaluation of their worthiness [42]. Interestingly, self-esteem can function as a predictor and outcome of experiencing sexual violence (e.g., [43, 44]). Self-esteem as a risk factor is seen as unfulfiled needs, possibly conflict and competing needs according to Baumeister [45]. These needs are formed by an individual's self-knowledge used to evaluate their worthiness. Together with this, the absence of positive views of themselves also contributes to low self-esteem. However, more importantly, this is not inherent to the presence of negative views by individuals with low self-esteem. As stated by Baumeister [45], 'if one can see one's shortcomings, others may see them, too'. Perpetrators of sexual violence can misuse an athlete's low self-esteem by interpreting it as a lack of competence to the rejection of others. Perpetrators contribute to athletes' self-esteem through an accurate appraisal of one's abilities in sports that is likely to positively influence the athlete's subjective evaluation of their worthiness. When this accurate appraisal either contributes to the athlete's self-knowledge or the absence of positive views, this behaviour contributes to building trust and friendship as part of the earlier-mentioned grooming process. As a result, their risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports increases.

2.2.5 Quietness

Quietness is a typical behaviour often associated with the personality traits introversion and shyness. According to Jung and Baynes [46], introverts are engaged with their internal world of feelings, thoughts and emotions and are more inclined to turn their attention inward. This behaviour might be perceived by others as being shy. However, the behaviours of these two traits are incorrectly compared. Cain [47] explains the difference as shyness being 'the fear of social disapproval or humiliation, while introversion is a preference for environments that are not overstimulating' (p. 12). Nevertheless, the comparison of the two traits is understandable due to both tending to turn their attention inward. Van Voorthuizen [16] identified quietness as a risk factor for experiencing sexual violence in sports. Quiet people could be perceived as withdrawing from and seeking the avoidance of communication when possible. In other words, quiet athletes could be more likely to withhold from disclosing sexual violence. However, it remains unclear what causes this association. Could it be that introvert, because they engage with their internal world, are perceived as people who do not speak up easily, and therefore, possibly contributing to a delayed disclosure of sexual violence? And would this be similar for shy athletes? Or would their fear of social disapproval and humiliation result in a greater tendency to conform to sexual violence? To gain more insight into this risk factor, further research is necessary.

2.2.6 Neurodiversity

Lastly, athletes dealing with an emotional disorder are at greater risk of experiencing sexual violence. To ensure the inclusion of all athletes with a wide range of causes and consequences of emotional disorders (e.g., autism, ADHD depression),

the terminology of neurodiversity[3] will be maintained. It is used as an umbrella term to include all athletes whose brain differences affect how their brain works related to a range of mental functions (e.g., sociability, learning and mood attention; [48]). Ultimately, it affects an athlete's risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports. In sports, studies found a high prevalence of neurodivergent athletes experiencing any form of sexual violence (e.g., [29]). However, neurodiversity as a risk factor has only been studied in the context of daily life regarding exclusion from education and employment, the need for personal assistance with daily living, reduced physical and emotional defences, communication barriers that hamper the reporting of violence, societal stigma and discrimination [49, 50]. But they found a high prevalence in studies about sports. Therefore, it remains unclear to what extent these risk factors are generalisable in the sports context.

2.3 Social factors

The third category of risk factors is about social interactions formed by norms and values in the environment of an athlete. These factors are important factors for nurturing the athlete and their consequential development (e.g., upbringing). In total, seven social factors — three about the athletes' upbringing (interpersonal relationships, incest and pressure to perform at home) and four about the athletes' sports environment (power, elite sports, tunnel vision and isolation) — were found by Van Voorthuizen [16] to increase the risk of experiencing sexual violence in sports.

2.3.1 Interpersonal relations at home

A child's attachment influences not only one's behaviour regarding intimate caregiving and receiving relationships with 'attachment figures', such as parents but also children or romantic partners [51]. When a child is securely attached to their parent, the child freely explores the world without experiencing distress. Together with a child's confidence in their attachment figure's availability, the individual seeks support, protection and comfort in times of distress: it is their safe haven. However, once these figures do not provide a safe base and haven to the child (e.g., parents being insensitive, physically or emotionally unavailable, rejecting the child's need) insecure attachment develops. Insecurely attached children show behavioural patterns formed by clingy behaviour, immature over(in)dependency, preoccupation with attachment figures and limited exploration due to unfulfiled emotional needs [52]. Thus, from an early age, they become dependent or feel stress and anxiety. Given the attachment style's influence on the need for intimacy and proximity in relationships, an impaired attachment — lack of warmth of their primary caregiver — results in a higher risk of experiencing sexual violence (e.g., [53–55]). Specifically, individuals with attachment anxiety are argued as being more vulnerable targets for sexual violence given their need for approval, preoccupation with relationships and continuous sensitivity to threats of abandonment and rejection [54]. Moreover, they are more likely to use sex as a way to meet their love and intimacy needs: sex and love are mistaken to be the same. In sports, athletes with unsafe attachments could seek for fulfilment of their emotional needs at attachment figures in their sports environment (e.g., coaches).

[3] In this perspective, one should hold the assumption that there is not a 'normal' or 'healthy' brain or mind, and therefore, neurodiversity is natural and part of human diversity. Opposite to neurodiversity is neurotypicality: individuals who do not have a diagnosis or neurodivergent condition [48].

This increases their risk of experiencing sexual violence in case there are bad intentions regarding fulfilling emotional needs. It could contribute to the grooming process, and thus, sexual violence is likely to occur.

2.3.2 Incest at home

Besides a child's attachment influencing their development, experiences of sexual abuse are also a disrupting factor. Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as 'any unwanted and non-consensual sexual behaviours occurring before the age of 16 years with a perpetrator who is at least 5 years older than the victim at the time of the abuse' ([56], p. 352). Forms of CSA can differ in the frequency, duration or type of contact of which incest is one of them. One specific form is incest is defined as sexual contact (i.e., activities) between a child and a close relative (e.g., brother/sister, parent, uncle/aunt and grandfather/−mother) [57]. According to studies, individuals who experience CSA are more prone to revictimisation of sexual violence [56]. After CSA, the child's sense of self and interpersonal relationships is disrupted causing a wide range of behavioural, cognitive and affective impairments. Consequently, they experience difficulties in making sense of the abuse, decisions about relationships and evaluating risky sexual situations. Next to a negative effect on their self-esteem, they obtain tendencies to blame themselves for the abuse and have greater needs to be in and maintain a relationship with a male. These consequences — difficulties in coping, internal attributions, insecure attachment and hyperfeminine personality — are seen as instigations of revictimization based on Gold et al.'s theoretical model [58]. However, an athlete's previous experiences of incest as a risk for revictimization of sexual violence in sports can only be theorised given the current lack of scientific research into this risk factor.

2.3.3 Pressure to perform

Parents acting out of line — based on a child's perspective — are affecting one's sports experience. They can lose sight of their child's reason to participate in sports and can — either consciously or unconsciously — put pressure on their child's sports performance [59]. Too much pressure decreases the child's motivation and enjoyment to participate in sports [60]. Based on Lee's [61] distinction of two types of emotionally over-involved parents — the excitable and the fanatical parent — the fanatical parent inappropriately increases the pressure to perform as opposed to the excitable. Their behaviours are of a controlling and confrontational nature due to their preoccupation with winning and losing and, therefore, not considering the child's best interest. They believe their child is only participating in sports to win, want to gain status by and obtain recognition for their performance or become a professional athlete. As a result, the child's psychological needs — formed by autonomy, competence and relatedness — are unfulfiled by its parents [62] fulfilment of these needs is important for a child's intrinsic motivation to participate in sports [63]. Consequently, these children feel frustrated and need replacement and compensation from others who can fulfil their psychological needs (i.e., attachment figures, such as peers or coaches) [64]. Ultimately, a maladaptive cycle of behavioural patterns is likely to occur preventing athletes from making decisions and acting in their own best interest. In turn, it will make them vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual violence perpetrated by attachment figures in sports associations who can fulfil their psychological needs.

2.3.4 Power

Power is an interesting phenomenon influencing dynamics in sports. Given it is the third pedagogical environment of children, the coach-athlete relationship is of importance [65]. The exertion of the power of coaches in this relationship sets the tone for developing a sports culture that either contributes to or prevents the existence of sexual violence in sports. Through awareness of power as a circulating concept, coaches can positively contribute to the child's pedagogical development. For example, by applying power in the coach-athlete relationship as a social function in a shared power arrangement to enhance the athlete's well-being and performance, for example, stimulating the athlete's autonomy [66]. However, negative consequences for athletes occur once coaches see power as an inclusive entity of being a coach. By exhibiting power over athletes, coaches place themselves in a dominant position as opposed to the athlete's submissive [67]. As a result, athletes become dependent on the coach (e.g., their sports performance), and this can be misused to eventually achieve their goal: sexual violence [68, 69]. St-Pierre et al. [70] studied the modus operandi of coaches who perpetrated sex offences in Canada: half of them had an authoritarian coaching style that made athletes feel intimidated. Behaviours, such as negative feedback, directive communication and focus on performance as the only goal are typical for this coaching style [71]. Moreover, athletes coached by an authoritarian coaching style coach are more likely to experience sexual harassment [72]. Altogether, power in itself is not a risk factor for athletes experiencing sexual violence: an imbalance of power in the coach-athlete relationship is.

2.3.5 Elite sports

Elite athletes are part of an exclusive group of athletes and are 'one who has superior athletic talent, undergoes specialised training, receives expert coaching and is exposed to early competition' ([60], p. 122). Besides their exclusive character in the nature of their athletic ability and young age, they also share different experiences in their sports participation [73]. In other words, the environment created to develop elite (child) athletes is unique. In elite sports, athletes are placed in an environment, prioritising performance and winning as part of their sports career. However, prioritising this success can go beyond the athlete's well-being. In that case, problematic practices occur putting the athlete's safety at risk resulting in a higher risk of the occurrence of (sexual) violence [74]. The set expectation of this performance environment is contributing to the normalisation of (sexual) violence while participating in sports resulting in a higher chance of problematic practices remaining under the radar [75]. Therefore, actors involved in the elite athlete's sports environment should emphasise focusing on the person behind the athlete: the athlete-centred approach.

2.3.6 Tunnel vision on sports and isolation

The last two at-risk factors to experience sexual violence in sports are athletes who set aside everything for their performance and athletes who are (socially) isolated. Once athletes are performing sports on a higher competition level, it is more likely for their lives to become unbalanced compared to peers performing sports on a lower level. This is due to particular sacrifices the athlete and their family are making for the athlete to be able to perform on this level [74]. In other words, the athlete sets aside everything for their performance. However, the danger about this is to be placed in

a one-dimensionality context: solely their sports. This can result in diminishing, for example, educational goals and social relationships [76]. The situation can worsen once the coach is taking over the role of a parental figure, resulting in the athlete's isolation from their family. Once an athlete's personal life is infiltrated in this manner, the chance of experiencing sexual violence becomes greater given the presence of opportunity [15, 77]. These problematic practices in sports can be normalised by actors performing techniques of isolation, such as sessions behind closed doors, a lack of friendships outside the sports (e.g., resulting in the impossibility of comparing 'normal' behaviours with peers) and the creation of a culture of silence and retribution [78]. *Via* these ways, opportunities for sexual violence to occur are risen.

2.4 In summary

Through the biopsychosocial profile, potential risk factors of athletes experiencing sexual violence in sports are identified. By elaborating on and understanding the possible origin of these risk factors, insights can be taken into account in developing preventive strategies, as well as supporting existing (non-disclosed) victims of sexual violence. By creating awareness of risk factors *via* this profile, future measures should require to make athletes more resilient to protect them from experiencing sexual violence. With this, it is important to note the need for research to gain more (substantial) support for cause-effect relationships of the above risk factors. Additionally, the risk factors of this profile could be correlated with each other (e.g., agreeableness with altruism, gender with sexual identity, attachment with incest and tunnel vision with elite sports). The next part focuses on empowering athletes stimulating their resistance and preventing them from becoming a victim of sexual violence. First, a general explanation of resilience is given. Hereafter, protective factors for empowering athletes will be discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with an existing intervention aiming to create a safe sports climate protecting athletes from experiencing sexual violence.

3. The psychology of resilience

For decades, the definition and operationalisation of resilience have been disputed [79], and as a result, scholars have written extensively about this psychological construct. The concept of resilience emerges from developmental psychology [80–82] and focuses on how individuals and communities overcome adversities and trauma [83]. More specifically, resilience is associated with human developmental processes that increase a person's sense of well-being when encountering adversities [84, 85] such as positive life outcomes by actively focusing on engagement, purpose and perseverance [84]. Resilience is, thus, a dynamic process influenced by multiple temporary related elements [86].

3.1 Psychological resilience

Resilience is not about *whether* an individual encounters adversity, but it is about *how* one deals with this adversity. The *how* is about 'the role of mental processes and behaviour in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors', called psychological resilience ([80], p. 675), ([81], p. 16). It is, thus, about various psychological processes influencing one's

resilience. The first and most well-known and discussed process of being resilient is that of 'recovery', meaning people can bounce back after being negatively influenced by a stressor [84]. The idea centres around individuals who eventually experience well-being in the face of adversity. Therefore, it is a process that involves negative experiences and stress, and the extent to which people respond and recover following onset. Resilient people show a shorter recovery period wherein they quickly regain equilibrium in psychological aspects of life [84]. Like the pathway of recovery, but different in the outcome, is the pathway of 'growth'. Whilst recovery argues for people to 'bounce back', the concept of growth implies that people function even better than they did before encountering the stressor [87]. As such, the adversity eventually leads to increased well-being and better overall functioning in life. It can be imagined that this construct of growth is a desirable outcome when facing adversity. Finally, the equally important concept of 'sustainability' entails that people remain stable and healthy after being exposed to stressors [88]. So, in contradiction with recovery and growth, people do not experience major distress in their lives and instead remain stable. For instance, they can maintain social relations in the same way as before a stressful event. This pathway entails the sustainability of values and goals while being confronted with acute and chronic difficulties [89, 90]. In other words, sustainability refers to the ability individuals possess to maintain their physical and mental health despite constantly changing circumstances marked by potentially threatening challenges. Altogether, someone's resilience can, thus, be cognitively different with various personal outcomes. However, what is influencing these differences in resilience?

3.2 The role of protective factors in resilience

During the transition from childhood into adulthood, an individual's resilience keeps developing through emerging opportunities and vulnerabilities within the personal environment [91]. This is not only a very dynamic and challenging period but it can also be very influential in altering the life course. According to Fergus and Zimmerman [92], understanding healthy development during these years is crucial for fostering resilience by focusing on strengths (i.e., protective factors) rather than shortcomings (i.e., risk factors). Risk factors are putting the individual at risk and should be considered in a changing environment, such as resilience itself [93]. The presence of protective factors can either help towards a positive outcome or diminish the negative outcome of adversities resulting from risk factors [94, 95]. In other words, protective factors counterbalance risks and lead to positive outcomes. Protective factors can be both assets (i.e., positive individual characteristics such as competence, coping skills and self-efficacy) and resources (i.e., positive external factors such as parental support, adult mentoring or community organisations that promote positive youth development) [92]. Importantly, the culturally sensitive aspect of protective factors — and specifically the resources — contributing to empowering individuals and increasing their resilience should be emphasised. Reid et al. [96] stated that the individual's culture and context shape the exhibition of an individual's resilience. Similarly, society's understanding of resilience, based on social norms, can have detrimental impacts on marginalised people or groups, such as racial minorities. Cultural norms surrounding the individual should be considered in determining protective factors of resilience. Therefore, resilience should be seen as a process that fits the individual's needs to heal and not society's needs.

3.3 Resilience in sports: Empowering athletes

So far, in the field of sports, resilience has been studied regarding sport performance. These studies focused on understanding psychological processes to overcome adversities in sports performance [e.g., [82, 83]]. However, the presence of resilience to prevent or overcome the darker side of sports — experiencing sexual violence — remains limitedly explored. In the past decade, researchers in this field focused on identifying the prevalence of sexual violence in sports around the world and provided insights into possible risks resulting in sexual violence. However, they explicitly focused on the role of the coach and the sports environment as risk factors and are, therefore, missing an — if not the most — important aspect of safe sports: the athlete. The identified risk factors of the biopsychosocial profile by Van Voorthuizen et al. [16] that are discussed above, fill this gap by applying the athlete-centreed approach.

3.3.1 Empowerment as a protective asset

In line with this athlete-centred approach, athletes can be empowered through personal characteristics — functioning as protective assets — to either prevent the occurrence of sexual violence or to overcome the consequences of these experiences. Existing interventions have shown the successfulness of competence, self-efficacy and prosocial norms as elements stimulating positive youth development [95, 97–100], and thus, empowering them. Therefore, these empowerment elements are placed as protective factors in the context of sexual violence in sports.

The first protective factor, competence, entails the experience of mastery and effectiveness in one's activities, including both social and physical abilities [63] and can be developed through obtaining new knowledge, skills and/or attitudes. It is a central component of self-concept (i.e., the perception of themselves) and provides the athlete with insight into their ability [101]. Given our focus on psychological resilience, we view competence in the light of social abilities. Athletes can be empowered by increasing their competence to become aware of sexual violence either as a prevention measure or by contributing to earlier disclosure of sexual violence. By obtaining new knowledge and attitudes about — for example, (unfolding) sexual violence practices to be recognised by the athlete, or what to do after sexually violent experiences — the athlete's empowerment is strengthened. Simultaneously, an athlete's competence is counterbalancing the risk factor of self-esteem given their close relatedness.

The second protective factor is self-efficacy. It entails an individual's belief in their capacity to behave in a certain way to attain specific goals or have an influence on their environment [102]. It is their self-belief resulting in feeling capable of dealing with internal (e.g., blaming thoughts) and external demands (e.g., taking physical action). Self-efficacy as a preventive measure for sexual violence can be formed by skills training (e.g., decision-making skills). Through skills training, they obtain a secure feeling of their ability. Additionally, after experiencing sexual violence, athletes will believe in being able to cope with adversities (e.g., getting their life back together) when self-efficacy is a coping mechanism [103]. As a result, self-efficacy can also counterbalance the risk factor of self-esteem given the subjective aspect of this concept as mentioned before.

The third and last protective factor is the athlete's social norms. These are rules and guidelines about how one is expected to behave in a particular social context. It is, thus, a powerful tool to shape behaviour. Knowledge gained from social norms in

sports contributes to the acceptability of the occurrence of these events. To establish safe sports — and thus, not accepting sexual violence — prosocial norms must become the standard in this environment. Prosocial norms are a subset of norms focusing on healthy, positive, ethical and prosocial standards [104]. Forms of prosocial norms often included in interventions are reciprocity, responsibility, volunteerism and altruism [105]. Theoretically seen, prosocial norms can counterbalance risk factors such as the pressure to perform, imbalances of power, isolation and altruism. Through the establishment of these prosocial norms, athletes become (more) aware of unacceptable behaviour in sports. Altogether, these elements empower athletes to prevent themselves from sexual violence or serve their recovery, growth or sustainability as their psychological resilience.

3.3.2 Social support as a protective resource

Social support is an external resource contributing to the resilience of an athlete. Social support can be manifested in diverse ways through its structure (i.e., the size, extent and frequency) and functionality (i.e., the perceived helpfulness and the quality) [106]. It has been found as a key protective factor functioning in two ways. It is associated with recovery, growth or sustainability after experiencing sexual violence [107]. If an athlete experiences sexual violence, the content of social support to overcome this adversity can differ. Some athletes might have needs to be fulfiled through emotional support (e.g., being loved or respected after experiencing sexual violence), and others might need material support (e.g., services to help with practical problems, such as an STD exam) or cognitive support (e.g., information sufficiency to cope with adversities provided by a local organisation). All these different forms of social support can be obtained by multiple systems, including relationships with family members, friends or other actors within the community [108–110]. For example, parents bonding with their child after experiencing child sexual abuse is powerful in fostering resilience and preventing re-victimisation [111]. Similar effects have been found through the support of fellow survivors. The empathy and belief of other survivors of sexual violence promote resilience in coping with daily life by reducing feelings of isolation, regaining self-esteem and restoring the capacity to maintain and build relationships [112, 113]. All these actors in the social network of the survivor are crucial to the resilience process of the victims to rebuild trust and feel safe again to restore from the violent experience. On the other side, the presence of social support can result in positive outcomes: prevention of sexual violence. Existing literature identified positive parental monitoring [108, 111] and social support from peers [108] as protective factors that decrease the risk of experiencing sexual violence in the first place. From a social learning perspective, an athlete's familial context contributes to the acceptability of (sexual) violence. Violence will not be normalised by the athlete if the athlete has been raised with beliefs about not tolerating violence. Next to this, forms of positive parental monitoring — such as effective discipline, open communication and knowledge of the athlete's activities — reduce risks, and thus, serve as a protective factor. When considering these social protective factors, it must be noted that there are other possible protective factors within the (sports) environment of an athlete given the scientific underexposure of resilience to sexual violence in sports. Based on insights gathered from the identified risk factors of Van Voorthuizen's bio-psychosocial profile [16], additional protective factors could be identified in future research. For example, coaches educated about sexual violence, a confidant in a sports club, the presence of parents during practices, or a support organisation, such as the

Centre of Safe Sports in the Netherlands [114]. However, the actual potential of these protective factors is yet to be determined by research.

4. Interventions and future recommendations

Whilst altering the vulnerabilities of athletes at risk of sexual violence might be complex, it is valuable to make use of interventions focused on enhancing protective factors. In these interventions, it is important to make use of the existing assets and resources of an athlete and their social environment and increase those [115]. Additionally, to counterbalance possible existing risk factors of athletes with protective factors, interventions should aim to reduce risk factors by focusing on clusters of behaviour as opposed to specific problems. In other words, the athlete at risk and actors in their sports environment should be viewed as holistic and targeted in these interventions. As resilience builds up from childhood and develops further in adulthood, resilience may be fostered among children and young adults through interventions [116]. Due to the complex nature and dynamics of risk and protective factors, it is desirable to prevent risks by intervening in early childhood [95]. Intervening in the resilience capacity of athletes from an early age is — theoretically seen — easy to establish given the number of opportunities since a lot of children become active in sports at a young age. With this, it is important to prevent early interventions from causing (young) athletes to think they are the issue of being at risk of experiencing sexual violence. The goal of these interventions is to change the standards of the sports environment in which athletes participate in sports. In other words, the climate in sports should be developed on a pedagogical base to positively contribute to the athlete's health, well-being and social cohesion in which resilience can be (further) developed. Once a positive athlete-centred climate is present, athletes can participate in sports with a caring and safe foundation. Ultimately, the climate serves as a protective factor for at-risk athletes experiencing sexual violence in sports.

4.1 Youth sports compass

The darker side of sports is not only formed by experiences of sexual violence. Unfortunately, the scope of the issue is broader since physical and emotional violence also takes place in sports [e.g., [32]]. Currently, the emphasis in sports is too much on performance and winning. Therefore, transgressive behaviours — such as sexual violence — are likely to occur due to actors in sports viewing the athlete as their 'product'. In other words, the athlete reflects national pride and boosts the coach's ego (e.g., 'This is because of me') after being successful. However, sports should provide (youth) athletes with a great opportunity to develop in many ways. Thus, it is necessary to steer in the present sports climate from a performance culture (focus on winning) towards a performance culture in which the athlete's holistic development is central.

The youth sports compass is a framework developed by Schipper-van Veldhoven et al. [117], aiming to improve youth sports as a strong developmental context for youth athletes[2]. It is developed to provide a safe sports environment for youth athletes to be implemented by sports clubs in close collaboration with proximate professionals for further support (e.g., municipalities). The compass contains a holistic approach by focusing on the micro, meso and macro levels of the sports community, as well as all possible

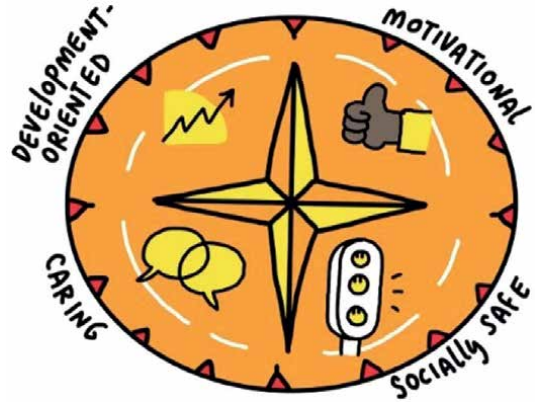

Figure 2.
Youth sports compass.

stakeholders. The base of the compass is formed by theoretical principles[4] [118], and it contains four pillars (see **Figure 2**[5]): caring, motivational, developmental and social safety. First, through the caring pillar, actors in sports clubs contribute to the children's feeling of need to belong by caring for them and acknowledging their worthiness. As an example, social support can be created by building a community by fostering the 'we-feeling' among the group of athletes by communicating in terms of 'we' to them. Second, the intrinsic motivation and the pleasure of sports participation of youth athletes can be increased through the motivational pillar. One way to contribute to this is if actors within sports clubs (e.g., a coach) apply positive coaching: encourage and support them by emphasising their accomplishments. Third, the developmental pillar is fulfiled once exercises and activities are adjusted to suit the athlete's performance level. By keeping an eye on the developmental process of the athlete (as opposed to winning and achieving), performance and personal development in the best interest of the youth athlete can be balanced. Lastly, and most importantly, transgressive behaviours (such as sexual violence practices) are prevented if the socially safe pillar of the compass is applied in daily practices at sports clubs. Emphasising sportsmanship and respect for interactions with actors in their social environment is important. For instance, being a behavioural example positively influences the athletes' attitudes towards others.

Altogether, the youth sports compass can be of help in determining the course of sports clubs towards a positive and safe sports climate providing protective factors for athletes at risk of experiencing sexual violence. Through this compass, the (pro)social norms of an athlete's sports environment are reset and serve as a protective factor. Through an (active) implementation of actions within the compass pillars, an athlete's awareness of transgressive practices increases, contributing to an increase in competence and possibly self-efficacy as well. Simultaneously, the social support system of an athlete is increasing given the holistic approach of the youth sport compass. Ultimately, physical movement is not the only learning method for athletes anymore: athletes are stimulated in their social and mental development as well.

[4] More insight about the theoretical substantiation of this compass can be obtained through this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDvKBFEnSuM.

[5] More insight about the working method of the compass can be obtained through this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHiIJIQ5COE.

5. Conclusion

The mindset of many actors in the sports community has changed towards demanding higher criteria for the guidance of youth in sports. Therefore, it is now the time to gain further understanding of the risk factors in the biopsychosocial profile, as well as protective factors for athletes at risk of experiencing sexual violence. By identifying these factors, athletes are centred on becoming resilient towards adversities that could be faced while participating in their sports. Ultimately, empowered athletes and increased social support contribute to creating a safe sports environment for athletes.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Edited by Patricia Snell Herzog

This edited volume investigates young people within their social contexts. The focus is on engaging young people as they transition from youth into young adulthood. Key advantages of this book are its embodiment of interdisciplinarity in gathering research across a range of diverse methods, theories, settings, and countries. The volume begins with reviews of key theories and methods in understanding young people within their social networked contexts of generosity, networks, identity, and ethnic heritage. The second section includes chapters attending to education and work as contexts for transitions to adulthood, counseling, meaning, and aesthetics from high school to college and into workplaces. The third section includes chapters studying community engagement and the well-being of young people, including social support, meaning in life, religiosity, spirituality, stress coping, yoga, and sports. The diverse topics addressed in this edited volume are generosity, philanthropy, voluntary action, social networks, social identity, personhood, ethnic heritage, post-colonialism, intersectionality, personality, lived experiences, informal economy, sustainability, pandemic, family support, educational counselors, motivation, "Not in Education, Employment, or Training" (NEET), everyday aesthetics, built environment, generativity, community, adult allies, youth engagement, life satisfaction, spiritual identity, religious affiliation, stress, practicing yoga, sexual violence, athletes, sports climate, pressures to perform, resilience, and neurodiversity. Disciplines span economics, business, education, sociology, psychology, medical science, geography, journalism, architecture, engineering, science and technology, and applied sciences. Methods include quantitative surveys, qualitative in-depth interviews, life course biographies, ethnographic case studies, bibliometric analysis, and integrative reviews. Young people are investigated across thirteen countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Yemen, Ghana, Bahrain, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Canada, Romania, and the Netherlands.

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