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Stories to Challenge the Status Quo - Experiences of Black Minority Ethnic Social Care Students in Ireland

Margaret Fingleton
Technological University Dublin, margaret.fingleton@tudublin.ie

STORIES TO CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO

EXPERIENCES OF BLACK MINORITY ETHNIC SOCIAL CARE STUDENTS IN IRELAND

Margaret Fingleton

Student number: D16123972

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Technological University Dublin

Supervisor: Dr Mairead Seymour

School of Social Sciences, Law and Education

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Abstract

This study examines Black Minority Ethnic social care students' experiences in Ireland and is located within the parameters of a number of key global events that occurred in the last decade. It provides critical insights into the students lived experiences of migration, resettlement, employment, higher education and social care scholarship.

Theoretically the thesis is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) drawing on the key tenets of race as a social construction, interest convergence, White privilege, storytelling and intersectionality. A participatory research methodology was adopted which informed all phases of the study. Using a combined semi-structured interview/storytelling method the experiences of 21 female Black Minority Ethnic social care students in five colleges in Ireland were explored and core themes of loss, fear, distrust and adaptions were identified.

By hearing, amplifying and sharing the experiences and voices of these participants, the research highlights the intersectional and cumulative impact of structural, institutional, systemic and personal racism and oppression in Ireland. The discussion considers the core themes of loss, fear and distrust and assesses the implications for Black Minority Ethnic social care students living, working and studying in Ireland.

The lessons learned provide the basis for recommendations targeted at wider society, higher education and social care scholarship and signpost considerations for future research. A key action stemming from the study is the development of the Race Equity Informed Common Space community of practice currently piloted in TU Dublin. This action, based on collaboration and participation, will advance some of the lessons learned from the research.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work. This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for graduate study by research of the Technological University Dublin and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution. The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the TU Dublin's guidelines for ethics in research. TU Dublin has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis be duly acknowledged.

Signature: *Margaret Light*   Date: 28/11/2022

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

BAME Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

BME Black Minority Ethnic

CAO Central Applications Office

CoP Community of Practice

CRT Critical Race Theory

CSO Central Statistics Office

DARE Disability Access Route to Education DfE Department for the Economy

DoE Department of Education

EDI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

FE Further Education

HE Higher Education

HEA Higher Education Authority

HEAR Higher Education Access Route

HEIs Higher Education Institutions

IoT Institute of Technology

IUA Irish Universities Association

MCRI Migrants Rights Centre Ireland

NASC Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

SDGs Sustainable Development Goals

SUSI Student Universal Support Ireland

THEA Technological Higher Education Association

TU Dublin Technological University Dublin

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Glossary

AkiDwA is a national network of migrant women living in Ireland. Akina Dada wa Africa means sisterhood in Swahili.

Asylum seeker: Asylum applicant awaiting a decision on an application for refugee status or other form of international protection.

Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME): Terminology used to describe people who are Black and Minority Ethnic or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

Black Minority Ethnic (BME): Terminology used to describe people of non-white descent.

Cultural Identity: is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group. It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception and is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture.

Direct Provision (DP) is a system of asylum seeker accommodation used in the Republic of Ireland.

Globalisation is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. Globalization has accelerated since the 18th century due to advances in transportation and communication technology.

Neoliberal policies promote free-market capitalism, deregulation, and reduction in government spending

Interculturalism: means not only accepting the principles of equality, rights, values and abilities but also actively promoting cross-cultural interaction, collaboration and exchange (Barrett, 2003.p.4)

Intercultural competence: Range of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills that lead to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures.

Microaggression: Is a comment or action that negatively targets a marginalized person or group and can be intentional or accidental.

Migrants: People changing their residence to or from a given area (usually a country) during a given time period (Eurostat, 2015)

Refugees: A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.

Social Identity: Social identity is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership(s).

Social integration: "Social integration is a dynamic and structured process in which all members participate in dialogue to achieve and maintain peaceful social relations.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores Black Minority Ethnic social care students' experiences of migration transitions, higher education and social care scholarship in Ireland. The introduction chapter provides an overview and rationale for the study and is divided into five sections. The first section offers contextual background to the study by reflecting on global and national migration and the movement of people for safety, work and education. The second section describes the landscape of higher education and situates Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. The third section focuses on the research question, explains the aim and objectives of this study and provides a rationale for exploring the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. The fourth section is an autobiographical reflection of the researcher. The final section offers a summary breakdown of each chapter of the thesis.

1.2 Context and rationale for the study

This research seeks to explore the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students in Higher Education (HE) in Ireland. Conducting such research is timely given the increase in inward migration to Ireland and subsequent rise in the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students in Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). While there is no empirical data on Black Minority Ethnic social care students to date, anecdotally the numbers of first and second generation Irish students enrolled on social care programmes in Ireland are consistently high. This study is also opportune given the high number of female Black Minority Ethnic social care workers employed in Ireland. Research in Ireland (AkiDwA, 2019; MRCI, 2020; NASC 2007) demonstrates how social care services are increasingly dependent on migrant women as care providers. Many of these workers migrated to

Ireland as refugees or asylum seekers and identified care work as an entry point into the workforce (AkiDwA, 2019). The participants in this study used the terms migrants, asylum seeker and refugee and these were frequently used interchangeably and may not have accurately described their migration status.

Another reason for deciding to research Black Minority Ethnic social care students is that there is limited research on social care students in Ireland. As a result, the researcher will draw on studies and literature about social work students as the professions are closely aligned. Research and literature on Black Minority Ethnic social work students is predominantly from other jurisdictions, in particular the UK. In Ireland, social work and social care are very distinct professions, but in other jurisdictions the categorisation is less differentiated (Lalor & Share, 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that studies on social work students (Cree, 2010; Fairtlough et al. 2014; Hillen & Levy, 2015; Singh, 2005) are relevant to the experiences of social care students in Ireland.

All the participants in this study were female and this reflects the reality of the social care sector where workers are predominantly women. It is estimated that women constitute over 70% of the global health and social care workforce (Gupta, 2019). Cree (2010) states that social work and social care students in the UK are predominantly female often with an interest in human rights and social justice stemming from personal discriminatory experiences. Research by Olusa (2018) on social work students in Ireland report high numbers of female students enrolled. As there is no data on the gender breakdown or numbers of social care students in Ireland, it can be hypothesised the gender of social care students is similar to social work students in Ireland and other jurisdictions. The experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students in Ireland have been researched by Ní Chonaill et al. (2021), Ní Dhuinn & Keane (2021) and Darby (2020). These studies have contributed significantly to scholarship on racism, equality and inclusion in HE in Ireland.

While limited in terms of sample size and application, they provide key data on experiences of students from diverse backgrounds.

This study contributes to academic literature on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students. The research provides new knowledge about the impact of migratory transitions, gender, motherhood and intergenerational learning on students journeys to and through HE. It also contribute to literature on Black Minority Ethnic social care students experiences of HE, including perspectives on the wider college environment, teaching and learning, socialising, groupwork, placements and identified supports. This study also contributes to the body of literature relating to methodological approaches when conducting research on minority ethnic groups. By engaging a participatory research approach and utilising CRT as a theoretical/analytical framework, it demonstrates how issues of ethics, unconscious bias, power, control can be addressed in a distinctively sensitive and appropriate manner. This unique approach can be applied to research in social care and allied professions as it reflects the core ethical principles of the sector.

1.2.1 Migration and the global movement of people

Evidence of Black people living in Ireland can be traced back to the 1800s, but until the 1990s the Black community in Ireland consisted of small numbers of predominantly male students, visitors and medical professionals (Garner, 2004; Lentin, 2004; 2007). The increase of the Black Minority Ethnic population in Ireland coincided with the Celtic tiger era (1997-2009). In 2006, 1.06% of the population identified as Black (CSO, 2006), however, within a decade the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2016) reported an increase of 45% in the Black Irish or Black African categories. The CSO (2016) also noted an increase in the Black Minority Ethnic female population over this period reporting marginally more Black adult women than men residing in Ireland in 2016.

International migration and research on the impact of this global phenomenon has never been more fundamental to social sciences. Central to any discussion about society is the knowledge about its membership and the physical, legislative, economic, social, cultural and linguistic boundaries that apply. Bartram, Poros & Monforte (2014) proposed that societies which experience migration are inevitably quite fluid and perhaps are becoming more indistinct. This observation holds true as the basis for social solidarity and commonality is somewhat less secure on foot of large-scale migration and, as Berry (2006) suggested, can result in uncertainty and discord. While immigration provides economic and social opportunities for migrants and host countries alike, it is a controversial topic and presents many challenges.

The current migration crisis resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the displacement of millions of people in the first five months of 2021 (Walsh & Sumption, 2022). Ireland has committed to accepting Ukrainian refugees without the usual visa requirement processing and at the time of this study, the Irish state anticipate the numbers of Ukrainian refugees to be in excess of 100,000. This response is already having direct and indirect impact on the current asylum and refugee system in Ireland and on those that have or hope to seek refuge and asylum from other countries.

Some have already highlighted the disparity between how Ukrainian refugees (predominantly White) are treated compared to those from the global south (predominantly Black) (Hegarty, 2022). Ukraine nationals availing of Temporary Protection are entitled to work, medical care, education and social welfare supports, whereas international protection applicants do not have the same entitlements while their application is processed, particularly when it comes to the type of accommodation and the rights to work. The double standards and racism inherent in Europe's refugee responses are stark. The Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov identified how refugees

from Ukraine were different "These people are Europeans. ... These people are intelligent; they are educated people … This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists" (Brito, 2022, para 2). The hypocrisy is also evident in the accounts of students and migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia who encountered racist treatment, obstruction, and violence whilst trying to flee Ukraine (Hegarty, 2022). The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres tweeted on February 27th 2022 that "It is important that solidarity is extended without any discrimination based on race, religion or ethnicity". The UN High Commissioner for Refugees stressed that "it is crucial that receiving countries continue to welcome all those fleeing conflicts and insecurity-irrespective of nationality and race" (UNHCR, 2022).

Notwithstanding the current migration crisis resulting from the Ukraine invasion, the global movement of people continues to grow at pace. The workforce in host countries continues to become more diverse, constituted more and more by migrant workers on lower wages and precarious contracts (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2020). In Ireland, migrant workers are currently overrepresented in many low paid sectors, in particular care and domestic work (MRCI, 2013; TASC, 2019). Data from studies in the UK report that the demand for care workers has fuelled global care chains with health and social care agencies actively recruiting migrant workers to fill positions (Hochschild & Ehrenreich, 2010; ILO, 2020; Turnpenny & Hussein, 2022).

The provision of health and social care services by migrant workers has a historic Irish context. As a nation of emigrants, there is a well-documented history of Irish women migrating to the UK and the USA as far back as the 19th century to work as nurses, carers, nannies and domestic servants (Glynn et al., 2015). In more recent times, this trend has reversed and Black Minority Ethnic migrants now provide similar types of care to the

Irish population (Cullen, 2019; MCRI, 2015). The specific areas of work are in care of the elderly, disability services, home care and live in au-pair work, with recent notable Irish government-led recruitment drives in developing countries to fill positions in nursing, social work and allied health and social care services (HSE, 2019).

1.2.2 Landscape of higher education

As with migration, the proliferation of international and migrant students is a worldwide phenomenon and numbers have been steadily increasing in the last decade (Altback et al., 2009; Guri-Rosenblit, 2015; IOM, 2020). The global movement of people has contributed to the increase of student numbers beyond the host country population. This is alongside the growing societal expectation to attend HE both by national and international students (HEA, 2016; Mayblin & Soteri-Proctor, 2011; OECD, 2018). Research on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on student mobility (Buckner et al. 2021; Di Pietro et al. 2020) indicates that the demand from international students continues to increase, despite evidence that programmes can be offered virtually or online indicating that international students are motivated by wider college experiences gained by living in host countries.

It has been difficult to ascertain or quantify the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students in Ireland. Studies commissioned by the HEA (Kempy & Michael, 2021) and Royal Irish Academy (2020) reported that the data collection instruments used by Irish HEIs do not collect information on race or ethnicity. This has resulted in Black Minority Ethnic students categorised only as international or national students. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2019) reported that Ireland does not have sufficient disaggregated data available on minority ethnic groups and expressed concerns about this gap in terms of availability, quality, and use.

Acknowledging the increase in the diversity of the student population and mirroring wider societal concerns about equality, inclusion, and diversity (EDI), HEIs have recognised

the importance of universal design[1], equality, inclusion and diversity in strategies and policies (Bracken & Novak, 2019; Royal Irish Academy (RIA), 2021). Initiatives such as widening participation, access programmes, grant and fee support and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) have supported the increase of Black Minority Ethnic student enrolment in HE in Ireland (RIA), 2021). However, the Higher Education Futures Taskforce (RIA, 2021) reported that approaches to EDI in Irish HEIs have been fragmented and reactive rather than proactive and coordinated. The taskforce recommends that an all-Ireland EDI Charter be developed which includes current targets, Athena Swan[2], Universities of Sanctuary[3] and other EDI initiatives. The Irish University Association (IUA) Charter for Irish Universities (2018) currently prioritises equality and diversity as one of its six core commitments and this is also reflected in the Gender and Diversity statement of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA, 2018).

1.3 The research question

The research question seeks to explore the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in HE, examine what shaped their journey to social care education and analyse the impact this had on their lives. Kempy & Michael (2021) highlighted that data pertaining to Black Minority Ethnic students in Ireland is limited due to the indiscriminate nature of classification, so for this study it was imperative that participants self-identified with the categorisation of Black Minority Ethnic social care student.

The aims of the study are:

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[1] Universal design in education puts high values on diversity, equity, and inclusion. strives to make educational products and environments welcoming, accessible, and usable for everyone.
[2] The Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research.
[3] The Sanctuary Award is an initiative to encourage and celebrate the good practice of universities, colleges and institutes welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants into their university communities and fostering a culture of inclusion for all those seeking sanctuary.

- To investigate the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland and gain understanding of their perspectives on migration, living, working and studying in Ireland.
- To create a space where these experiences can be voiced, heard, discussed, analysed understood and reflected upon.
- To ensure that the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students are represented, and their voices amplified in the discourse of HE and social care.
- To advance lessons learned for HE and social care through engaging a participatory approach and developing a set of actions resulting from the research.

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine perspectives and experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students about living, studying, and working in Ireland.
- To add to the knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities Black Minority Ethnic students encounter in access, participation, progression, placements, and attainment in the Irish HE system.
- To contribute to understanding and the development of equality inclusion and diversity policies and practices in HE and in the social care sector
- To aid the development of culturally competent practices in HE and social care practice.

Research (AkiDwA, 2020; Michael, 2015; NASC, 2019) report that Black Minority Ethnic migrant women experience multiple intersecting layers of discrimination based on their gender, skin colour and nationality in host countries and within their communities. As all the participants in this study were female and self-identified as Black Minority Ethnic, an intersectional perspective, based on the work of critical race theorist Crenshaw (1991), is a core element of this research. Intersectionality provides a basis to question how multiple forms of inequality and identity inter-relate in different contexts and over time.

A participatory research approach (Freire & Ramos, 1970; Hall, 1992; Reason & Bradbury, 2008; White, 1996) was adopted to ensure that the voices of the participants

were prioritised. This approach also contributed to addressing the positionality of the researcher as a White social care lecturer and practitioner. The research used qualitative methodology and combined semi-structured interviews/ storytelling as a method to gather data. Reflective thematic analysis involving the participatory advisory group was used to analyse the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The research is informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1998; Yosso & Solórzano, 2007) and this investigative/analytical framework supports the exploration of the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. The study provides a critique of equality, inclusion, diversity strategies in HE in Ireland (HEA, 2016) by focusing on the voices and lived experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students.

1.4 Autobiographical reflection

I was initially reluctant to include an autobiographical reflection as I felt that the research was about the participants' stories and experiences and not about me. However, I have learned that the "I" is an often-hidden research instrument. Through the reflexive process, I was able to understand why it is necessary to acknowledge and explain about who I am in this research journey.

Growing up in the 1970s on a farm in the Irish midlands did not offer much in terms of exposure to diversity. My first memory of seeing a Black person was at mass in the local village when I was about 10 years old. I was very fortunate to have parents that were peace and justice activists and as members of AFRI[4] and Fairtrade Ireland[5] instilled a sense of social justice into my consciousness from childhood. In my early adulthood I had

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[4] AFRI (Action from Ireland) goal is the promotion of global justice and peace, and the reduction of poverty.
[5] Fairtrade Ireland works with farmers and workers in the Global South to promote fair and sustainable trading practices in developing countries.

the opportunity to travel abroad where I met people of many colours, races and ethnicities and indeed was sometimes the 'other' with my white freckly skin standing out as clearly as that Black man in the church in Laois. Perhaps this was one of the few experiences I had in my life of being the 'outsider' or the 'other' and I can still remember the feelings of being different and not belonging simply because of my skin colour.

Life experiences influenced my engagement in the world and drew me to the social care profession. Becoming a mother made me re-evaluate everything I previously knew and shaped, indeed continually shapes, how I engage, interact and relate in my personal and professional world. Having worked in social care for over 25 years, I witnessed first-hand the increasing direct and indirect racism and discrimination targeted at Black Minority Ethnic workers by staff members, management and service users in social care settings. These incidents often went unchallenged, unreported or were dismissed as minor issues.

Almost a decade ago, I moved from social care practice to work as a lecturer and tutor in HE. Again, I observed racism and discrimination in the college environment, on placements and in the wider social care sector. This surprised me as I expected that HEIs would be places of enlightenment, but there seemed to be little awareness or concern that Black and White students generally did not mix or socialise together. I felt and continue to feel uncomfortable, ashamed and discouraged that this is not being recognised or addressed, especially by us as social care educators.

It was this frustration and discomfort that motivated me to formally research this area further and I decided to enrol as a PhD student in TU Dublin. At the initial scoping stage, I spoke with some Black Minority Ethnic social care students and asked them about the issues that concerned them. These students subsequently became an advisory group for the study. It was from interacting with these student advisors that I realised how little I really knew about the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students as they introduced

me to concepts of White privilege, White fragility, cultural humility, positionality and intersectionality. The participatory research approach resonates well with my values and beliefs and aligns with my training and experience as a social care professional, educator and as a mother.

The advisory group became pivotal to the study and through numerous phone calls, emails, online and in person meetings we discussed, argued, agreed and compromised at each stage of the study. This was lightened by breakfasts, coffees, cakes and chatting about motherhood, social care, politics, education, COVID-19 and family life. Through these interactions, my awareness was heightened about my limitations as a White person in understanding and interpreting the experiences of the participants. The advisors frequently took me to task about language and terminology that I used without consideration – ouch! I kept a personal reflective diary to help process my own feelings, thoughts, learning and positioning in the process. I was also aware of the competing needs of completing the PhD and honouring the participants' stories and subsequent call for action.

Reflections on past experiences illuminate the present and understanding the past not only gives context to the present and future, but grounds an individual in their daily life. These reflections are "ways of perceiving and understanding the self and the world … an ontology, dynamic changing process" (Chinn and Kramer, 2008, p.1). The start of this journey began back sometime in the 1970s in the midlands in Ireland, when I first became aware of difference, inclusion, diversity and inequality. The journey was not always comfortable or safe and at times I was nervous, frightened and became defensive at the prospect of being challenged and questioned about my White privilege and position in Irish society. However, the commitment, investment and bravery of the participatory advisory group over the six years of the study sustained and encouraged me throughout.

I have included a short personal piece in the conclusion which offers some final reflections on my own learning.

1.5 Thesis summary

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and provides contextual discussion to the ever-changing landscape of migration, higher education and social care practice and education. This chapter outlines the research question, aims and objectives of the study and offers a rationale for the need for such research. The voice of Black Minority Ethnic social care students is absent from research in Ireland and this study seeks to redress this gap.

Chapter two explores, discusses and critically evaluates existing literature and scholarship on racism and discrimination, social care as a profession and HE and social care scholarship in contemporary Ireland. It sets the scene by examining the global phenomenon of migration and explores literature on how this relates to gender, motherhood, care work and intersectionality (Brown & Braun 2007; Chant & Radcliffe, 1992; Parrenas, 2001). It provides an argument for engaging Critical Race theory (CRT) as a theoretical, investigative and analytical base for the study and considers how capitals and culture impact on acculturation, assimilation, social bonds and belonging. Social care as a profession is contextualised within the global and national demands for care and consideration is given to the impact of regulation and funding models on orientation and professional identity. The chapter examines literature on higher education and how equality inclusion and diversity (EDI) legislation, policies and strategies impact on access, participation, representation and attainment. In particular, it provides a critical evaluation of the social care curriculum, cultural competency in teaching pedagogies and appraises the placement element of the programme.

Chapter three considers the qualitative approach taken, demonstrating how the conceptual framework of Critical race theory (CRT) underpins the study. CRT encourages the use of storytelling as a research method, enabling the voices of the participants to be heard and amplified. Twenty-one Black Ethnic Minority female students from five colleges in Ireland told their stories about experiences of living and studying social care in Ireland. The data were analysed using the six stages of reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020) and from this process key themes emerged and were identified. A participatory research approach was adopted to address researcher bias and give meaningful voice to participants. This study was informed throughout by a participatory advisory group of Black Minority Ethnic social care graduates who reflected on and discussed the cultural nuances and meanings that may have gone unnoticed by the researcher.

Chapter four is the first of two findings chapters and introduces the participants, providing information on their age, citizenship, migration transitions and experiences of resettlement in Ireland. It presents their stories of relationships, mothering, family and the challenges the participants encountered in their daily lives. Issues of communication and language competency are shared, and the participants' religious beliefs are presented as they relate to building connections and community and provide supports and motivation for some of the participants. Primary, secondary, and adult educational experiences of the participants are described and the diversity in routes to HE are noted. Finally, this chapter refers to the participants' motivations and expectations of studying social care.

Chapter five examines the data as it relates to lived experiences of the participants. It analyses the impact of historic positioning, current discourses and the recent Black Lives Matter movement on Black people living and working in Ireland. It explores the participants' experiences as social care students in HE in Ireland presenting data on

visibility and representation, experiences of the formal and informal learning environment and on placement. It considers strategies and adaptations that were used to respond to these experiences, emphasising the intersectional and cumulative impact. It also presents data on supports and resources identified by the participants as being helpful in navigating their journey through HE.

Chapter six critically analyses the findings as they relate to the research question and relevant literature. By using the prism of CRT, key insights are gained into the world habituated by the participants. It critically investigates how experiences of migration and resettlement transitions shape perspectives and engagement in Irish society and HE. It debates societal perspectives and discourses about race, migration, equality and inclusion and investigates how structural factors such as migration and employment policies impact on the expectations, motivation and engagement of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. Using intersectionality as an analytical lens, this chapter examines the participants experiences across race, gender, migration status and generational positioning. It explores perspectives of HE by analysing experiences in the wider college environment, formal and informal interactions, groupwork, and placements. By identifying structural, systemic and individual supports, it builds a case for a number of core recommendations.

Chapter seven concludes the study by stating contributions to new knowledge and provides key recommendations that materialised from the study. It explains the development of the Race Equity Informed Common Space initiative in TU Dublin that stemmed from the study. It also demonstrates that by combining CRT with a participatory research approach, innovative initiatives can be advanced by institutions and educators. This affords an opportunity to strengthen and build on the principles of social justice as

outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2016) and promote equality for all Black Ethnic Minority Ethnic students and graduates in Ireland.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided context and rationale for the study by acknowledging the rapidly changing global landscape of migration due to war, environmental and economic issues. Such matters have resulted in the increase of Black Minority Ethnic people seeking refuge, safety, work and education in Ireland. The chapter described the landscape of HE and social care in Ireland and situated Black Minority Ethnic social care students in that context. The researcher shared personal reflections on motivations and positionality as a White educator and researcher. The research question, aims, objectives and rationale for exploring the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland were provided and a summary of each chapter was included. The next chapter sets the scene for the study presenting relevant literature and research in the area.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores, discusses and critically evaluates existing scholarship on migration, racism, higher education (HE) and social care education and practice in contemporary Ireland. The chapter is presented in six sections. Section one sets the scene outlining how recent global phenomena have resulted in an increase of diversity in the Irish population. It assesses the complexity of terminology and definitions of race, ethnicity and skin colour. It also examines literature as it relates to migration and gender, motherhood and care work highlighting the intersectional impact on female migrants. Section two explores Critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical, investigative and analytical base for studies on racial inequality and intersectionality and considers how CRT can be applied to an Irish context. Section three examines literature relating to the construction and interplay of social and economic capitals and culture by reflecting on acculturation, assimilation, social bonds and belonging. Section four presents an overview of the global health and social care sector, assesses the increasing demands for care workers and situates social care work in the contested space of health and social care. Consideration is given to the historical development of the social care profession, the impact of regulation and funding models on orientation and professional identity. Section five examines equality inclusion and diversity (EDI) legislation, policies and strategies as they relate to access, participation, progression, representation, visibility and attainment in HE. The sixth section builds on this by critically evaluating the social care curriculum, cultural competency in teaching and learning and the placement element of social care programmes. The literature and research presented in this chapter frames the background for the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students of living, working and studying in Ireland.

2.2 Setting the scene

This research was conducted at a time of unprecedented global events. The war in Ukraine, Covid-19, Brexit, climate uncertainty and the rise of right-wing politics worldwide have and continue to have a cumulative impact on people's lives. These upheavals have created a wave of uncertainty regarding economic stability, climate change, energy and food supplies, migration, international cooperation, free movement of workers, students and academics and ongoing knowledge transfer between countries (Human Right Watch (HRW), 2021). A key driver of contemporary international political economies is globalisation[6]. While it offers efficiencies in the distribution of resources and improved standards of living for some, for those in developing or war-torn nations it may contribute to increased poverty and inequality (Stieglitz, 2006). Support for unilateral trade and internationalization is weakening, nationalism is on the rise and economic protection is looming with globalisation as a development mechanism being increasingly heavily criticized (O' Sullivan, 2019).

The impact of Brexit, a manifestation of nationalism, on the social care sector in the UK is already evident with the addition of social care to the 'occupation shortage list', a device created by the British government to give migrants work visas where there are recognised shortages of labour (Skills for Care, 2021). Jones (2012) questioned how long an economic system that depends on the mobility of manufactured capitals and financial flows, but blocks the movement of people, can survive suggesting that walls and policies will not stop people from migrating.

In tandem with globalisation, neoliberal policies which promote free-market capitalism, deregulation and reduced government spending have introduced market competition into

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[6] Globalisation is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide. Globalization has accelerated since the 18th century due to advances in transportation and communication technology.

all elements of the western economy and society, with Ireland being no exception. This has resulted in the commodification of public resources such as health and social care, opening them up to private companies to convert into profit making ventures (Hearne, 2011). The privatisation of the care sector in developed economies is heavily dependent on migrant workers to serve it (King-Dejardin, 2019; MCRI, 2004; TASC, 2022). While there is a growing realisation that alternative macro-level economic political and employment frameworks based on equality, justice, sustainability and inclusion are urgently required, the shift is slow and contentious, as the current system serves the wealthy (Hearne, 2011; Kitchin et al., 2012).

The United Nations Migration Agency (UN, 2015) identified climate change as another key driver of migration from the global south. It reported that in 2018 alone, 17.2 million new displacements were associated with climate related disasters in 148 countries with 764,000 people in Somalia, Afghanistan and several other countries displaced following drought (UN, 2020). The recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia, ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in Eritrea and Sudan, flooding in Pakistan and poverty in Kosovo all contribute to global instability (Cordesman, 2019; IMO, 2020).

Another global event relevant to this study is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, stemming from the killing of George Floyd by a police officer in the USA. Floyd's death sparked worldwide protests about police racism and brutality and from this developed a global response called the Black Lives Movement (BLM). In the aftermath of Floyds death, anti-racist protests worldwide put a spotlight on systemic, structural and institutional racism. The use of blackout squares[7] in social media and the taking to the knee in sport [8]demonstrated signs of solidarity. Coinciding with BLM movement, issues

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[7] Black out squares were used on social media sites to demonstrate support for the BLM
[8] Taking the knee (or taking a knee) is a symbolic gesture against racism whereby an individual kneels upon one knee in place of standing to attention for an anthem or other events

of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) have moved up the agenda of the Irish government and have become a notable concern for public service organisations (Public Appointments Service, 2021). EDI policies and strategies that pertain to HE are now underpinned by recent legislation such as the Higher Education Authority Act, 2021 with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015) providing clear goals and targets.

These factors contextually foreground the experiences of the participants in this study. As the research focuses specifically on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland, global and national issues pertaining migration, politics, racism and discrimination are directly related to the research question.

2.2.1 Terminology and categorisation

Integral to this study is understanding how issues of race, skin colour and migration are discussed in Ireland. There are well-documented dilemmas in defining ethnic minority populations (Huddleston & Sharif, 2019) and each effort has ambiguities that highlight the problematic nature of defining groups within the population (Mayblin & Soteri-Proctor, 2011). In the UK, the Equality Act (2010) requires universities and other public authorities to have "due regard for the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristics and people who do not share it" (OFS, 2017, p.64). The protected characteristics include race, ethnicity, religion and colour and the umbrella term of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) has become a widely used definition to describe those who are non-white. However, this term is contested and criticised for its lack of heterogeneity (Stevenson et al. 2019). The definition has expanded in recent times to Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) and this acronym is used extensively in literature and policy documents (Connor et al., 2004; Mayblin & Soteri-Proctor, 2011; Singh, 2011). The BAME categorisation is also contested and can be subject to a broad range of interpretations and constructions leading to difficulty in

understanding experiences of this cohort of student (Mayblin & Soteri-Proctor, 2011). In 2021, the UK Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) recommended that the use of the term BAME be discontinued to better focus on understanding disparities and outcomes for specific groups. A more recent term of 'global majority' has been coined which refers to people who are Black, African, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or, have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities,' but who now are the global majority, representing approximately 80% of the world's population globally (Campbell-Stevens, 2021).

Regardless of contested terminology, without appropriate classifications in data collection, the use of visibility as an analytical tool to gather data on Black Minority Ethnic people and communities continues to be utilised. In Ireland, the BME acronym is only recently emerging as a term to categorise Black Minority Ethnic students. Harris & Ní Chonaill (2016) reported that the HEA "uses the terms "Irish" and "non-Irish" students in referring to students at third level … it does not distinguish between 'international' fee-paying or Erasmus students, and students from migrant backgrounds, including those who become naturalized Irish citizens" (p. 81). Singh & Kwhali (2015) challenged the use of categories such as 'Black other', 'mixed race' and 'multiple ethnic group' stating that such terms are not ethnic identifications, but generic and potentially offensive ways of categorising people whose ethnicity does not neatly fit into an officially defined category.

Black Minority Ethnic students' experiences of access to HE and subsequent choice of college, discipline and programme as well as motivation, participation, retention and success involves unpacking complex factors linked to ethnicity, gender, class, family and social and cultural capital (Reay et al. 2005). The Black Minority Ethnic target group for this study have a significantly more diverse profile to the broader international category that they are subsumed into. The author of this study, with the support and direction of

the participatory advisory group decided on the term Black Minority Ethnic so as to best capture the broad range of diversity in the student population. The author decided not to use the acronym BME in an attempt to acknowledge and honour the individuality of each person regardless of categorisation. The use of the capitalisation of the words Black and White were influenced by the writings of Appiah (2020) and hooks (2003; 2014) and guided by section 5.7 of the APA publication manual (2020) which recommends that "racial and ethnic groups are designated by nouns and are capitalised" (p.142).

2.2.2 Migration

All of the participants in the study stated that they had migration experiences and over half reported seeking asylum or refuge in Ireland. As a result of the political, demographic, socio-economic and environmental factors, migration has become one of the most profound global occurrences in this century (IOM, 2020; OECD, 2019;UN, 2021). The trend of increased numbers of migrants seeking refuge, work and education is spiralling upwards and will continue to do so given the demographic, economic and environmental predictions for the future (IOM, 2020; UN, 2021). Ireland has received a small number of refugees and asylum seekers over the last two decades but has not yet been affected by the massive influx of migrants to the same extent as other European countries. Between 2014 and 2018 there were 3,673 applications for refugee status but only 683 were approved (Irish Refugee Council, 2018). Under the Irish Refugee Protection programme (IRPP) which was established in 2015, the Irish government committed to receiving 4,000 refugees, however by 2018 only 834 refugees had been accepted (Irish Refugee Council, 2018). While COVID-19 impacted on the movement of people, the Irish Refugee Council reported an increase in applications for asylum in 2021 up by 16% on 2019 (Irish Refugee Council, 2021; Eurostat, 2020). In 2022, the war in Ukraine has caused the displacement of millions of people. Ireland, along with other EU countries, has agreed to offer temporary protection through a visa waiver system. This

has resulted in almost 50,000 Ukrainian refugees arriving in Ireland (McGee, 2022) since the war started and a humanitarian crisis plan being prepared.

The consequence of inward migration is that the number of people living in Ireland with a nationality other that Irish has risen significantly over the last two decades, from 7% of the population in 2002 to 17% in 2016 (CSO, 2016). At a basic livelihood level, it is worth noting that until 2000, no work permit system existed in Ireland for migrants or refugees (MRCI, 2004). Prior to that time, migrants from outside the EU who wanted to enter Ireland as refugees or as migrant workers could only do so through the asylum process (Torode et al., 2001). Yet by 2008, non-Irish nationals accounted for over 16.5% of the workforce, with the rise of foreign national workers in Ireland being the fastest observed in the OECD (O'Connell & Mc Ginnity, 2008). The effects of migration on the health and wellbeing on adults (Siegel, 2020) children (Darmody et al., 2022) and unaccompanied minors (Ní Raghallaigh et al., 2019; 2018) have been the subject of research, however the long-term impact on those who migrated and those left behind has yet to be fully understood.

2.2.2.1 Experiences of Black Minority Ethnic migrants in Ireland
According to INAR (2019) and MCRI (2015) the Irish government response to refugees and asylum seekers has been to tighten border controls and develop and maintain punitive welfare systems and polices that deterred asylum seekers from coming to Ireland. In 2001 the State created the system of Direct Provision (DP) "whereby State services in Ireland are offered and directly provided to international protection applicants through the relevant Government Department or Agency" (NASC, 2019, p.7). Over half of the participants described themselves as being refugees or asylum seekers. During the period when these participants sought refuge or asylum their applications were processed by the Department of Justice and they were accommodated by the Reception and Integration

Agency in DP centres. These consisted of a mixture of State-owned and commercial hotels, guesthouses, hostels, former convents/nursing homes, mobile home sites, system-built facilities, and apartments. At that period many of the centres are in rural areas, with limited or no transportation available and residents received a weekly allowance of €21.60 to cover incidental expenses. The participants described being provided with accommodation on a full board basis which included the provision of a bed and three meals per day. At that time, they had no access to kitchen facilities in DP centres and reported sharing bedroom and bathroom facilities with other residents (Reception, Dispersal, and Accommodation, Dept. of Justice, 2021).

While there have been subsequent improvements made in terms of the provision of cooking facilities and private rooms, the DP system has been severely criticized by human rights groups such as the Irish Refugee Council (2012), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2014) and Amnesty International (2018). The key issues identified are the length of time processing applications, limited access to employment and education, isolated locations, privacy and overcrowded living conditions, lack of cooking facilities, poor quality and monitoring standard, physical and mental health needs and the impact on children. The DP system has been the subject of numerous reports and reviews[9] reiterating the negative impact the DP system has on those that have lived in it since its inception in 1999 and all call for reform. Researchers (Coakley & MacEniri, 2022; Foreman et al., 2016) highlighted that the DP system is exclusionary and restrictive and has impacted on the ability for asylum seekers and refugees to integrate within the community due to the divisive nature of the process.

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[9] The McMahon report (2010)
National Standards for Accommodation (2019)
Mont Trenchard Report (2019)
Joint Oireachtas Committee report on Direct Provision and International Protection (2019)
Programme for Government (2020)

Studies show that migrants have significantly different experiences depending on the country they come from and which category of migrant they belong to (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2008; Mc Ginnity, 2006). Loyal (2003) reported that most work permit holders are White and Christian and arrived in Ireland as a result of Government recruitment drives to EU accession countries. By contrast, asylum seekers, the largest population of whom, when categorized by nationality, are Black and Nigerian (ORAC, 2009). Joppke and Morawska (2003) alleged that migrant workers defined as 'White' have been sought preferentially by the Irish State as opposed to those who are 'Black' or ethnically different. The Immigrant Council of Ireland (2013) noted a high prevalence of harassment and racism towards migrant and Black families in their homes, school, public places and neighbourhoods. The iReport.ie which is a racist incident reporting system set up by the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) in 2013 noted that in 2021 (INAR, 2021) while the overall levels of violence and hostility increased year on year, the reporting during the BLM period was static and they attributed this to the antiracist work done by trade unions, civil society led initiatives and grassroots community activists.

2.2.3 Gendered migration

Recent developments in feminist theory, multicultural studies and a growing body of research, literature and policy have made notable contributions to the global migration debate from a gender perspective (IOM, 2020; Reilly et al., 2021; WHO, 2017). The OECD (2019) estimated that approximately 42% of migrants are now women, a phenomenon described as "feminization of migration" (p.6). This is notable as until the 1980s the "phrase migrants and their families was code for male migrants and their wives and children" (Boyd & Pikkov, 2005, np). The disregard for women and their presumed passivity in the process stemmed from what Pessar & Mahler (2003) suggested was their traditionally assumed place in the home and their dependence on their husband. In the

1980s, migration research began to include women and the neoclassical economic models began to view migration as more of an individual decision (Boyd & Greico, 2003).

Addressing migrant women's issues requires recognising them as a diverse group in the roles that they play as well as in characteristics such as age, ethnic background, urban or rural orientation, immigration status, educational attainment and motherhood status (UNFPA, 2006). Migrant women frequently move from countries with less egalitarian cultures to countries that have a great emphasis on equality between the sexes. However, residual unequal attitudes within western societies can negatively impact on the outcomes for migrant women and may explain some of the additional disadvantage experienced by migrant women (European Commission, 2007).

There are conflicting views on drivers of female migration and the literature has identified several push and pull factors (AkiDwA, 2012; Brown, 2016; Pillinger, 2007). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2020) reported that female migrants with third level education increased between 2009 and 2019 due to global progress in the educational attainment of girls and women and the growing demand for qualified labour in sectors with a predominantly female workforce, such as health and social care. However, Brown (2016) reported that in the Horn of Africa, girls often cite lack of education and early marriage as push factors, and they migrate in order to avoid abuse and seek better opportunities. Pillinger (2007) summarised the key motivations for women migrating were to seek political asylum, refugee status, employment, family reunification and to provide better opportunities for their children.

The demand for labour in receiving countries has influenced the migration decisions of both genders, however migrant women have been increasingly targeted to fill shortages in the area of domestic and care work worldwide (EASO, 2020). Examples of ongoing collaborations between German health and social care organisations and Turkish

education institutions to train potential migrant care workers have proved effective (EASO, 2020) and in Ireland, the HSE have been actively recruiting nurses from the Philippines and social workers from South Africa to fill shortages over the last decade (HSE, 2012).

Research also demonstrates that post migration, migrant women, have a unique range of challenges such as initial lower level of literacy and education, lack of extended family and other support networks (OECD, 2020; NASC, 2017). The negative impact of living in DP, poor housing and unemployment and lack of access to educational opportunities and language supports add to social deprivation (AkiDwA, 2012). O'Connell (2018) reported that in Ireland, "Black Africans still stand out as disadvantaged in the Irish labour market and African women are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as their Irish counterparts" (p.23). In the areas of social, cultural and educational activity, migrant women have been somewhat disregarded and the difficulties and challenges they encounter are exacerbated by the lack of political representation (Pessar & Mahler, 2003; EU, 2019).

For some women, migration can be an emancipating experience (EIGE, 2020; International Labour organisation, 2019), for others it can entrench traditional roles, values and inequalities (Hearne & McMahon, 2016). Migration can expose women to new vulnerabilities as a result of legal status, social exclusion and isolation. However, it can also provide new opportunities to improve and transform women's lives, often changing oppressive gender relations (Jolly, 2005). Heath et al. (2013) reported that the path, paved by the first wave of migrant women in Europe, resulted in second-generation ethnic minority women having increased levels of language competency as well as higher and more recognised educational qualifications than their first-generation counterparts. Second-generation migrants have more opportunities to engage in the labour force and

HE (Heath et al., 2013) while Aston et al. (2007) suggested that they are subject to different expectations from parents and communities which results in more freedom and flexibility in terms of career and education choice.

2.2.3.1 Pathways to care work

The growth in migration has coincided with the increasing demands for workers in the care sector (TASC, 2022). Care work, therefore, has become a pathway to employment for many migrants in western countries as there are few restrictions in terms of regulation or minimum entry standards (Hussein et al., 2012; King-Dejardin, 2019; MCRI, 2006). Unfavourable working conditions and insecurity about immigration status have increased vulnerability to global exploitation in health and social care sectors (AkiDwA, 2010, Oxfam 2009). Christensen et al. (2016) study of migrant women care workers in the UK and Norway reported that many migrant women enter care work through word of mouth and "they tend to have a subordinated servant-like roles towards an employer" (p.8). Cangiano et al. (2009) reported that in the UK over 30% of migrant care workers work more than 40 hours a week, compared with 18% of UK born care workers and a similarly higher proportion of foreign-born care workers (74%) also do shift work compared with UK-born care workers (60%). Colombo et al. (2011) reported that migrant workers have:

> shorter contracts, more irregular hours, broken shifts for lower pay, lower class functions than non-migrant care workers and may have to work with least favourable care recipients … They may be subjected to verbal abuse or outright refusal to be cared for by the client … they may also experience such behaviour from colleagues and employees … and are especially vulnerable to personal and financial exploitation (p.175-6).

In Ireland, care is provided by mixture of private for-profit, charitable and non-profit making, community and statutory services and organisations in and also operates in the

black economy. Over the past decade, the Health Service Executive (HSE) have outsourced most home care, institutional care for the elderly, disabled and children's residential services to private agencies and companies (HSE, 2019). The amount of public funding received by private for-profit home care providers increased from three million euros in 2006 to 176 million euros in 2019 (HSE, 2019). While care work can be precarious and exploitative, it facilitates flexible working hours and agency work enables employees to work a number of jobs and earn the maximum amount in the hours worked (Cangiano et al., 2010; Hussein et al., 2012). It also provides opportunities to work for cash and this may appeal to undocumented migrants or those without work visas (Pillinger, 2007; Timonen et al. 2006). Indeed, MCRI (2013) and TASC (2022) reported that migrant workers have brought a significant transformation to the formal and informal care workforce and may have unwittingly facilitated the introduction of the "cash for care" system that is now common in Ireland and working for cash in the black economy undoubtedly increases vulnerability for these workers.

Doyle & Timonen (2009) described the different experiences of migrant care workers depending on their country of origin. The study found that African migrant carers were more likely to be confronted by racism and discrimination than other migrants. Degiuli (2007) highlighted how 'the process of racialization' may influence the standard of conditions that migrant care workers are employed under and mobility prospects for these employees (p.205). Other relevant literature argues that many employers, care recipients and their families construct racial stereotypes and sometimes have preferences for certain nationalities that they regard as caring, nurturing, docile, warm and loving (Anderson & Rogaly, 2005; Yeates, 2005a).

The centrality of the service user has re-positioned them from 'passive recipients' into 'active consumers' who, with support and direction from their families, can chose the

type of care and carer that they want (Browne, 2016). While this ability to exercise power and control over care provision empowers service users, missing from the debate on care choice are the rights of the care worker. Turnpenny & Hussein (2022) argued that when resources are limited or unequal, Black Minority Ethnic workers can be vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation.

Several studies reported that migrant workers view care work as 'nurturing' and 'holistic' and clients as 'family', drawing on societal and cultural values, such as elder respect and care giving (Datta et al., 2010; Hussein et al., 2012; McGregor, 2007). Migrant care workers with children and families left in home countries, may perceive care work as a place to build relationships, be part of a family or belong to a community (Walsh & Shutes, 2013). The need to belong, feel part of a family and build relationships can span beyond the professional space and migrant women may feel a personal responsibility towards their clients (Timonen & Doyle, 2010). Datta et al. (2010) argued that this can result in tensions between personal values and needs and the commercialisation of the care industry with implications for the emotional wellbeing of migrant care workers and the risk of burnout.

2.2.3.2 Motherhood and migration

A significant consideration for many migrant women is their role and responsibility as mothers. Hochschild's (1979) work on theorising the social complexity of the emotions of mothering provides an insight into the emotional journey of motherhood through migration and resettlement. Much of her work focuses on the "global heart transplant" (Hochschild, 1979, p.182) that happens when mother migrate and leave children behind. Gilmartin & Migge's (2016) study described how structural obstacles and cultural understanding of care actively conspire to undermine migrant mothers' potential to develop a sense of place and belongingness, as time and energy diverted to caring for

others reduced the prioritization of their own needs. Other studies (Boyle, Feng & Gayle, 2009; UNHCR, 2019) reiterated how the intersectional losses accumulated in the migration transitions, coupled with the absence of affordable childcare and family members, reduce opportunities to create of a sense of belonging outside of the process of mothering and the home. Therefore, Gilmartin & Migge (2016) suggested that "migrant mothers in Ireland are compelled to negotiate the simultaneous processes of belonging and not-belonging in their everyday lives" (p.158). Hays (1998) proposed that the concept of motherhood in the western world is underpinned by the neoliberal and individual notion of personhood, middle-class values of lifestyle and childrearing. This concept holds the individual mother primarily responsible for child rearing and dictates that the process is to be child-centred, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labour-intensive and financially expensive (Herrero-Ardias et al. 2021). This contemporary ideology of mothering has led to an increase in the professionalisation of parenting, monitoring of parental practices and the reduction of intuitive parenting (Jaysane-Darr, 2013). According to Berry (2013) the pressure to be a 'good mother' within intensive mothering can be a variance with migrant mothering practices as values and mothering ideology may differ from that of the society they now live in.

As parenting values and styles of migrant parents can sometimes be at variance with host countries, it can lead to difficulties in understanding and interpreting cultural, social and legal parenting norms. This may result in increased social service intervention. Coulter (2015) reporting on Childcare Law proceedings in Ireland, highlighted the high numbers of African families involved in such proceedings suggesting that "this is totally disproportionate to their presences in the population as a whole … African families are 20 times more likely to find themselves in the childcare courts than other members of Irish Society" (p. 20). Coulter (2015) identified factors that contribute to the over-representation of African children in care as "abandoned or unaccompanied minors,

mother's mental health difficulties (especially if she has spent extended periods in direct provision as an asylum seeker), and physical chastisement" (p. 20, para, 5).

Another concern for migrant mothers is that they may have left children behind in home countries for indefinite periods, cared for by other family members. Parrenas (2001) referred to this as 'parenting at a distance' (p. 4). The mother and children are highly dependent on communication systems, technology and social media platforms to maintain regular contact. Bryceson (2018) highlighted the challenges of negotiating the life cycle of transnational families and describes the complexity of providing emotional, social and economic support while depending on others to care for and love their children in their absence. Levitt (2009) asserted that children of such migrants accordingly grow up in a virtual transnational space while Zhao et al. (2018) claimed that prolonged separation following migration disrupts parent-child relationships and results in psychosocial difficulties especially for those who live with multiple adversities in the family.

2.2.3.3 Global care chains

The OECD (2019) and the World Bank (2020) have pointedly and strategically invested significant resources into overseeing the migration of women from the south to meet the care needs of the north. Hondeagneu-Sotelo & Cranford (1999) and Degiuli (2007) reported that migrant workers fill labour shortages not only in the formal care sector, but also in the 'grey' labour market where carers are employed directly and sometimes illegally by families to complement or replace the informal care supplied from within families. Turnpenny & Hussein (2022) reported that in the UK, 11% of the social care workforce were non-UK nationals (Skills for Care, 2020) and that the reliance on migrant care workers in the UK is among the highest in the EU. Cangiano et al. (2009; p. 163) described this as the 'migrant in the market' model, where dependence on migrant workers is largely attributed to their willingness to consent to the precarious working

conditions characteristic of a privatised social care system in exchange for a foothold to the local labour into the workforce (Da Roit & Weicht, 2013; van Hooren, 2012;).

Hochschild (1979) coined the term global care chain describing how "Chains are formed when individuals and groups move from third to first world to provide care work, leaving behind a care deficit" (p.39). Female migrant workers account for 50% or more of the long-term care labour force in Austria, France, Italy and Israel and are overrepresented in the home help and institutional care sector in many European countries including Ireland (Colombo et al., 2011). This cyclical care chain occurs as a result of women's labour force participation, leading to women hiring other women as domestic helpers and care workers. These women then rely on other women, such as mothers, female relatives or eldest female children to care for their families, potentially reducing economic and educational opportunities for women in the global south (Fleury, 2016, p.10-11). Lulle (2014) conceptualised the notion of the neoliberal mother shifting over space and time within a migratory context who aspires for a better future for herself and for her children, revealing complex relations between migration, gender and social change.

Hochschild & Ehrenreich (2002, p.39) created the metaphor 'Care Drain' to describe the significant losses associated with global care chains. This metaphor was a play on the term 'Brain Drain' (Dodani & LaPorte, 2005, p.467) which describes the departure of educated or professional people from one country, economic sector, or field for another usually for better. Hochschild & Ehrenreich (2002) highlighted the global injustice which drained the care and love from migrant mothers from poorer and developing countries and its children and extracted them to the wealthy north in the form of nannies, au pairs, nurses and care workers. Hochschild & Ehrenreich (2002) asserted that care work is really "diverted motherhood because time, energy and most importantly love is diverted from those, who by kinship or communal ties, are their more rightful recipients" (p.22) and

amounts to methodological sexism. Others have taken exception to the use of this metaphor and suggest that claiming care work can be provided without education, skills or competencies is based on the false assumption that caring is natural and innate to women. Dumitru (2014) suggested that this thinking de-values the profession and fails to recognise the highly complex nature of the work.

2.2.3.4 Remittances

The payment of remittances by migrant workers to their families in home countries has been documented in existing research (ILO, 2018; Siegel, 2021; 2020; UN, 2015). Remittances are not a new concept, but they have a particular meaning and consequences for migrant women. Research by Le Goff (2016) and ILO (2018) found that as migrant women send a significant percentage more of their earnings back to their families than men, it has created an additional push factor for encouraging female migration (Ramirez et al. 2005). Even if women have childcare commitments and are in full time education, they can be expected to send remittances, putting additional pressure to earn money whilst caring and studying (Arday, 2018a; Humphries et al., 2009;).

While research about financial remittances is available (CSO, 2016; IOM, 2020; MRCI 2013; Siegel, 2020), less is known about the practice of social remittances. Levitt (1999, 2001) coined the phrase 'social remittance' (Levitt, 2001, p.14) which is the transfer of non-financial support. Sustaining emotional connections, responsibility for family reunification and providing support for family that subsequently migrate are all types of social remittances that migrant women provide (Bryceson, 2019; Pillinger, 2007; Smith et al., 2021). When accounting for the additional factor of the gendered nature of care work, the intersectional factors mount up. The CSO (2016) reported that women accounted for 91.8% of nursing and 84.4% of health and social care professionals in Ireland in 2016. This over representation of female staff in health and social care brings

an additional layer of complexity and the recent COVID -19 pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of women who were working in care sector and also were caring at home (Crowley & Hughes, 2021). These gender related factors create an additional intersecting layer of responsibility for migrant women compounding their capacity to work, study and integrate into host countries.

2.3 Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is a framework frequently used in social sciences which focuses on the critical enquiry of society and culture and how it intersects with race, law and power. CRT originated from the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement in the USA (Ladson-Billing & Tate, 2000) and critical race theorists (Crenshaw, 1989; Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995) regarded CRT as an appropriate theoretical, investigative and analytical base for studies on racial inequality and intersectionality. Hiraldo (2010, p. 54) stated that CRT can be used to critically analyse the role of race and racism in "perpetuating social disparities between dominant and marginalised racial groups".

There are a number of core tenets of CRT, the first of which is that race is socially constructed (Crenshaw, 1989; Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995). This is centred on the refutation of the biogenetic notion that the human species is divided into distinct groups, based on inherited physical and behavioural characteristics (Delgado, 1995). Ortiz & Jani (2010) argued that race as a relational concept functions as a tool "to classify people for purposes of separation and stratification" (p.178) while Sue & Sue (2013) suggested that the concept of race is internalised, integrated and strongly rooted in the psyche of society and is a constantly evolving process. The notion of who is and is not White is extremely complex and developed concepts of Whiteness and conceptual Blackness (King, 1992) do not transfer well on to bio-genetic or cultural constructs such as "'middle classness' 'intelligence' or 'welfare recipients'" (Ladson- Billings 1998, p.9). Race has become

metaphorical "a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes and expression of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic that biological race ever was" (Morrison, 1992, p.63). While traditionally race has been viewed in terms of the "Black-White binary" (Ortis & Jani, 2010), this now seems limited in today's world of complexity of race, immigration, globalization and population increase (Ahlberg et al, 2019).

The second CRT principle is that "racism is ordinary, not aberrational … and is an everyday experience for most people of colour" (Delgado, 1995, p.7). Solórzano et al. (2000) examined racism under the headings of macro and micro aggressions which are seemingly insignificant, often unconscious acts of racism which can go unnoticed by the perpetrator. Critical race theorists criticize liberalism, favouring a race conscious approach to transformation rather than the liberalist colour-blind perspective. Based on the writings of DuBois (1903) critical race theorists (McIntosh, 1989; Tatum, 1997) argued that White people benefit from unearned and often unacknowledged advantages attached to being born White and refer to the benefits and advantages that come with being a member of the dominant culture as White privilege.

CRT also draws on the thesis of 'intersectionality' (Cooper, 1892) which examines how outcomes varied when different structures of inequality existed between the sexes. Feminist writer hooks (1984) built on Cooper's work, researching the overlapping roles of race, class, and gender in oppression before the term 'intersectionality' was coined by fellow Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, p.141). Feminists such as Crenshaw (1989) and Patel (2017) joined critical race theorists (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Tate, 1997; Taylor, 2009) contending that both ethnicity and gender are sites of inequality. They argued that Black women experience different and more intense types of oppression than women who are White. Building on this contention, Black feminist scholars Moody-

Ramirez & Dates (2014) suggested that by "liberating Black women it would create freedom for all, as it would require the end of racism, sexism and class oppression" (p.38).

A further principle of CRT is what scholars call 'interest convergence' (Bell, 1992, p.523) which refers to how society tend to serve the interests of dominant White groups. Thus, the racial hierarchy that characterises a particular society may be unaffected or even reinforced by apparent improvements in the legal status of oppressed or exploited people. CRT can act as a tool to deconstruct the narratives of the dominant culture by encouraging storytelling (Bell, 1993) and 'naming one's own reality' (Hiraldo, 2010, p.56) using narratives to explore and highlight racial oppression. A more detailed examination of use of storytelling in researching the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students can be found in the methodology chapter.

CRT has expanded as more researchers became interested in the complexity of racial ideology, terminology, political power, current government regimes and social media and is currently applied to the study of racialised power and racism across many areas. This expansion has highlighted the intersectional impact of race on family structures, relationships, access to public service supports, employment opportunities, education and social interactions (AkiDwA, 2010; Cooper, 2016, Dubgazah, 2012; MRCI, 2004).

2.3.1 Relating Critical Race Theory to the Irish context

It has been suggested by some authors (Garner, 2004; Hainsworth, 1998) that historically, Ireland, north and south, had few racist difficulties, due to the homogeneity of the population. However, this simplistic view, based on numbers alone, ignores the experiences of Jewish and Traveller communities and also fails to recognise the long-established problems associated with sectarianism (Mitchell, 2011). Historically, Ireland has been a country of mass emigration, from famine times, through the economic downturns in the 1960s and in the more recent post Celtic tiger era (CSO, 2019).

However, from the late 1980s, inward migration has steadily increased (CSO, 2019; Mitchell, 2011). More recent Irish history centres on identity formation, establishing borders and the reinterpretation of nation and homeland. This has led to certain "cultures and minorities pushed away by racism, discrimination and inflexible rules of belonging" (Fanning et al., 2008, p.3). As a result, Mitchell (2011) proposed "there has been a formation of strong white national cultures, essentialist appeal to 'true' Irishness, a connection to land and the adoption of ethnocentric norms, each of which in different ways preclude the inclusion of racialised Others" (p.8).

The practice of othering is referred to in research (Darby, 2020; hooks, 2008) and as Ireland has been a predominately White nation until recently, discourses about Black Minority Ethnic residents have increasing anti-immigration sentiment, and racism and xenophobia in the media and wider society are evident (Hillard, 2019, Malik, 2020; UN, 2019). Across Europe and more recently in Ireland, asylum seekers and refugees have been responded to with suspicion. The political discourse and media reporting on the issue highlights the dissonance between Irish national identity and potential 'others' (Irish Refugee Council, 2018). Notwithstanding the fact that Ireland's history of emigration and its widely spread diaspora might generate an understanding and recognition of asylum seeking, along with the self-professed "long history of refugee protection" (Mussano, 2003, p.141) the reality suggests otherwise. Asylum seekers are frequently portrayed as "opportunistic cheats or 'spongers' come to capitalise upon an Ireland, whose very success makes it an 'easy target'" (Mitchell, 2011, p.9).

The Irish Network Against Racism (INAR) (2019) reported that racism in the Irish context "takes many forms, the most prevalent being anti-Black racism, anti-Traveller racism, anti-Muslim racism, anti-Roma racism, anti-migrant racism (xenophobia) and anti-Jewish racism (or antisemitism)" (p.13). Research by The EU Agency for

Fundamental Rights (2016) showed that respondents with North African, Roma and Sub-Saharan African background indicated the highest levels of discrimination based on ethnic or immigrant background at 45%, 41%, and 39%, respectively. Michael (2015) reported that in Ireland, the highest number of any single group targeted in the incidents has been from people of African descent, including African migrants, their children and those of mixed race:

> Incidents have included political hate speech, racist crimes, racist violence, intimidation, racist bullying, illegal practices and discriminatory treatment in housing, education and service provision, poor policing practices and poor responses by Gardaí to racist crimes, lack of access to healthcare and employment and persistent and repeated racial harassment (p.5).

This finding is consistent with the European study on migrants (ECRI, 2013) where the Irish sample of Black migrants reported discrimination was most common "on the street or on public transport, followed by harassment at work and recruitment discrimination" (McGinnity et al., 2018, p.5).

Joseph (2018) suggested that Irish people share in the White privilege enjoyed by White Europeans and as a nation "we have shifted from out-migration to in-migration, from colonised to colonisers, from outsiders to participants in fortress Europe obsessed with keeping non-EU migrants outside its borders"(np). Joseph (2018, n.p) went on to remind us of our recent history of "collections for the black babies" [10]and how the one-sided aid model preferred by Ireland has damaged the reputation of Black people (Lentin, 2007). The treatment of asylum-seeking refugees who are Black Minority Ethnic on arrival in Ireland has been the subject of much criticism and Joseph (2018) argued that the Irish

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[10] A fundraising Lenten campaign by the Irish agency, Trocaire distributing collection boxes to Irish children with a picture of a black baby

have become the "beneficiaries of the wages of whiteness, which located them some notches away from the bottom of the racial ladder, above Black Africans and non-English speaking Whites" (n.p).

With world leaders denouncing global citizenship and openly promoting racist attitudes and behaviours, the metaphorical perspective of race is evident (McGinnity & Fahey, 2020). Statements from world leaders such as "There is no global flag, no global currency, no global citizenship" (Trump, 2017) and "If you believe that you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere" (May, 2016) encapsulated the critical discourse against internationalization, migration, racial difference and the movement of people. It also situates the rise of the 'far right' globally and gives context to political movements such as Brexit, the rise in the neo-Nazi movement in Europe and the increased popularity in right wing politics worldwide (Gallagher, 2020).

2.4 The construction and interplay of capitals, identity and belonging

It is often through migration that human capitals are evaluated and assessed. Bourdieu (1991) has written extensively on the relationship between economic, social, cultural capitals and social inequality. While he did not consider himself a Marxist sociologist, the theories of Karl Marx (1926) contributed to Bourdieu's thinking. For Bourdieu and Marx, the more capital one has, the more powerful a position one occupies in life. Erel & Ryan (2019) conceptualised capitals as convertible to resources and argues that immigration policies, rights of residency and migration management systems reduce opportunities for migrants to convert capitals into resources. Bourdieu extended Marx's idea of capital beyond the economic sphere and into the less tangible realm of culture (Buchholz, 2013). Similar to Marx, Bourdieu (1991) argued that cultural capital forms the foundation of social life and defines one's position within the social order. According to Bourdieu (1991) cultural capital comes in three forms: embodied, objectified, and

institutionalized. A person's language or dialect is an example of embodied cultural capital, while expensive cars or art collections are examples of cultural capital in its objectified state. In its institutionalized form, cultural capital refers to credentials and qualifications such as degrees or titles that denote cultural competence and authority (Gartman, 2002). Bourdieu (1991) noted that certain forms of cultural capital are valued over others and can help or hinder one's social mobility just as much as income or wealth.

The implication is that those with high levels of capitals have inherent valuable knowledge which can be utilized to maintain higher social status and power position, while those without access to knowledge creating structures are unable to participate equally within the social confines of that society (Freire, 1993). Gramsci's (1971) theory of cultural hegemony described the dominance of a culturally diverse society by a small number of powerful individuals who manipulate the culture, the beliefs and explanations, perceptions, and values so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norm. Developing the logic on capitals while drawing on Gramsci's theory, it can be argued that opportunities for Black Minority Ethnic people to access, participate and progress in labour, educational and social dimensions in Irish society are diminished. Fionda (2009) supported this argument and contended that power and social control is dominated by the White ruling class, resulting in limiting the potential of other groups.

2.4.1 Language competency

The interplay between linguistic competency and human capital is extensively researched and Ochs (1986), Philips (1983) and Ní Chonaill (2018) emphasised that language acquisition is highly valued capital and that culture itself is initiated and reproduced through linguistic interactions. Blommaert (2005) described how the value of English acquired in Africa is part of the declassing process associated with migration:

The English acquired by urban Africans may offer them considerable prestige and access to middle class identities in African towns. It may be an 'expensive' extremely valuable resource to then. But the same English, spoken in London by the same Africans may become an object of stigmatisation and may qualify them as members of the lower strata of society (p. 223).

Bernstein's (1996) theory of pedagogic discourse[11] explained that migration does not always result in upward mobility and some migrants stay horizontal or even face downward trajectories (Rose-Adams, 2014). This 'declassing" or downward social mobility experienced by many migrants as a result of linguistic ability can result in the loss of cultural, social and economic capital in Bordieuan terms (Bourdieu, 2005).

In 2008, the ERSI[12] reported that migrants in Ireland from non-English speaking backgrounds are subjected to an occupational gap compared to those from English speaking backgrounds (O'Connell & McGinnity, 2008). Twelve years later, McGinnity et al. (2020) reported that African migrants continue to experience particular difficulties accessing the labour market, citing language competency as one of the factors. Smith et al. (2007) described how low levels of language competency of migrant staff resulted in poor communication, misunderstandings and high staff turnover in care services in Ireland. Similar issues have been identified in other jurisdictions. In the UK Manthorpe et al. (2010) claimed "that migrant workers found it difficult to understand aspects of British culture, such as patterns of family care, social models of disability or the nuances of language in the sector" (p.107) and this impacted on their efficacy and employability. A study of the role of migrant care workers in ageing societies (IMO, 2010) commented

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[11] Bernstein defines pedagogic discourse as: "a principle for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into special relation with each other for the purposes of their selective transmission and acquisition".
[12] ESRI: The Economic and Social Research Ireland produces independent, high-quality research with the objective of informing policies that support a healthy economy and promote social progress.

on the challenges foreign pronunciation and English proficiency pose to elderly and hearing-impaired clients. The study suggested that when migrant workers use their native language to communicate with co-workers, it created distance between caregivers and their clients and native-born co-workers.

2.4.2 Ethnicity and identity

The word ethnicity, derived from the Greek *ethnos,* meaning having a common descent or nation, was only added to the Oxford English dictionary in 1972 (Ibrahim, 2011). Thus, while the concept of ethnicity has existed for a long time, it is a relatively new working term in the western world. Perez & Hirschman (2009) suggested the term is often used to indicate in a euphemistic way, non-White people as a whole. Ethnic groups are made up of individuals who may not necessarily share the same race, but do share common cultural characteristics including history, beliefs, values, food and social interaction preferences, religion and language (Triandafyllidou, 2011). Ethnicity usually incorporates culture and race, but Ifekwunigwe et al. (2017) stated that race is based more on biological constructs, such as the sharing of skin colour or certain physical attributes and it may or may not also be a political or social construct.

In more recent times Whiteness as a racial classification has come to the fore and some authors suggest that White identity is an ideology more than a biology (Fields, 2001; McIntosh, 1989;). While the study of Whiteness in not new (Crenshaw et al. 1995; Wise, 2011), in the context of the BLM movement it has received more mainstream attention (Cole, 2020; DiAngelo, 2018) and the focus is now on Whiteness as it relates to some of the core CRT tenets of White supremacy, White privilege, White fragility and White normativity (DiAngelo, 2018; Resane, 2021).

As with ethnicity, identity is a key factor of the lived experience and has become the subject of critical discourse in Ireland as the population diversifies (Mc Ginnity et al.,

2021; Ni Dhuinn & Keane, 2021). A person's identity, how they perceive others and themselves, how others view them and how that is communicated is fundamental to their position in society (Ford & Harawa, 2010; Laws and Heckscher, 2002). Part of personal identity is the cultural and social element and cultural identity defines the relationship between a person and members of a specific ethnic group (such as Irish, Nigerian, Syrian) who may share a common history, language, social norms and/or values. Social identity can be defined as the connections between the person and the wider community as mediated through families, educational institutions, employers, social settings and services (Gumperz, 1982; Ochs, 1979). Social and cultural identity, historically grounded, comprises of knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs which may predispose people to feel, think and act in a particular manner and to perceive how others interact in a certain way.

Bhugra (2004) viewed cultural and ethnic traits as central to a person's identification at a personal and social level and Gellner (1983) explained that acquired traits have two dimensions. The first trait is overt in the form of flags, symbols, anthems and traditions of dress. The second is more covert, often hidden and is expressed through norms, values, beliefs and prejudices. As the covert traits are challenged, the overt traits such as symbols take on a greater importance and Bhugra (2004) argued that this can result in the host community reacting to cultural displays by migrants in a less than positive manner.

2.4.3 Acculturation

The concept of acculturation has a long and somewhat contentious history. Berry (2006) described acculturation as a long-term process of cultural and psychological change that results from contact with culturally similar people, groups and social influences. Noted anthropologists Redfield et al. (1936) defined acculturation as occurring when "groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original patterns of either or both groups" (p.149). This

definition has evolved, and Gordon (1964) conceptualized acculturation by placing an emphasis on the social relationships of indigenous and minority groups. However, others argue that multiculturalist societies have become so heterogeneous that the binary model of acculturation and assimilation hardly apply any more (Berry, 2006). Indeed, many 'new' migrants, act transnationally, arrive in their host societies with greater human capital in education, language proficiency and sense of resilience that their predecessors and even of many individuals in the host country (Berry, Trimble & Olmedo. 1986; Olmedo, 1979; Rogler, 1994; Ward. 1996). Portes et al. (2009) and Waters et al. (2010) proposed that the most appropriate way to understand acculturation may lie in the relational perspective which attempts to locate and observe the relationships where the cultural changes take place, and to understand change as a process that itself continually shifts in time and place.

2.4.4 Social bonding and adaptations

For acculturation and assimilation to take place, significant adaptations are required for migrants to initially survive and eventually thrive in the new environment. The key adaptation hinges on what Hirschi (1969) categorised as the ability to develop bonds with others through processes of attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Peguero et al. (2011) argued that strong social bonds to community, school and society have the potential to mitigate some of the observed ethnic and racial gaps in integration. The opportunity to form social bonds varies and the strength of the protective effects differ and vary according to each person, the type of bond and the ethos and values of the particular socializing environment (Chriss, 2007). The importance of the environment as a factor in social bonding is highlighted by Peguero et al. (2011). The data demonstrates that Black Minority Ethnic people are more likely to reside in areas that are characterized by poverty, unemployment, crime, social isolation, family breakdown, under resourced community facilities and discrimination (Peterson et al. 2006; Stewart et al. 2002).

According to Berry (2006) these conditions tend to impede the formation of strong social bonds to the community, its structures and institutions creating additional barriers for integration.

Sibley (2002) and Darby (2020) claimed that in HEIs, increased social bonding can be achieved through developing an appropriate understanding of the functioning of the institution and those within it. D'Angelo (2011) and White et al. (2020) used the term 'code switching' to describes strategies and adaptations employed by students to increase bonding and to positively navigate interracial interactions with other students. Code-switching includes adjusting style of speech, not opposing adjusting names, modifying hairstyle and dress, expressing shared interests with others so as to offer a sense of affiliation and downplaying and avoiding negative stereotypes associated with Black racial identity. However, while code switching may be useful as an adaptation strategy, McCluney et al. (2021) warned that it can reinforce White superiority and generate social, psychological and economic costs for the Black Minority Ethnic population.

2.5 The health and social care sector: Situating the social care profession

COVID-19 has reshaped the provision of health and social care and has expanded where, what and how health and social care services are provided (Charles & Ewbank, 2021). The pandemic has heightened awareness of inequities of health care and its links to sustainability and the environment (Deloitte, 2022). The WHO (2020) predicted that global health and social care services will need to dramatically increase to meet the growing needs of aging populations worldwide. In 2017, the WHO (2017) estimated there would be a global deficit of 18 million skilled health professionals by 2030. In Ireland, the demand for care is increasing as the population grows and alters in terms of its age structure. It is estimated that the percentage of the population aged 65 and over will rise

from the current level of 11% to over 20% in 2035 (CSO, 2016). ESRI (2017) projections suggest that about a fifth of those aged over 35 or more in Ireland presently will be physically disabled by 2047 and the demand for home help and residential care placements are predicted to rise by at least 54%.

It is within this global context that social care is situated. Defining and describing social care has always proved difficult as the broad nature of providing care is complex (Lyons & Brown, 2020; McHugh, 2020). There are a number of working descriptions, however CORU (2016) definition is the most up to date

> A relationship-based approach to the purposeful planning and provision of care, protection, psycho-social support and advocacy in partnership with vulnerable individuals and groups who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special needs. Principles of social justice and human rights are central to the practice of social care workers (CORU, 2016, np)

This definition encapsulates the primary function of social care practice however, the remit continues to evolve as new social issues emerge. It has been acknowledged that the competencies and skills of social care graduates can be positively transferred to supporting people who are aged, disabled and those availing of addiction, domestic violence, asylum, mental health and homeless services (Lyons & Brown, 2020; CORU, 2016). The Integrative Framework for Practice Teaching (McGarr & Fingleton, 2020) is a tool that facilitates educators to position social care context, role, and goal and it captures the essence of social care by breaking down the elements of practice, deconstructing each component and demonstrating the connections and interplay which support integrated learning for students.

2.5.1 Historical development of social care in Ireland

Social care in Ireland, previously defined and delineated almost solely by The Children's Act (1908), is now underpinned by a raft of legislation, policies and strategies, many of which stem from recommendations of inquiries into mismanagement and poor practice in past service provision (Holohan, 2011). Since the early 1990s, a total of 551 recommendations were made from 29 national inquires and reviews on concerns arising from the serious abuse and/or death of children in the care of the statutory child protection services (Buckley & Nolan, 2013).

These recommendations have formed the legislative and policy basis for social care work in response to the significant shift in the Irish social and political outlook, reflecting a greater consciousness of the centrality of the rights of the client and prioritising EDI in social care services through partnership approaches (Byrne, 2016; Lyons & Brown, 2021). This rapidly changing horizon has demanded the role of the social care worker to evolve and become dynamic and responsive to clients and service providers. Some have argued that this has reoriented social care work from person centred to procedure led and has resulted in the over bureaucratisation of social care work (Brown, 2018; Lyons & Brown, 2020; SCI, 2018). The recently published CORU Standards of proficiency (SCWRB, 2017) put further emphasis on the importance of record keeping and documentation. This reorientation may have consequences for workers with less tacit knowledge of systems or professional language required.

2.5.2 Regulation and national standards

The recommendations from various enquires and reports, coupled with the demand from the Irish public to regulate the care industry has led to the establishment of a number of statutory regulatory bodies for the social care sector (Department of Health, 2016). In 2010, the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) was established as an

independent authority to "drive high-quality and safe care for people using health and social care services in Ireland" (HIQA, 2010, p.3). HIQA's mandate extends across a specified range of public, private and voluntary sector services and its function is to develop standards, inspect and review health and social care services and support informed decisions on how services are delivered (HIQA, 2017).

As previously mentioned in Chapter one, CORU is Ireland's multi-profession health regulator. Its function is to "protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals" (CORU 2016, para 1) and is underpinned in legislation by the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005. It is mandated to regulate all health and social care professionals with 18 professions listed under its current remit. CORU is in the process of approving the social care programmes offered by education providers across Ireland and these programmes will then become the gateway for registration when the social care register opens in November 2023. The establishment of these regulatory bodies have been broadly welcomed by all stakeholders with the expectation that regulation will contribute to professionalizing the social care sector.

The regulatory structures have been strengthened by a profession specific Code of Ethics (CORU, 2016) and a complaints process. As a consequence, social care professionals are required to be familiar with new processes such as audits, evaluations, inspections, professional standards and procedures and they can be subject to a fitness to practice assessment if a complaint is made once the CORU social care register is opened. Research by Boahen (2021) has shown that in the UK the Black Minority Ethnic social care workforce is more likely to face formal disciplinary and regulatory processes such as Fitness to Practice investigations and this is replicated in nursing and other care related

professions (NHS, 2022) and this may be a concern for Black Minority Ethnic social are workers when the register opens in Ireland.

2.5.3 The impact of funding on orientation and outcomes

Traditionally the Irish state provided direct social care service provision complemented by voluntary, community and religious run social care services (Lalor & Share, 2009). However, there has been a significant shift in how the sector has been funded and this has impacted on the orientation and outcomes for service users and employees. Mulkeen (2016) argued that this commoditized approach has given rise to the privatisation and outsourcing of care work by the Irish state and points out that:

> In an era where the mantra of 'evidence based 'policy is ever-present, to date no research has been undertaken in Ireland to measure the impact of marketisation on the quality of care for citizens using services, the working conditions of staff or costs to the state (p.53).

This market driven approach, combined with lack of regulation, has resulted in precarious working conditions for many social care workers leading to the possible exploitation of those employed by these providers (Mulkeen, 2016; Pembroke, 2018). It is notable that recent legislation prohibits the use of zero contract hours under the Employment Miscellaneous Provisions Act (2018), but exceptions are allowed which relate to short term relief care work, a feature in many social care settings. As migrant and Black Minority Ethnic social care workers are overrepresented in relief and agency work (MCRI, 2020; TASC, 2022) the privatisation of care is particularly relevant to this study.

The financing of health and social care has been reported as being ad-hoc and crisis driven, and this uncertainty has influenced how the sector has developed with inadequate planning, poor service evaluation and resource allocation (Power & Darcy, 2017). A

consequence of this funding model is that frontline organisations can be required to compete for funding annually which reduces the services to adopting a "fire-fighting approach" (McVerry, 2017, np). In response, many statutory care services introduced the Commissioning funding model (HSE, 2016; NDA, 2013; Tusla, 2018) which stipulates that consideration be given to the evidence of effectiveness in the planning monitoring and evaluation of services to meet needs (Gillen et al., 2013). This model has further reoriented the role and function of community and social care services, requiring social care workers to provide evidence and justification for resource allocation.

The shift in how funding and resourcing of the sector is managed has had a significant impact on the skill set required by social care workers. There is now a greater emphasis on understanding the wider organisational culture and socio-political context and less on the practical skills of care (McGarr & Fingleton, 2020). CORU Standards of Proficiency (SCWRB, 2017) require graduates to have high levels of verbal and written communication competency. For those who are motivated to care for others and have a skill set rooted in the practical skills of caring and advocacy, the procedural tasks can be challenging. The Migrants Rights Centre Ireland MRCI (2012) suggested that migrant workers may require additional resources and time to learn and develop the knowledge and skills required and that this can impact on their progression in the sector.

2.5.4 Professional identity

The positioning of social care as a profession and the continuing evolvement has been subject to discussion for many years (SCI, 2010). The complex nature of social care work and the unregulated nature of the sector have contributed to the confusion of role, the scope and definition what a social care professional is in Ireland (Lyons & Brown, 2021; SCI, 2016). Social Care was recently described as a "new profession" at the launch of the

CORU[13] National Standards (CORU, 2016) despite the fact that social care workers have been employed in the state for over thirty years. There have been efforts to define and protect the title of social care worker (CORU, 2016; Lyons & Brown, 2021; Mc Hugh, 2020), but many graduates continue to work under a broad range of titles such as project worker, facilitator, support worker, night support and team leader (Grad Ireland, 2016).

Social care, situated in the wider care sector has often been perceived as second-class work, performed by uneducated and unskilled employees (ILO, 2018; Turnpenny & Hussein, 2022). As the sector is largely unregulated and only recently been added to the CORU remit for standardization and regulation in Ireland, there is a perceived notion that 'anyone' can do this work (Mulkeen, 2016). Policy makers, funding agencies and employers have demonstrated a lack of understanding of the complexity of caring as a profession (Brown, 2016; Kings Fund Project, 2019). Roldan (2018) argued that this view is compounded by the dominant ethos of postmodernism and neoliberalism with the primacy of market economics de-emphasising the greater social good.

2.6 The landscape of higher education in Ireland

Higher education in Ireland is provided by established Universities, Institutes of Technology (IOT), Colleges of Education, National Colleges, National and Chartered Institutions in Ireland. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) provides an oversight role on the HE system and is the lead agency in the creation of a co-ordinated systems for HEIs. The HEA provide statistical data on all aspects of HE (2021) and in 2021 reported that there were 245,600 students enrolled in HE in 2020/21. Despite the factors associated with COVID-19 there has been an overall increase in enrolment of 12.6% since 2014/15. The significance of education as a tool to assist people to move beyond social and

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[13] CORU is the National Regulatory body for Health and Social care professionals in Ireland.

economic exclusion has been long recognized in literature and research (OECD, 2012; 1998; Bernard, 2001; UNICEF, 1989; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2019). Linehan and Hogan (2008) considered HE as a "powerful and life-changing instrument in the process of social integration" (p.3). Therefore, it could be argued HE is a vehicle which moves people beyond economic and social exclusion and according to Coakley & MacEniri (2007), this is "particularly true of immigrants" (p.4). Consequently, an accessible and equitable HE system is particularly important for migrants and Black Ethnic Minorities as it should promote equality and provide opportunities for progression and social integration.

There are numerous motivating factors in the decision to gain a higher-level qualification. Hussein & Manthorpe (2012) reported that many migrant students come from middle-class backgrounds and have high levels of educational achievement and expectations. Working in the care sector can result in reduced social and economic mobility for migrants, so by gaining a professional qualification, it may enable some rebuilding of economic and social capital lost in the migration process. Petzhold & Moog (2017) contended that international students value education as a personal development experience over academic advancement, while other research suggests that migrant students are highly motivated and place a very high value on education, in particular HE (EU, 2013; HEA, 2016; NUS, 2011). However, Parker & Villapando (2007) found that Black Minority Ethnic students had lower expectations that a HE qualification would improve their career prospects and were less likely to come to university to experience university life and to meet new people. Kaplan-Levy (2017) and Lashley (2014) discovered that Black students who are mothers were motivated to set an example for their children and become positive role models for them. Research by Dolea & Adams (2005) and Johnson & Long (2019) suggested that care professionals are motivated to

study social care by life experiences and hope to gain personal insights and understandings, address unmet needs and advocate for others.

2.6.1 Critical Race Theory and higher education in Ireland.

Recent scepticism of internationalisation and globalisation, which can be heard in public and political debates on trade, open borders, migration and refugees also extends to the field of HE (Van der Wende, 2016). Xenophobia and discrimination against foreign students have long been reported in developed countries such as Australia, South Africa and Russia (Van der Wende, 2017) and ENAR (2018) noted the increase of migrant students reporting racism, discrimination and intolerance in HE in Ireland from 2014 to 2017.

Institutional and structural racism and discrimination that critical race theorists describe is evident in studies on HE. The Runnymede Trust (2016) observed that universities and colleges in the UK with high numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students have less resources and are considered less prestigious. According to Dodgson (2017) the numbers of Black students applying for, receiving offers from and attending Oxford and Cambridge universities in the UK are chronically low and these institutions acknowledge that more must be done. Critical race theorist Bonilla-Silva (2014) argued that rewarding of property and power over justice results in interest convergence and that White people promote racial advances only when their own interests are served. The deficiency of Black academic staff in HEIs enables the dominant White group to justify power by constructing reality through stories that maintain their control and privilege (Joseph, 2020). Delpit (1988) wrote about Black people's voices being seldom heard in HEIs and how they are effectively silenced as White people view their perspective as the only truth. Darby (2020) and Ní Chonaill (2016) suggested that the Eurocentric and dominant White nature of HE in Ireland inhibits other perspectives from being explored or discussed

beyond the focus on racist incidents and bullying, while Kitching and Curtin (2012) claimed that institutional racism goes mainly unnoticed and unchallenged by those within HEIs and by society at large.

In the UK, as a result of the increase in the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students attending HE, there has been a heightened awareness of structural and institutional racism in HEIs. Campaigns such as *Rhodes must fall* (RMF, Oxford, 2014), *Decolonising the Curriculum*, (SOAS, 2016) and *Mind the Gap* (NUS, Equality Challenge unit, 2017) are all recent movements, underpinned by the core principles of CRT, have addressed these issues, resulting in significant changes to HEIs in the UK (Cureton et al., 2019). The introduction of the Race Equality Charter[14] (Advance HE, 2021) currently being adopted by many HEIs in the UK provides a framework through which institutions work to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students. Similar to the Athena Swan award[15], member institutions develop programmes and solutions for action and can apply for a Bronze or Silver Race Equality Charter award, depending on their level of progress. The Race Equality Charter (Advance HE, 2022) aims to improve the representation, progress and success of Black Minority Ethnic students and staff mirroring the diversity found in wider society.

2.6.2 Equality, inclusion and diversity in higher education

Educational institutions tend to mirror wider societal views and perspectives and Linehan & Hogan (2008) claimed that societal inequities are "most apparent in higher education" (2008, p.17). EDI policies, strategies and frameworks for HE in Ireland (National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015; National Strategy for Higher Education

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[14] Race Equality Charter
[15] The Athena Swan Charter is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research.

2030; International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-2020) are underpinned by legislation (Equal Status Act 2000; Qualifications Act (Education and Training) 1999; University Act 1997). The recent Higher Education Authority Act (2021) provided an updated legislative basis to advance EDI in HEIs. The Higher Education Authority (HEA)[16] has emphasised the importance of embedding the principles of equality and social inclusion in Irish education policy and allocated responsibility to the National Access Policy Office to ensure the needs of a diverse range of students are catered for within HE (HEA, 2016).

One of the initial strategies specifically targeting the diversity and equality needs of Black Minority Ethnic students in Ireland was the 2010 Intercultural Education Strategy (IES). This resulted in the roll out a National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) which aims to ensure that all students experience an education that "respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" (Education Act, 1998, p.2). The IES also proposed that assistance and support be provided for education providers to ensure that inclusion and integration is embedded in intercultural education. However, a number of key issues continue to exist for Black Minority Ethnic students in levels of access, reduced engagement and lower retention and attainment levels in HE compared to White students (HEA, 2013). The Higher Education Authority Act (2021) sets out to ensure that HE advances equality, diversity and inclusion by being adaptive to the needs of students and using knowledge creation to advance social, economic and cultural development. This legislation strengthens previous strategies by setting conditions for funding HEIs and provides for the application of remedial measures if there is non-compliance. However, the core tenets of CRT remind us that racism is deeply embedded in the psyche of people and interest

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[16] Higher Education Authority (HEA) is the statutory body governing higher level education in Ireland.

convergence is used as a protective measure so until the efficacy of the legislation is evidenced there is a concern that the incongruence between the official discourse and what happens in practice will continue.

2.6.3 Widening participation in higher education

With increasing numbers of students attending HE in Ireland and predictions for these numbers to rise further (HEA, 2016), initiatives to widen participation such as Access programmes[17] and Springboard[18] have become an important driving force in creating access for all. As participation increases, Collins & Slembrouck (2005) cautioned of the danger of two-tiered approach emerging in HE as has happened in the UK (The Guardian, 2011) and Germany (Nikolai, 2019). In the UK, this stratification has happened between the old traditional and often elite institutions and the new recently created universities which are perceived to be less prestigious by some. Reay et al. (2005) suggested that these divisions exist because of ethnic and social class, so despite more places being available generally in HE, the majority of places at the old universities are taken by those from more privileged backgrounds and working class, ethnic minority students attend the newer less prestigious colleges. Blommaert et al. (2005) argued that this reproduces inequality rather than solving it as it created "a massive stratified system which allocates different kinds of knowledge to differently placed students" (p. 270). Similar divisions are becoming evident in Ireland between the established university sector which could be considered the equivalent of the old universities in the UK and the newer Technological Universities which are mergers of Institutes of Technologies (IOT's). HEA figures from 2017/2018 reported that the IOT's have significantly more international students enrolled

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[17] The Access Foundation Programme (AFP) is a one-year full-time course preparing students, both personally and academically, to pursue undergraduate programmes

[18] Springboard+ courses are available to the unemployed, returners (formerly homemakers), formerly self-employed, the employed and recent graduates. Most of the courses are offered on a part-time basis for a maximum of 12 months and are open to all eligible applicants regardless of their employment status

than the University sector and in 2019 out of 232,000 students enrolled in HE in Ireland, the IOT's had 3.1% African students enrolled compared to 1.7% in universities (HEA, 2019).

Dillon (2011) claimed that non-traditional access routes to HE has been negatively impacted by the over-emphasis of academic credentials and qualifications and increased competition for college places. With CORU now effectively setting the admission criteria for social care programmes through the approval of education programmes in Ireland, the advanced entry route that many Black Minority Ethnic students traditionally used to access HE may effectively be closed off (CORU, 2016, TUD, 2019). This stricter admission criteria therefore may have the unintentional consequence of reducing the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students accessing social care education. It may also result in capping or restricting life-long learning opportunities for these already marginalised groups and individuals (Dillon, 2011).

A number of studies in the UK highlight how resources have been targeted at access to HE, with student participation, integration and attainment often being overlooked (Care Council for Wales, 2010; Jacobs et al., 2007; Singh, 2011). Evidence of this was found in a study of social work students in the UK, where Dillon (2011) described that that the emphasis on equality and fairness was heavily weighted towards access routes rather than focusing on outcomes for Black Minority Ethnic students and other minority groups. The data from the UK Equality Challenge Unit (2015) established that Black Minority Ethnic students with similar entry qualifications and socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to achieve a degree, gain a first or higher-level honours degree or to move to graduate employment in their area of study. A major review carried out for the HEFCE[19] in the

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[19] HEFCE; The Higher Education Funding Council for England distributed public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges.

UK identified types of curricula, student-staff relations, psychological and social support offered, student financial hardship, assessment practices and student-student relationships as the key factors influencing attainment (HEFCE, 2015).

2.6.4 Categorisation of Black Minority Ethnic students in higher education.

Accessing accurate data or statistical knowledge about Black Minority Ethnic students in HE in Ireland is complex as they are subsumed in the broader categories such as non-Irish, non-standard or international (HEA, 2016). Categorising, defining, describing and quantifying this diverse group of students is therefore a difficult task, not just because clear categorisations have yet to be developed (Connor et al., 2004; Singh, 2011), but also because terminology is laden with values shaped by cultural norms and stereotypical viewpoints (Lutterback & Beelmann, 2021). In HE categorisation of students as access, international or nonstandard denotes difference (HEA, 2016) and can have the potential to both 'other' and 'privilege' students. The term Black Minority Ethnic implies a similarity that does not exist, and this grouping is often completely heterogenous with many different nationalities, languages and culture contributing to the problem of categorisation (Stevenson et al., 2019). Research by Heng (2018) and Huang & Turner (2018) reported that HEIs tend to view this broad grouping of diverse students from a deficit perspective, focusing on difficulties in language proficiency, cultural adjustment, poor social integration and lack of preparation for western cultural norms rather than the benefits they offer. Research in the UK by the Office for Students (OFS) (Stevenson et al., 2019) categorised the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students under access, participation, retention and qualification attainment and this offered insights into these students' journey to and through HE.

2.6.5 Pedagogical approaches and perspectives

The current profile of students attending HE in Ireland is a tapestry of variation in social background, ethnicity, race, gender and ability (HEA, 2019). This diversity has challenged the traditional values, assumptions and conventions that have held fast for many decades in HEIs in Ireland. Black Minority Ethnic students that have primary and tertiary educational experiences in other countries may have a diverse range of capacity and skill due to different pedagogical practices and approaches and this may impact on engagement, communication, groupwork, academic writing and influence educators' viewpoints (Darby, 2020; Harris & Ní Chonaill, 2016; Razack, 2001).

Student participation and engagement in teaching, learning and assessment has been the subject of research and new inclusive pedagogical approaches are emerging (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Herodotou et al. 2017). Nonetheless, teaching continues to be carried out predominantly through lectures, placing the educator as the primary authority with assessments tending to focus more on learning outcomes than on learning processes (Cowden & Singh, 2013; OECD, 2009). Parker & Villapando (2007) reported that institutional design, governance, curricula, pedagogy and research approaches all reflect a narrow view of knowing and interpreting the world. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why students from diverse backgrounds feel alienated and daunted by the current HE environment (Reed & Adams, 2020).

2.6.5.1 Bias and labelling in higher education

One of the measures used to conceptualise and understand others is to define, categorise and label. Bhopal (2014) claimed this categorising and labelling has been instrumental in othering, excluding those who are not within the 'norm' category. Howard (2003) suggested that Black Minority Ethnic students can be labelled as "lazy, poor, primitive, uneducated, unmotivated and unresponsive to interventions" (p.66) reinforcing the persistent belief that minority students are low achievers which in turn perpetuates the

culturally alienating power structures through the promotion of White middle-class norms (Murray, 2018; Zentella, 1997). Bucholtz & Hall (2004) propose that this can be viewed as a socially constructed practice that adversely positions some customs and practices "diminishing the importance of one group in comparison to another group with more social capital or resources and opportunities" (p.598).

Research on othering[20] has its foundations in psychology, anthropology and sociology and offers an exploration of inclusion or exclusion based on racial and ethnic identity in a variety of sociocultural contexts (Palfreyman, 2005). The creation of an "us" versus "them" binary is based on perceived differences from the "norm" and several researchers (Balogun, 2020; Lewis, 1998; Young, 2005) reported that othering based on race, ethnicity, religion and skin colour stem from racial and cultural ambiguity. As Ireland has historically been a monocultural and monoracial society (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2016) it is faced with coming to terms with the new 'other', sometimes described as the 'new Irish' with a particular focus on the most visible 'other' Black Minority Ethnic people.

2.6.5.2 Integration, belonging and acculturation in higher education
The response to EDI legislation, policies and directives has created a degree of urgency to promote inclusion, integration and belonging in HE in Ireland (RIA, 2021). Once students have navigated access to HE, research suggests that the next stage is settling in (Ginty & Boland, 2016; Hunt, 2011). It is widely agreed that entering HE can be an unnerving, isolating and intimidating experience (Kuh, 2003; Lowe & Cook, 2003). Research into first year student experiences demonstrate that resourcing and support are essential to enable successful transitions (McInnis, 2001). Initiatives such as longer

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[20] Othering is a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group.

induction periods, peer-mentoring and academic skills workshops have been productive, but tend to be generic and not targeted specifically at students with diverse backgrounds and needs (Morosanu et al., 2010).

Connor et al. (2004) reported that in Ireland, Black Minority Ethnic students stated they felt less welcome in HE than they did in second level and interestingly that finding is reversed for White students. The authors suggested that this might indicate the more welcoming nature of the Eurocentric values of the university for White people (Connor et al., 2004; Modood, 2021). Fordham (1988) reported that Black Minority Ethnic students believed that in order for them to be academically successful, they must "become raceless" or "act white" (p.203). Bourdieu (1968) described the dynamics of social class and how members of higher-class groups adopted various methods to protect and reproduce their social positions. He suggested "when habitus encounters a social world of which it is a product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 127). Black Minority Ethnic students in HE in Ireland tend to be the minority grouping in HE so it may be more of the 'fish out of water' experience for them. Kitching & Curtin (2012) argued that identity, skin colour, race and ethnicity are constructed though "institutional racism and the postcolonial bureaucratic and migratory context of Ireland" (p.29) resulting in the othering of Black Minority Ethnic students.

As social care education is underpinned by the core tenets of social justice, it is crucial to gain insights into how the principles of equality, justice and inclusion are experienced by Black Minority ethnic social care students. The literature provides evidence of categorisation, labelling, stereotyping and othering in social work and social care education (Fairtlough, 2014; Tedam, 2014). Hillen & Levy (2015) described how Black social work students in Scotland reported being laughed at for their pronunciation,

ignored or excluded from groupwork projects and experienced direct and hostile questioning in class discussions. Tedam (2014) and Fairtlough (2014) also reported students experiencing racism and discrimination while accessing and participating in practice modules and placements.

A number of studies reported groupwork as a particular site of exclusion for Black Minority Ethnic social work students in HE (Masocha, 2015; Razack, 2001) Black Minority Ethnic students may possess culturally divergent knowledge and communication styles therefore have a different understanding of group-work norms (Cox et al., 1991; Brett et al., 2006; Hall, 1990). This can result in "work that they contributed not acknowledged or utilised" (Razack, 2001, p. 226). Bandura (1991) argued that these experiences may result in reduced engagement as the student's self-efficacy is affected and they may be less motivated to work as a group or in a team, participate in class or on placement.

By drawing on psychological and sociological theories of belonging, some insights into the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students can be gained. Belonging has been referred to as the need for love and affection (Murray, 1938), belongingness (Goodenow, 1993; Maslow, 1954), affiliation motivation (McClelland, 1987), the need for positive regard from others (Rogers, 1951) and the need for relatedness to others and the world around (Deci & Ryan, 1991; Ryan, 1991). Yuval-Davis (2006) described how the potential mismatch between a student's background and that of the institution may result in students not feeling like they belong. However, Hausmann et al. (2009) argued that social relationships with like-minded fellow students positively influenced an individual's sense of belonging while Hurtado (2007) emphasised the importance of cross-racial interactions "for a higher sense of belonging on campus" (p.190).

Tinto (1987) claimed that levels of perceived belonging have a powerful effect on students' emotional, motivational, and academic functioning. Socialising and interactions outside of the classroom can enhance sense of belonging. However, Singh (2011) discovered that Black Minority Ethnic students were less focused on the social aspects of university life than white student counterparts and were "less likely to identify with University life" (p.8). While racial identification was one reason offered, the study reported that Black Minority ethnic students frequently travelled long distances to university and had work commitments that reduced their opportunities to socialise. Connor et al. (2004) and the National Union of Students in the UK (NUS) (2011) noted that socialising in pubs and where there was alcohol acted as a deterrent for some Black Minority Ethnic students to interact with classmates as it was not part of their cultural or religious beliefs. The implications of decreased opportunities to socialise and interact with other students were evidenced in the lower sense of belonging expressed by students in the study (NUS, 2011).

Acculturation requires people to make sense of belonging to country of origin and host country. Given that greater integration is associated with greater adjustment in permanent migrant populations (Berry, 2006) it can be argued that higher acculturation will also be associated with improved outcomes for Black Minority Ethnic student populations in HE. Chirkov et al. (2017) suggested that acculturation motivation can be positively connected to academic adjustment and institutional attachment because those with higher acculturation motivation are more likely to integrate. However, balancing one's heritage culture with host countries can be a stressful process as navigating the complexity of dual citizenship and belonging can impact on individual well-being (Smith & Silva, 2011; Wang et al., 2010).

2.6.5.3 Language competence and academic achievement in higher education

Language capability and competence is recognised as one of the main challenges for those who do not have English as a first language in HE (HEA, 2008; Harris & Ní Chonaill, 2016). Black Minority Ethnic students that gain access to HE are increasingly subjected to assessment of language proficiency and in particular academic literacy (Berry & Loke, 2011; Bhopal, 2014). These students are linguistically and culturally diverse and include those that have acquired English as a first language, as an additional language as well as English based creoles[21] and varieties of English spoken in ex British colonies. This can cause issues in classification and pedagogy as students from countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, who are educated through the medium of English, are not classed as ESOL students (English for speakers of other languages). NUS (2011) reported that as these students are regarded as neither ESOL or 'home' students they often fall between the cracks in receiving language and academic writing supports. Furthermore, NUS (2011) found that while many migrant students appear fluent, they may have had underlying deficits in comprehension and academic writing that impact on their academic learning and attainment. Taguma et al. (2009) reported that migrant students need "longer supports to achieve mastery of academic English" (p.9) while Warner (2006) in a report commissioned by Pobal[22], noted that migrant students experience difficulties understanding lecturers due to accents, colloquialisms, subject specific wording or the delivery speed. These difficulties may result in a reluctance to ask questions or contribute to class (NUS, 2016; Singh & Kwhali, 2015).

In contrast to what has been described above, the increase and change in migration patterns has resulted in the emergence of a generation of young Black Minority Ethnic

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[21] Creole languages developed in colonial European plantation settlements in the 17th and 18th centuries as a result of contact between groups that spoke mutually unintelligible languages.

[22] Pobal works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion and development

students that have been born to highly mobile parents and have spent a significant portion of their formative years outside their home countries. Pollock and Van Reken (200, p.8) referred to these as "Third Culture Kids" who are often bi- or multilingual, acting transnationally and Faye (2016) reported that they tend to be excellent cross-cultural communicators, academically literate and interested in furthering their education. This new generation challenges commonly held assumptions about the homogeneous nature of Black Minority Ethnic students and the deficit perspective that can be applied to them.

2.6.5.4 Academic writing

Language competency is the foundation for academic writing and a principal feature of academic literacy is the requirement to switch "writing styles and genres between one setting and another, to deploy a repertoire of literacy practices appropriate to each setting, and to handle the social meanings and identities that each evokes" (Lea & Street, 1998, p.371). Academic writing can be very discipline specific, and Rai (2004) argued that social work students from diverse cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds may have more difficulty acculturating to writing expectations. Rai (2004) contended that for these social work students, the challenges may be exacerbated by the requirement to develop hybrid writing skills to demonstrate the application and integration of abstract theory to personalized practice experiences These difficulties are acknowledged by Wong et al. (2021) who reported that Black Minority Ethnic students are often unprepared and under resourced for the challenges in writing for the discipline.

The CORU Standards of Proficiency (2016) in Ireland require graduates to be proficient in drafting accurate case notes, evaluating interventions, completing grant applications and writing legally binding documents. Thus, social care students need to be proficient in both academic writing and in discipline-specific practice skills for the profession. Wale & Bishaw (2020) found that there are substantial differences between students' and

lecturers' expectations and understanding of which academic skills need improvement with students highlighting jargon, while educators emphasized critical thinking and argumentation as the main area for concern.

2.6.5.5 Attainment

Research by Hyams et al. (2019) demonstrated the problematic perceptions of some educators that Black Minority Ethnic students possess inadequate academic ability. Studies by Bamford & Sergiou (2005) and Marklein (2017) reported higher levels of academic misconduct among Black Minority Ethnic students and noted that educators often expect Black Minority Ethnic students to plagiarise because "they don't understand what plagiarism means" (Marklein, 2017, p.7). Researchers (Strangfeld, 2019; Dee & Jacob, 2012) noted how unintentional plagiarism can occur because of deficits in language, lack of sufficient knowledge of citation techniques or because the student is unsure if the information they are presenting is common knowledge, therefore not needing citation. Owusu-Kwarteng (2021) contended that educators' expectations of underachievement amongst Black Minority Ethnic students reinforced by negative stereotyping actually contributed to academic underachievement. Transmitting low expectations to students can "make it difficult to believe that it is possible to succeed" (Lee, 2011 p. 638). Rubie-Davies (2017) made direct correlations between teachers' expectations and student attainment and advocates the need for more positive reinforcement. Researchers argue that these perceptions constitute institutional racism, thus potentially impeding performance and attainment (Barblan et al., 2007; O Malley, 2018;).

DeVita (2007) argued that Black Minority Ethnic students are often viewed from a deficit perspective in HE and Singh (2018) claimed that this can provide a justification for lower grade allocation. Another viewpoint explains under achievement as a result of students

experiencing more disengagement, alienation, negative attitudes from staff and other students, which may result in lower self-esteem and lack of confidence affecting progression and attainment (Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007). A more radical assessment of the problem considers the wider issues such as the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum, lower educator expectations, ghettoization, segregation and othering (Ladson-Billings, 2006)

Critical race theorists argue that the wider contextual issues such as historical positioning, stereotyping, lack of voice and agency contribute to reduced levels of social, cultural, linguistic and economic capital for Black Minority Ethnic students, impacting on attainment and progression (Crichlow, 2015; Wong, 2021). Loke & Berry (2011) and Morgan (2016) suggested that the focus for HEIs should go beyond the challenges of attainment for individual students and that the reproduction of White superiority and supremacy that underpins the devaluation of the knowledge and ability of Black Minority Ethnic students' needs to be addressed before progress can be made.

2.6.5.6 Supports and resources for Black Minority Ethnic students
Supports for students to access and attend HE such as the SUSI[23] grant system, HEAR[24] and DARE[25] schemes are recognised as vital for students with additional and intersecting needs (HEA, 2021). Once enrolled, student services promote educational, language, social and wellbeing supports for students (Botticello & West, 2021). However, Muller (2001) argued that some of these students require lecturers, peers or class leaders to explicitly offer resources and they may need additional support to reach out and request

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[23] Student Universal Support Ireland [SUSI] is Ireland's national awarding authority for all higher and further education grants.
[24] The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) is a college and university scheme that offers places on reduced points and extra college support to those who are resident in the Republic of Ireland and underrepresented at Higher Education due to their socio-economic background.
[25] The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. DARE offers reduced points places to school leavers who, as a result of having a disability, have experienced additional educational challenges in second level education.

help. This understanding may be based on previous educational experiences in home countries, where supports for students were unavailable, unattainable, had a cost or were negatively perceived (Dhanda, 2009; Shaheen, 2016).

Dumas–Hines (2001) recommended that "retention strategies need to provide counselling, tutoring, academic support, career planning and placement services, as well as work to improve the social and racial climate on campus and cultural competency skills of academic support staff" (p.182). Other researchers highlight the need for more holistic supports for Black Minority Ethnic students in HE, arguing for a more personalised approach (Alves, 2019; Kauser, et al., 2021) where personal circumstances such as trauma and other individual needs are considered. Acknowledging the emotional, psychological and traumatic aspects of social work training, Cree (2010) argued for a reappraisal of how Black Minority Ethnic students are supported and valued in social work education so that they can be effective practitioners.

2.7 Social care education

Social care education in Ireland is underpinned by the aforementioned CORU (2016) Standards of Proficiency for social care workers. The minimum per-requisite qualification to practice as a social care worker in the publicly funded social care sector is a Level 7 degree requiring a minimum of three academic years in HE. Until recently, undergraduate social care degree programmes at Level 7 and 8 were offered in all IOTs in Ireland and while the merge of the IOTs into Technological Universities has resulted in some changes, social care continues to be an option in every IOT and Technological University in Ireland. Social care programmes offer core modules in professional practice, psychology, sociology, attachment, groupwork and communication, social justice, disability, addiction, creative arts and many other electives. Social care students are required to complete a minimum of 800 supervised practice placement hours on

graduation. The practice placement is a central component of social care education where students develop their practice skills, self-awareness and integrate and apply theoretical knowledge (Mc Sweeney & Williams, 2018). Due to the dearth of research on Black Minority Ethnic social care student experiences, the researcher will draw on research pertaining to social workers, which can be of relevance to social care work given the close alignment of the professions.

2.7.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion in social care education

While social care education advocates a commitment to EDI, research shows that internationally social work and social care graduates continue to be predominantly White and female (Boniol et al. 2019; Crisp & Meleady, 2012; Sakamoto et al. 2008). Meanwhile there is an increasing over-representation of Black Ethnic Minority service users in child protection, youth justice and children's residential services in the UK (Bernard, 2021; Carter, 2021) and in Ireland (Coulter, 2015). In light of this UK based researchers Singh & Kwhali (2015) and Laird (2008) reiterated the importance of having Black Minority Ethnic social care professionals employed in the sector. The absence of Black Minority Ethnic educators in Irish HE is also noted by Joseph (2019) and Crisp & Cruz (2009) recommended an increase of ethnic diversity in teaching teams in social work education so as to bring a full understanding of the challenges that are presented in a multicultural society.

The increase in diversity in student population and the absence of Black academic staff on social care programmes have highlighted the need to develop skills and practices in EDI. The literature emphasised the need for ongoing and robust education in cultural competence for educators, students and practitioners (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998; Gallardo, 2014). Cultural competence in social care work is multifaceted and defined as "The process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to

people of all cultures" (The National Association of Social Workers, 2015, p.13). Cultural competence is a core requirement for relationship-based practice and can be referred to as cultural appropriateness, awareness, acceptance, tolerance and sensitivity in social care modules (Appendix A CORU Proficiencies). Cultural competence requires social care workers to acknowledge and understand their own positionality and Tervalon & Murray-Garcia (1998) suggested the initial starting point should be one of "cultural humility" (p.118). Cultural humility encourages self-reflection and professional evolvement connecting social distance as well as power differential between the social care worker and the client (Moncho, 2013; Ramanathan, 2014).

According to Slavin (1995), one of the most important ways to address inherent bias is by promoting sensitivity to others and their cultures. Cultural awareness training for HE staff that have primary (chaplaincy, international officer) and secondary (technical and administrative staff) contact has been shown to be effective and Trice (2004) purported that through education, socio cultural issues can be explored, advanced and addressed. Peer and reverse mentoring programmes have also been effective in facilitating interaction and developing better cultural understanding (Hurd et al., 2012; Sanchez et al. 2021). Westwood and Barker (1990) found that pairing international students with local students enhanced their academic performance, reduced the dropout rate and assisted in diluting the cultural dominance faced by the outsider in a larger group. Chang et al. (2006) suggested that cross-cultural interaction supported students critical thinking and increased problem-solving skills and intellectual and social confidence in their study cross cultural education, however Sims (2007) in a study of students' experiences of diversity in HE in the UK, reported that inadequate resources were a barrier to meaningful change

Researchers have called for training on racism, anti-discriminatory practice, ethnicity, culture and competence to be prioritised in HEIs and proposed it be facilitated in an

exploratory, experiential manner (Darby, 2020; Dillon, 2011; Fairtlough et al., 2014). Kitching & Curtain (2012) suggested that setting rules that have a clear no tolerance policy towards racial discrimination ensures students feel more secure in the class. More recently Ní Chonaill et al. (2021) and Darby (2020) recommended initiatives and campaigns to address structural and institutional power imbalances and inequalities by embedding anti-racism practice across all aspects of HEIs and in particular in youth work and social care.

2.7.2 Cultural perceptions and social care education

Literature on cultural perceptions is relevant to this study as it relates to Black Minority Ethnic experiences of social care education and practice. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist theory emphasizes the significance of the cultural background of the individual, as the cultural context of cognition influences the way a person may respond to processing, managing and presenting information. When engaging in problem solving and decision-making, students need to negotiate cultural barriers, often rooted in different frames of reference, values and norms (Cox & Blake, 1991). Triandis (1994) found that expectations between the personal versus common or group goals may also be strongly swayed by cultural perspectives. An example of this is how conflict is understood. According to Doucet & John (1997) conflict is culturally defined and can be viewed very differently depending on cultural background. Some cultures tend to avoid open conflict as it may be seen to be obstructive and could be viewed as a negative influence on the cohesion and progression of the group (Triandis, 1994).

Wnedt et al. (2009) reported how perceptions of leadership also vary across cultures and genders. Black Minority Ethnic female students may find themselves a variance with taking a leadership role where there are men in the group, due to cultural norms within their community (Hillen, 2013; Singh, 1999). Hofstede (2001) observed that "ideas about

leadership reflect the dominant culture of a country. Asking people to describe the qualities of a good leader is in fact another way of asking them to describe their culture" (p.388). This was evident in the Hillen & Levy (2015) study on Black Minority Ethnic social work students in Scotland where they "expressed uncertainty about ways to question and challenge men without being seen as 'disrespectful'" (p.8). Other literature from the UK on Black Minority Ethnic social work students (Hillen, 2013; Singh, 2011) identified the need to further examine female subordination and oppression within patriarchal societies and structures in the context of social work practice in order to address the differing cultural approaches to leadership.

2.7.2.1 Curriculum

As HE strategies and policies reiterate the importance of recruiting and supporting a diverse range of students (HEA, 2019; TUD 2021) it follows that curricula need to be adapted to accommodate the needs of these students, reflecting the centrality of EDI in HE (Darby & Dowling, 2020). Bond (2003a) described diversifying the curriculum as "integrating an intercultural dimension into the course content, materials, teaching and assessment" (p.2) and suggested this can be achieved in a number of different ways. The simplest way is the 'add-on' approach where a reading or an assignment is added to the existing course content. Notably, Burnapp (2006) suggested that this approach loses the opportunity to have a real sense of embedded broad cultural learning. According to Bond (2003a) the most widely used method is infusing the curriculum with intercultural content and selecting relevant course materials and content while integrating students' experiences into the learning activities. With this method, more preparation and participation of lecturers and students is required but Bond (2003a; 2003b) claims that this approach does not adequately address the problem. The most difficult but transformative method is developing an intercultural curriculum. Such a process demands

significant change, but if successful it can lead to a climate of respect and trust and better outcomes for students, staff and institutions (Bond, 2003a).

Recent campaigns to decolonise the curriculum in the UK (NUS, 2016; Rhodes Must Fall, 2015) have been building momentum. In Ireland, Darby's (2020) study on belonging in HE recommended curriculum diversification as a key step in the EDI process. An example is Darby and Dowling's (2021) recently piloted Building MultiStories project in TU Dublin Blanchardstown campus. Through collaboration with business students, academic staff and library services, culturally diverse materials, resource and assessments were identified and a 'Discover diversity library collection' was developed based on student recommendations.

An inclusive curriculum is particularly important for social care students given the divergent nature of the work and the strong focus on EDI (Darby, 2020; Dillon, 2011; Tedam, 2014). Flynn & Sweeney (2020) claimed that if social care education is to deliver both formal and informal curricula in a way that reflects the variety of social practice, it must reflect the full spectrum of cultures, traditions and systems prevailing in society and provide all students with a more balanced representation of society to prepare them to work and compete in a globalized world.

2.7.2.2 Social care placements

Placements are an integral component of social care programmes. For Black Minority Ethnic social care students to effectively engage in placements, work with clients, families and in community and residential settings, there is an inherent expectation that they will understand the political and socio-cultural contexts that these social care services operate within (CORU, 2016; SCI, 2014;). In the absence of research on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students on placement, research on the experiences of social work students will be used as it is of relevance to social care

students. Fairtlough (2014) reported that providing opportunities on placement for students to utilise their knowledge of languages, culture and other competencies they possess could enhance the experience for all stakeholders.

Researchers (Hillen & Levy, 2015; Singh, 2018) reported that Black Minority Ethnic students found it more difficult to secure practice placements than their White fellow students Research by Wilson et al. (2009) on social work students highlighted that social work practice placement teams have often not been in a position to challenge possible discriminatory behaviour as they are tied to the "cap in hand" "grace and favour" (p.642) sourcing of placements and cannot risk losing a placement partner. Bartoli et al. (2008) also reported that Black Minority Ethnic social work students expressed concerns about the allocation of "poor quality" (p.81) placements due to the lower expectations by tutors.

Adaptation stress was also an issue for some Black Minority Ethnic social work students on placement (Cree, 2010; Equality Challenge Unit, 2012a) and this stress was intensified by the experiences of overt and convert racism by service users and staff (Tedam, 2014). Evidence of discriminatory practice on social work placements was identified in several studies (Fairtlough et al. 2014; Hillen & Levy, 2015; Hussein et al., 2011). Razack (2001) described social work students experiences of being ignored by supervisors and staff, requested to do work that was considered demeaning along with more overt racist attacks by service users such as being called the "N" word or being told to "go home to your own country" (p. 224). Hillen & Levy (2015) highlighted the difficulties students encounter when challenging discriminatory practice on placement and the consequences of not addressing the issues "If you don't say anything then you never learn, and then how on earth are we going to have anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory social workers" (p.24).

A qualitative study in the UK by Fairtlough et al. (2014) on social work students reported that Black Minority Ethnic students felt more scrutinised than White students whilst on

placement and also felt less supported when difficulties arose. As a result, Hillen (2013) &Thomas et al. (2011) described how students responded defensively by underperforming, withdrawing from tasks or they tried to become invisible. Given the structural and related challenges, it is perhaps not unexpected that Black Minority Ethnic students have slower progression rates on social work placements and failure rates are higher for Black African students in particularly (Bartoli et al., 2008; Bernard et al., 2011; Singh, 2015).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter began by setting the scene, describing how globalisation and other factors have resulted in increased migration and global care chains worldwide. Through the lens of CRT, literature pertaining to the construction and interplays of capital, culture and identity on integration and belonging and adaptations are considered. Situating social care in the wider care sector provides context for the experiences of Black Minority ethnic social care students in Ireland. An exploration of the landscape of HE and literature on pedagogical approaches and perspectives offers insights into experiences of scholarship, placements and attainment for Black Minority Ethnic social care students. The literature and research provide the backdrop for subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Methodological approaches to research employed in this study are outlined in this chapter and the rationale for the choice of investigative/analytical framework provided. It is presented in four sections with the first section outlining the research paradigm. Methodology, epistemological and ontological considerations for the study are provided and issues of quality criteria, voice, reflexivity and positionality explored. The second section of the chapter reflects on ethical considerations in the study, confidentiality, informed consent, prevention of harm and ethical approval. Section three of the chapter focuses on research methods. The participants were invited to share their experiences through a combination of semi structured interviews and storytelling. The researcher used a participatory research approach and the motivations of the researcher, key principles and critical issues central to this approach are discussed. Through the combination of CRT, participatory research and utilisation of the core principles of social care practice, issues of belonging, othering, power and privilege, positionality, insider-outsider perspectives and reflexivity are examined. The fourth section presents details on participant recruitment, the pilot study, collecting and transcribing of data. This section also demonstrates how the data were analysed by using the six stages of reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020) and describes the role of the participatory advisory group in the process. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study.

3.1.1 Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an analytical/ investigative framework

The previous chapter explored the core tenets of CRT and how they relate within an Irish context. As literature on CRT confirms that HEIs are one of the key sites of institutional racism and oppression (Ladson-Billing, 2013, Patton, 2015), it is imperative that this

study investigates and challenges racism, discrimination and colour-blindness, defined by DeCuir & Dixon (1999) as a mechanism that allows people to ignore racist policies that perpetuate social inequality. Solórzano & Yosso (2002) proposed "an approach to research grounded in CRT that pushes us to humanize quantitative data and to recognise silenced voices in qualitative data" (p.34). The challenges of terminology and language currently used have been highlighted in the previous chapter and Hayman (1995) claimed that as "race goes through relentless, deconstruction and reconstruction" (p.70) language itself is an "act of epistemology" (Denzin et al., 2008, p.91), therefore research on race and racial inequality requires a framework to underpin conceptualising, investigation and analysis. To address this complexity, the author engaged CRT as a framework for this research employing the core tenets to underpin all stages of the study.

3.2 Research paradigm

On reading the methodological literature, the words *philosophy, approach, methodology, paradigm, worldview, framework* and *methods* are used in subtly different ways. For the purpose of clarity in this study, the researcher will use the terms *research paradigm, qualitative methodology, investigative framework, research approach* and *research methods.* In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's 'worldview'. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) defined paradigms as human constructions which deal with the basic principles indicating where the researcher is coming from so as to construct meaning from data. Therefore, paradigms are important because they provide a rationale for what should be studied, how it should be studied and how the results of the study should be interpreted. The paradigm defines a researcher's philosophical orientation, and this has significant implications for every decision made in the research process including the choice of methodology and method.

The researcher has adapted Guba & Lincoln's (2005) Themes of Knowledge to demonstrate the methodological, ontological and epistemological and perspectives for this study. This paradigm is further expanded in Figure 1 to describe how the basic beliefs in the paradigm inform the practical issues such as the aim of the study, quality criteria, voice, values and ethics, reflexivity and positionality of the researcher.

Figure 1:
Research paradigm: Themes of Knowledge: basic beliefs of inquiry. (Adapted from Guba & Lincoln, 2005
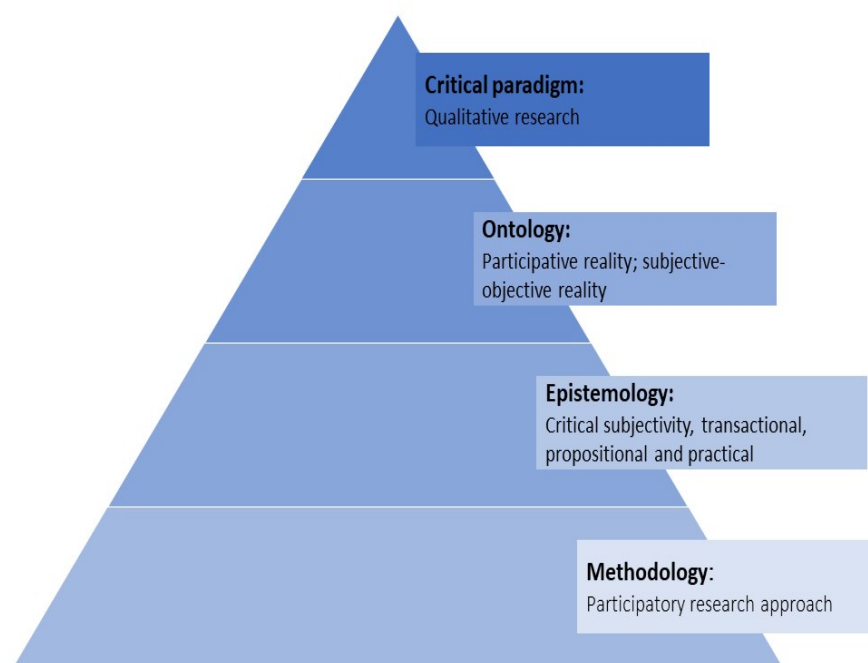
3.2.1 Methodology

Neville (2007) suggested that research explores, describes, explains and reviews existing knowledge, finds new information and devises alternative solutions on many different topics. According to Creswell (2003) and Johnson et al. (2007) there were traditionally two different methodologies to research, quantitative/positivistic or qualitative/ phenomenological. From these developed a third methodology which was a combination

of both and became known as mixed methods. Denscombe (1998) stated "the social researcher is faced with a variety of options and alternatives and has to make strategic decisions about which to choose" (p.3). This led the researcher to explore various methodologies to gain insight, explore experiences and perspectives and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each (Creswell, 2003).

The quantitative or positivistic methodology is conventionally used in the natural sciences and utilises a deductive logic to confirm or deny a research hypothesis. Golafshani (2003) reported that "methods used in quantitative research are highly detailed and tightly structured. Results found are numeric and are statistically robust" (p.597). As the researcher was motivated to investigate the experiences of the participants and capture the nuances of language, emotions and perspective, it was decided that this methodology was not suitable.

The mixed methods methodology described by Johnston et al. (2007) as "a synthesis that includes ideas from qualitative and quantitative research" (p.113), takes a 'real' as distinct from a traditional academic view of the research question. Mixed methods research acknowledges the importance of context and time, the temporal nature of truth, the power and meaning of language, the worth of numbers and the diversity of human nature. It places worth on shared cultural values and does not expect the researcher to stand detached from the research (Robson, 2002). The researcher initially considered the use of mixed methods however, as the target group were notably diverse and their experiences and communication style varied, the researcher believed that a mixed method methodology would not adequately facilitate the collection, analysis and discussion of the rich and nuanced data from the participants.

Qualitative methodology is concerned about the lived experiences and perspectives of individual participants and does not seek to judge, order or attribute generalisation from

their accounts (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2014; Shaw & Holland, 2014). It seeks to identify emergent themes; commonalities as well as differences in individual experiences. Creswell (2007) argued that researchers should conduct qualitative research when they "want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices or hear silenced voices" (p.41). In recent times qualitative contributions to knowledge have become better understood and accepted (Patton, 2015). This is evident in the increasing volume of qualitative research literature for social work, psychology (Shaw & Gould, 2001; Rubin & Babbie, 2008) and in more recent times for migration studies (Zapata-Barrero & Everen, 2018). Research on Black Minority Ethnic people's experiences of health (Moriarty, 2008), mental health services (McDaid & Kousoulis, 2022) and education using a range of qualitative methodologies have been published and include ethnography, action research, case studies and interpretive methods (Berry & Loke, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Singh, 2011).

There are a number of advantages to adopting a qualitative methodology. Firstly, connections are built between research and practice (Ungar & Nichol, 2002) revealing the many nuanced processes related to daily living which would escape notice in a different research focus (Creswell, 2007). Secondly, the methodology facilitates the research to purposefully explore the merits of anti-discriminatory practice and the values of policies on inclusion, anti-oppressive practice and other related areas as outlined in the HEA strategy 2030 (Department of Education and Skills, 2011). Thirdly, the methodology allows for the experiences of seldom-heard voices to be sensitively listened to, probed, recorded, interpreted, understood and amplified. Mertens & Ginsberg (2008) argued the same parameters that underlie effective social work practice in terms of being able to establish rapport with clients and understand the multiple variables impacting on their lives further validates the use of qualitative research methods. This led the researcher to decide that a qualitative methodology would be the most appropriate for this study.

3.2.2 Ontological and epistemological considerations

Experts (Candy, 1989; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) grouped research paradigms together into four main categories: positivist, interpretivist, pragmatic and critical. The positivist paradigm is in the scientific method of investigation and relies on deductive logic, formulation and testing of hypotheses, mathematical equations and calculations (Comte, 1853). The interpretivist paradigm endeavours to understand human behaviour and perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) through understanding and interpreting others 'experiences. The pragmatic paradigm was developed as a response to philosophers concerns about the limitations of using a single method (Patton, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003;) and advocates the use of mixed methods as a pragmatic way to understand human behaviour. The critical paradigm is concerned with social justice research and seeks to address political, social and economic issues, which lead to social oppression, conflict and power imbalances. Because it seeks to confront and change it is sometimes called the transformative paradigm.

Influenced by the work of Guba & Lincoln (2005) and Martens (2015), the researcher decided that the critical paradigm was the most suitable for this research project. Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) attributed the following characteristics to research conducted within the critical paradigm and they closely align with the core tenets of CRT

- The concern with power relationships within social structures and respect for cultural norms;
- The conscious recognition of the consequences of privilege and examination of positionality;
- Research as an act of construction rather than discovery;
- Uncovering agency and voice leading to liberation and emancipation;
- An endeavour to expose juxtapositions of politics, morality, and ethics;
- The intentional effort of the researcher to promote human rights and increase social justice;

- To actively address issues of power, oppression and trust among research participants;
- A high reliance on praxis and the utilisation of participatory research.

The critical paradigm assumes a transactional epistemology in which the researcher interacts with the participants and these participatory interactions create an understanding of how she knows what she knows.

Scott & Usher (2004) suggested that ontology is essential to a research paradigm because it helps to provide an understanding of the things that constitute the world as it is known. Based on the work of Guba & Lincoln (2005), the critical paradigm is grounded in an ontology of historical realism, especially as it relates to oppression. This ontological perspective acknowledges interactions of privilege and oppression that can be based on race, ethnicity, gender, class or ability (Bernal, 2002; Flatschart, 2017; Giroux, 1984). Drawing on the work of Bryman (2012), Heron & Reason (1997) and Guba & Lincoln (2005) the ontological position of the researcher in this study is a subjective-objective reality co-created by the mind and the surrounding world. The researcher's ontology is rooted in participation and participative realities which recognises that human nature operates in a world that is based on a struggle for power (Heron & Reason, 1997). These assumptions are critical to understanding how the researcher orientated thinking about the research question, its significance, and how it might be approached so as to contribute to its solution.

3.2.3 Participatory research approach

As referred to in the previous section, the critical paradigm is appropriate to social justice research and advocating for the voiceless or those less powerful. The critical paradigm centres on empowerment and removing oppressive structures from participants (Freire, 2000) therefore, a participatory research approach fits well within this paradigm. The

development of participatory research is rooted in participatory action research and the 'popular education' movement associated with Paulo Freire (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Wallerstein & Duran, 2003). Participatory research places participants as joint contributors and investigators in a time limited research project. This approach attempts to validate and highlight the experiences of participants, rather than taking the traditional route where the researcher takes the lead and the participant is the subject. The approach is a collaborative, consultative process often led and advised by a group, panel or board of participants which are identified as 'community members', with 'community' meaning the target research group (Boylorn, 2008). Participatory research can be used at different stages of the research from problem identification, assessment of priorities to monitoring of progress, interpretation of data and evaluation (Vaughan & Jacques, 2020).

Participatory research may be conducted in a variety of ways and is more commonly a partnership approach with community members and professional researchers (Banks & Armstrong, 2012). The application of participatory research is common in studies of minority groups and marginalised communities as it acknowledges the importance of engagement with community members by building trust and recognising explicitly the institutional power inequalities that exist (Tobias et al., 2013).

There are many meanings that apply to participation (Institute of Development Studies, 2020). Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation and White's (1996) work on the forms and function of participation add to the understanding of this approach. The ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969) demonstrated levels of participation, from non-participation to tokenism to citizenship to real power. The ladder links each step to the level of real power that participants have over processes and outcomes. White (1996) suggested there are four forms of participation; nominal, instrumental, representative and transformative and argues that positionality influences the levels of power at each stage.

Hidden agendas, organic and dynamic relationships, solidarity, subjectivism all play out in the participative research process and have an effect on the power balance throughout the participative experiences (Institute of Development Studies, 2020). Literature confirms that when participatory research is employed in a meaningful and respectful manner, the results can be transformative (Arnstein, 1969; Banks & Armstrong, 2012; Boylorn, 2008; White, 1996)

For this study, the researcher worked in partnership with a number of Black Minority Ethnic social care students who advised the project from inception. This participatory advisory group consisted of past students of the researcher and recent social care graduates who had expressed an interest in advocating for Black Minority ethnic students. The members of the participatory advisory group were all women and mothers and these were significant factors in developing relationships and connections as there was a commonality in shared experiences. This group shaped the research through dialogue, shared conversation and experiences while offering a critique to the researchers' position of White privilege (Chambers, 2009; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). A working agreement was developed, and this set the parameters for the participatory advisory group. (Appendix B: Participatory advisory group working agreement). To ensure that the participants had 'real' power (Arnstein, 1969) in the process, the researcher encouraged the participatory advisory group to inform and advise each stage of the research from the initial design of the study to the interpretation and the dissemination of the data. The advisory group engaged with the researcher, checking validity in terms of terminology, highlighting key and current issues, reading and interpreting the data and discussing and advising on how best to disseminate the data to have maximum impact (Bell, 1992; Heron, 1996;).

3.2.4 Paradigm position on practical issues

The inquiry paradigm as presented in Figure 1: Research paradigm: Themes of Knowledge: basic beliefs of inquiry offer a rationale for the basic ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives that informed this research. This provided a basis for which Figure 2 outlines the practical issues of the research aim, the nature and accumulation of knowledge, the quality criteria, values and ethics and the researcher position within the study. The paradigm poses questions as to who narrates the research, what skills does the researcher have to conduct the inquiry and how power is addressed in the study.

Figure 2:
Themes of Knowledge: paradigm positions on selected practical issues
(Adapted from Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

3.2.4.1 Research question

The first practical issue is the research question and at this point it is useful to refocus on the aims of the study that were presented in the introduction chapter. The research

question seeks to explore the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland, enquire about what has shaped their journey to HE and social care and examine the impact this has had on their lives. The aims of the study are:

- To investigate the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland and gain understanding of their perspectives on migration, living, working and studying in Ireland.
- To create a space where these experiences can be voiced, heard, discussed, analysed understood and reflected upon.
- To ensure that the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students are represented and their voices amplified in the discourse of HE and social care.
- To advance lessons learned for HE and social care through engaging a participatory approach and developing a set of actions resulting from the research.

3.2.4.2 Quality criteria

How researchers judge the quality of their enquiry is based on credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). One of the benefits of participatory research is the opportunity for participants to transition from a passive role of being asked questions and observed, to a more active emancipatory role of asking questions and offering feedback. This accordingly places the researcher in the role of the student. This approach created additional opportunities to learn from and engage with participants and in this study enabled the privileged position of the researcher as a White lecturer to be challenged. Through critical probing by the participatory advisory group, the researcher engaged in reflection and introspection unearthing previous unacknowledged and unearned privileges. This process offered opportunities to interrogate objectivity, subjectivity and the relationship to each other which gave depth to the study ensuring that the data was dependable and credible. This resulted in increased trustworthy and authentic findings and provided a catalyst for action for the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

3.2.4.3 Voice

Participatory research situates the participants as joint contributors, and this positioning can validate the experiences of participants making them central to the research process (Boylorn, 2008). It promotes participant involvement offering an 'insider' perspective to the process, from design, to interpretation to dissemination. The participants voiced their opinion in response to the research, thereby representing their community. Participants engaged in dialogue and offered feedback which added validity and credibility to the research. Participants as co-researchers also provided access to other insiders and encouraged others to join the conversation (Banks & Armstrong, 2012; Cullen & Walsh, 2020). They offered counter stories or alternatives to theories presented that challenged the positionality of the researcher. Joseph (2020) highlighted the importance and value of counter stories and composite storytelling and crucial role these play in challenging the narrative ambivalence about race and racism in research.

In this study, the participants own words gave an authentic voice and the researcher attributed values and significance to the participants' stories and experiences which enabled trust and respect to develop between researcher and participant. By having multi-voicing reflexive practices, it decentred the researcher as the authoritative figure by opening up data, giving the participants a more active role in interpreting meaning (Alversson et al. 2008). Williams (2010) suggested arranging an extended engagement period to the participatory research process by asking participants to comment on data interpretations and this approach was adopted in this study. Pillow (2003) contested the idea of giving voice and power over to participants as it risks data being unduly influenced and suggests that it may skew or contaminate the research findings. The researcher was aware of this risk and mediated it through discussion and interrogation with the advisory group.

3.2.4.4 Reflexivity

The importance of considering positionality and power imbalances that exist in the research process is well documented (Bourke, 2014; Freire & Ramos, 1970; Raheim et al., 2016). Reflexivity as a process is introspection on the role of subjectivity in the research process and at its core is "to make the relationship between and the influence of the researcher and the participants explicit" (Jootun et al., 2009. p.45). Reflexivity allows the researcher to focus on the contribution to the construction of meaning and of the lived experiences of others through the process of research (Delgado-Gaitan, 2003, Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, Pillow, 2003, Reay, 2007). The concept of reflexivity challenges the assumption that there can be a "privileged position where the researcher can study social reality objectively, that is, independently from it through value-free inquiry" (Plaganas et al., 2017, p. 432). Reay (2007) argued that reflexivity is "about giving as full and honest account of the research process as possible, in particular explicating the position of the researcher in relation to the research" (p.611). Fieldwork is deeply personal, and the researchers' position play a fundamental role in the research process, from motivations, research design, data collection and interpretation to how findings are presented and disseminated (Plaganas et al., 2017).

Discourses on reflexivity highlight the importance and significance of reflexivity in feminist research (Hesse-Bieber & Piatelli, 2007; Pillow, 2003). Critical race theory (Bell, 1970; Delgado, 1998) participatory research (Bell et.al, 2004; Bergold & Thomas, 2012; Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2005) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) are heavily influenced by feminist theory and methodology (Lather, 1991; Roberts, 1981). Jootun et al. (2009) suggested that where the researcher identifies with research participants, they must tune into how their values, beliefs and perceptions shape the research process on an ongoing basis. This identification can sometimes develop into a 'merger' which offers opportunities to raise new questions, engage in deeper dialogue and develop different

types of relationships and reciprocity (Chaudry, 2000; Delgado-Gaitan, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hesse-Bieber & Piatelli, 2007).

3.2.4.5 Positionality

One of the basic elements of reflexivity is positionality and some authors view "positionality as a research tool" (Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019, p.2). Anthropological literature characterises the researcher/researched relationship in many ways; the observed and the observer, the native and the coloniser, the endogenous and exogenous (Råheim et al, 2016). The stance of the researcher can be difficult to determine as it is constantly evolving and changing, influenced by many variables such as the interaction with third parties, changing perspectives, new knowledge and time (Hertz, 1997). The impetus to study an area can be motivated by many factors and choosing a research area that the researcher has connection to and familiarity with is common (Vaughn & Jacquez, 2020; Zuber- Skerrit & Perry, 2002) so understanding the motivations and positioning of the researcher is critical.

The complexity involved in attending to positionality required the researcher to unfold the intangible nature of her constantly changing social identities and this challenged her understanding and knowledge (Day, 2012, Jacobson & Mustafa, 2019). Some of the questions that emerged for me as the researcher in the study were.

- What role does positionality, identity and power play in the process of knowledge production? (Day, 2012)
- What is my power relationship with the people I am researching? (Cousin, 2010)
- Am I researching with or on people? (Cousin, 2010)
- How does the relationship between me as the researcher and participants influence the research? (Orr & Bennett, 2009)

Traditional research methods have considered the inclusion of the researchers own experiences to be too subjective, but Delong et al. (2005) argued that the embodied

knowledge of the researcher is highly significant in how they approach the research. By acknowledging and in fact placing 'I' at the centre of the study encourages a culture of enquiry (Alder-Collins, 2008; Pugh, 2007; Whitehead, 1989; 2008). Peshkin (1988) suggested that we bring "all of ourselves - our full complement of subjective 'I's to each research site and our subjective self which underpins our narrative voice" (p.18). Acknowledging this, the researcher engaged in reflective writing, using the 'I' perspective and this proved to be invaluable in terms of assessing positionality, unconscious bias, hidden racism, power and control.

Building a culture of enquiry, reflection and scholarship requires empathy and the ability to understand others' perspectives in order to address the imbalance of power (Delong et al. 2005; McCain & Mustard, 1999). Participatory research is often strengthened by relationship-based practices and can sometimes be associated with prolonged engagement in the field, which results in relationships and friendships growing and developing (Råheim et al., 2016). While relationships may flourish as participants identify the researcher as an ally or advocate, the researcher may be required to engage with participants that hold opposing views and maintain respect while keeping distance and holding boundaries while still allowing the dissenting voice to be heard. In this study, the participatory research approach allowed for these unconscious viewpoints to be unearthed, challenged and discussed within the space of the participatory advisory group and this created more transparency, credibility and validity in the research process. However, it did also require managing personal boundaries and understanding the limitations of the group members.

To understand and address the issues of identification and positionality, the researcher completed a social identity map developed by Jacobson & Mustafa (2019) (Appendix C: Social Identity map). This mapping revealed the significance of the researcher's

identification through gender and motherhood with the participants and offered an understanding of the unconscious empathic feelings that assisted the researcher to engage and connect with participants (Jankowiak-Siuda et al., 2011). The mapping also provided an opportunity to assess the positioning of the researcher as a lecturer of social care students in tandem with the role of a researcher. Nielsen (2013) recognised how role duality can prove awkward and difficult. Young (2005) referred to a deconstruction of identity between lecturer and student where students may perceive the lecturer is inferior as they are still studying, or alternatively, view them as an equal as a fellow student. The advantages of this may be that students may be more empathic and committed to the research. However, the disadvantages could be that the research findings may impact negatively on the participants and the researcher may be perceived as spying, breaking peer norms or not being supportive (Holmes & Darwin, 2020). In this study, the positioning of the researcher shifted and changed over the course of the study. Some of the participatory advisors subsequently enrolled on master's programmes in other colleges so they were also students during the period of the study, and this became an additional commonality and connector between them and the researcher.

The issue of researcher membership of the group being studied is relevant to all approaches of qualitative methodology as the researcher plays such a direct role in shaping all phases of the study. Whether the researcher is an insider, sharing the characteristics and experiences of participants, or an outsider to the commonality shared by participants, the membership status in relation to those participating in the research is an important factor of the research project. Some authors (Dwyer & Buckle 2009; Fay, 1996) suggested that the researcher does not have to be a member of the group being studied to appreciate and adequately represent the experience of the participants. Instead, Dwyer & Buckle (2009) hypothesized that the "core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of

one's research participants and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience" (p, 59).

As a White female university lecturer researching experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students, the researcher can only strive to be an empathic outsider with insights drawn from personal and professional observations, research and experiences of social care practice and education. While the outsider position can create a type of 'pedagogical chaos' (Hocking, Haskell & Linds, 2001) it may address preconceptions or preunderstandings. Hall (1992) suggested that "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within" (p. 223). As a result of discussion, reading and reflection and over the long period of the study the researchers' standpoint or position was to be "with" the participants.

3.3 Research Methods

Research methods are tools used in carrying out research (Charmaz, 2014) and certain methods suit particular approaches with interviews and focus groups normally associated with the qualitative approach methods. These methods are used to gather focused, qualitative and textual data (Bernard, 2000). Semi-structured interviews are utilized extensively as a research tool usually with an individual or sometimes with a group. Semi-structured interviews are useful for clarifying the research domain and can uncover rich descriptive data on the personal experience of participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Storytelling and counter storytelling are also used as methods and analytical tools to assist in understanding discourse on racism and the intersectionality. Storytelling as a method is a core principle of CRT and Solórzano & Yosso (2002) proposed that the use of stories is a "tool for exposing, analysing and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (p.32). The design of the schedule was also informed by the participatory advisory group and the researcher's professional skills and experience in social care.

3.3.1 Semi- structured interviews

In this study the researcher used an adaptation of semi-structured interviews, incorporating storytelling, as a means of exploring the perspectives and experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students. Using semi-structured interviews aligned with the aims of the study and encouraged participants to share stories and experiences which go beyond what standardized interviews permit (May, 2001; Shaw & Gould, 2001; Rubin and Babbie, 2008). Furthermore, this method enabled the researcher to follow up on any points that participants made and explore with them their particular views and experiences (Bryman, 2012). This provided a flexibility to deviate towards areas that participants considered relevant to the broader subjects under discussion (Robson, 2002). It also allowed for cultural differences and communication difficulties to be explored and clarified and the researcher reworded the question or requested that a phrase or word be repeated for better comprehension.

In this study, in-person interviews took place between September 2019 and March 2020 and 15 participants were interviewed in person. Due to COVID -19 the final six of the participants agreed to be interviewed online through Teams and Zoom between March and July 2020. Semi-structured interviews employ a mix of closed and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up 'why' or 'how' questions. The discourse can move around the topics on the schedule rather than adhering to set questions as in a standardized survey and may delve into unforeseen issues and topics (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012). Asking in-depth questions and enquiring about the independent thoughts of each individual through probing, open-ended questions on topics that participants might not be willing to share in a group setting, gives an extra layer of depth and richness to the study (Creswell, 2003). In order to keep it focused and minimize fatigue for both interviewer and participant Adams (2015) recommended that it should be kept to about an hour in length Semi-structured interviews facilitated the researcher to

follow the lead of the participant thereby enabling the participant to share what they felt was important to them. This created a space for new ideas, concepts and views to be discussed, heard and understood and provided an opportunity for the researcher to probe further which enabled enhanced contextualising and interpreting of the information gathered.

3.3.2 Storytelling

Critical race scholars have established the use of narrative and storytelling as essential to "connecting the voice of victims of racism with the documenting of institutional, overt and covert, racism" (Hughes & Giles, 2010, p.41). Critical race theorists suggest that the method of storytelling can be used to "analyse the myths, presuppositions and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariable render blacks and other minorities as one-down" (Delgado, 1995, p.xiv). Stories, storytelling and narratives are deemed important among CRT scholars as they add the contextual contours to the seeming neutral or positivist perspective (Bell, 2004b; Delgado, 1995; King-Dejardin, 2019; Matsuda et al., 1993; Williams, 1996). The use of narratives or "naming your reality" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p.13) is a way that CRT links experiential knowledge with structural racism. Delgado (1989) proposed that much of reality is socially constructed so stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychological preservation. Ladson-Billings (1998) suggested that the exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome ethnocentrism and challenge the tendency to view the world in one way.

Ladson-Billings (1998) further explained the importance of counter-story telling by highlighting that "oppression is rationalised, causing little self-examination by the oppressor" (p.14). By hearing, recording, analysing and discussing the experiences shared, the counter-stories of the participants can assist in challenging the "contentment

that may go along with such privilege and confront the overriding discourses that serve to repress communities at the social margins" (Graham et al, 2011 p.90). Research and pedagogical strategies that attempt to highlight the salience of race in all our lives are sometimes dismissed and discounted as subjective with individual stories and experiences often overlooked (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Using counter-storytelling to challenge the status quo provides a way to oppose the normative voice (Tisdell, 2001).

There has been some criticism of using storytelling as a method and Ladson-Billing (2005) urged caution in the use of uncritical narrative or storytelling:

> I sometimes worry that scholars who are attracted to CRT focus on storytelling to the exclusion of the central ideas such stories purport to illustrate. Thus, I clamour [sic] for richer, more detailed stories that place our stories in more robust and powerful contexts" (p. 117).

Darder and Torres (2004) wrote about CRT being "elevated to a theoretical construct despite the fact that the concept of race itself has remained un-theorized" (p.99). This criticism has been contested by Parker & Lynn (2002) who suggested that storytelling methods "uncover, challenge, and expose the historical, ideological, psychological, and social contexts in which racism has been declared virtually eradicated" (p.10). The use of reflection, reflexivity and journaling provided a critical analysis of how the researcher processed, conceptualised and analysed the stories. These tools help challenge her embedded position within HE structures, ensuring that CRT was used to expose her White privilege as a White academic.

3.3.3 Combining semi-structured interviews with storytelling

The design of the interview schedule was based on the aims of the study, underpinned by key concepts in the literature review and reviewed by the advisory panel. The questions

were informed by the core tenets of CRT which provided a framework to guide the collection of the data (Appendix F: Interview schedule). After consultation with the participatory advisory group, a key recommendation was to design the interview schedule that would support the participants' style of communication and engagement. The semi-structured interview schedule provided a structure for the study however, the interview questions were constructed in an open-ended manner to facilitate the participants to interpret the question and share their stories and experiences accordingly. The researcher determined that through combining the method of semi structured interviews and storytelling, a hybrid adaptation was most appropriate. This adaptation reduced the number of questions and allowed for more opportunities for participants to share experiences and tell their story. The researcher engaged in circular questioning, which is a tool commonly used in social care practice to generate multiple explanations and stories from clients (Evans & Whitcombe, 2016). This tool can also be used as means to stimulate the curiosity of the researcher while avoiding temptation to seek a one definitive explanation. The researcher decided that this hybrid approach would need to be supported with questions which captured basic demographic information. This data provided contextual data on the individual student's migration, family, cultural, linguistic and educational status and experiences before entering higher education, thus facilitating a deeper understanding of their stories

3.4 Values and ethics

According to Shaw (2008) an ethical approach should inform each stage of the research process from the design of questions to the dissemination of data. Seale et al. (2004) recommended that the researcher pursues ethical practice towards all parties directly or indirectly involved in the research process and this was a guiding principle throughout the study. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) distinguished two different dimensions of ethics

in research which they described as procedural ethics and ethics in practice. Procedural ethics ensure that an appropriate ethical framework is in place and this confirms that the researcher has primary responsibility for validity of the data and the protection of the participants (Shaw & Holland, 2014). Ethics in practice refers to issues of relationships, consent, confidentiality, supports available and access to the study findings.

Ethical approval was sought early in the study and, prior to obtaining approval, the Technological University Dublin research ethics committee identified some issues that needed further clarification. These included issues regarding eligibility criteria, storage of participants' data and the need for a protocol if consent was withdrawn post-interview. The researcher refined the eligibility criteria and included the option to self-identify with the term Black Minority Ethnic as it was acknowledged by the researcher that there are significant challenges in categorizing people by colour, race or ethnicity. The research protocol was amended to clarify that if a participant withdrew up to the point of data analysis, their data would not be used. Clarification was also given as to how collected data would be transcribed by the researcher and securely stored.

Reflexivity and direction from the participatory advisory group was particularly important in identifying possible ethical dilemmas that could occur when interviewing participants. The ethics of inviting participants to partake in research that is currently the focus of national and global political unease was also considered. The researcher was also aware that asking students to discuss their experiences in relation to racism and discrimination might create awkwardness and possible vulnerability especially as many students would continue to be studying in the particular college after the interview. The researcher was also concerned that the study could exacerbate the participants' situation of risk (Brinkmann, 2007; Finch, 1986; Walsham, 2007) or could prove discriminatory or racist (Bhopal, 1997). At the start of each interview, the researcher explained the aims

of the study, the justification of the terms and language use and also referred to the information sheet (Appendix D: Information sheet), consent form (Appendix E: Consent Form) and ethical approval from the college. As a result of probing and critical discourse with the participatory advisory group, the researcher endeavoured to adopt a cultural humility approach to the interviews (Yeager & Bauer, 2013). Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique whereby the individual not only learns about another's culture, but one starts with an examination of one's own beliefs and cultural identities (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998). The researcher attempted to demonstrated cultural humility in the interviews by explaining their positionality and inviting the participants to offer guidance in relation to language, terminology that they deemed appropriate and non-discriminatory and to acknowledge their expertise on their own lived experiences.

3.4.1 Ethical considerations in participatory research

Participatory research poses several ethical challenges (Wilson et al. 2009) which can at times conflict with traditional ethical approaches characteristically adopted by research ethics committees particularly within healthcare research (Beauchamp & Childress 2001). Conducting research with, rather than on, participants problematises traditional ethics requirements of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, new ethical problems emerge from everyday practice where interactions and relationships can determine the course of the study. The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action in Durham University (2012) produced a guide to ethical principles when conducting participatory research and the seven key principles were adopted by the participatory advisory group:

- Mutual respect developed by listening to others and accepting diverse perspectives.

- Equality and inclusion; encouraging and enabling engagement from a range of backgrounds and inclusion of people whose voice is not heard, who face discrimination and oppressive attitudes and actions.

- Democratic participation, whereby the contributions by all are meaningful and commitment to acknowledging and discussing issues of power and status.

- Active learning and engaging in a collaborative process of sharing this learning.

- Making a difference by promoting research that creates a positive change for communities and building the goal of positive change into each stage of the research.

- Collective action: Agreeing visions and goals while recognising and working with conflicting rights and interests.

- Personal integrity is a key principle with researchers and participants behaving in an honest and reliable manner. Ensuring accuracy in research methodology and honest analysis in reporting the findings is fundamental.

As discussed in the previous section, participatory research usually involves researcher-participants' relationships. Pre-existing relationships are usually subject to ethical review processes and research involving students, clients, family members or friends requires close scrutiny. Strategies can be put in place to counteract relationship based ethical issues, however relationships that develop over the course of a research project are less predictable. Ethical approval is often granted early in the research process and ethics boards tend to provide limited guidance associated with emerging relationships (The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action in Durham University, 2012).

Ethical concerns of researchers and participants' friendliness being interpreted as personal friendship have been identified in some studies (Mannay 2015; Wilson et al, 2009). Researchers who ascribe to a relational ethic endeavour for collaborative, reciprocal, trusting, friendly and connected relationships with participants and this expressly requires them to engage with reflection, self-awareness, reflexivity and interactivity throughout the research process. Self-disclosure is common and shared

intimacies can sometimes lead to close relationships that last beyond the lifetime of the research (McDonald, 2003). Therefore, negotiating exits from the research field and balancing the roles for all involved can also prove challenging (Banks & Armstrong, 2012; Cullen & Walsh, 2020).

In this study, the participatory advisory group worked together over a span of 6 years. There were many changes in that period, including COVID-19, that impacted on how the group operated, communicated and engaged. The informal interactions, shared intimacies and commonality of motherhood, student life and shared work interests sustained the relationships throughout that time. Agreeing terms of reference and ethical principles as already in this chapter outlined ensured that boundaries were managed appropriately.

3.4.2 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in reporting the research was assured to all participants. The research ethics application to the TU Dublin ethics committee acknowledged that there are ethical and legal limits to confidentiality such as safeguarding which were explained both verbally and in writing to all participants. Participants were advised of this when informed consent was sought to take part in the research and reassurance was provided during and after the interview. No issue arose in terms of breaches of confidentiality in the study. (Appendix E: Consent Form).

3.4.3 Anonymity

Hewitt (2007) suggested that research participants are particularly vulnerable to identification in qualitative studies. Parker et al. (2007) argued that research can never be confidential because the intention of research is to make discoveries which are then presented to others. Time was spent reflecting on this point, as the researcher was aware that the participants belong to a minority group in Ireland, itself a small country.

Additionally, as participants were all studying social care, they could possibly be identified if the location of the colleges were named.

Anonymity of respondents was achieved by changing participants' names and each was given an alias. The location of the college attended and where the interview was held was also given a pseudo name. One of the responsibilities of the researcher is to ensure that data are not available to any unauthorised persons. This necessitated safe data storage and the removal of identifying information from the data (Flick, 2014). Interviews were stored electronically on the researcher's laptop which was encrypted. Recordings on Teams and Zoom were also stored securely. All transcripts were anonymised, and each interview was assigned a unique personal code. Typed transcripts were stored in a locked drawer in the researcher's study and the researcher was the only person with access to this filing cabinet.

3.4.4 Prevention of harm

Prevention of harm to respondents was an ongoing consideration throughout the study. Consideration of language and terminology, theoretical framework, methodology, sample recruitment, dissemination of the findings, discussion and recommendations were all taken into consideration when attempting to reduce any potential harm to the participants. The researcher was particularly cognisant of ensuring that the study would not have a negative impact but would result in a neutral or positive outcome for research participants (Bogolub, 2010).

The researcher was aware that exploring participant's professional and personal experiences could be an emotive and possibly re-traumatising for some and therefore reflected on appropriate responses if this occurred. By adopting a trauma informed approach (SAMHSA, 2012), the researcher encouraged participants to seek support and help from student services if they felt triggered by any of the issues that arose. However,

there is no guarantee that participants will realise before an interview begins what they might reveal (Lee, 1993), therefore the researcher was prepared for the 'ethically important moments' (Ellis, 2007, p.22) which are the unexpected and unpredictable situations that can arise in the data collection in this field. Information on student services within the particular college including counselling and health services were gathered by the researcher before the interview and signposted to participants. Participants were encouraged to contact the researcher if any assistance was required after the interview and the researcher contacted each participant after the interview to thank and check in with them.

3.5 Research study

The research process had a number of phases including planning and consultation, recruitment, piloting, sampling, data collection, data transcription, data analysis and dissemination.

3.5.1 The research cohort and sampling

Sampling is an important component of research design (Robson, 2002) and in relation to the validation of a research study, the sample design has to be coherent, achievable and appropriate to the research aim (Robinson, 2014). The aim of sampling was to target Black Minority Ethnic social care students in HE across Ireland so as to provide representation of urban and rural based students, colleges that had higher and lower numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students enrolled and that offer fulltime and part-time social care programmes.

Identifying and sourcing participants was complex and challenging. The literature and advisory group established that terminology, categorisation and identification were value-laden and contextualized (Darby, 2020; Ladson-Billing, 2000). It was therefore important

that the participants were able to self-identify with the eligibility criteria of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in HE in Ireland. The criteria stipulated that the participants had at least one year completed in HE. This ensured that they had experience of HE and could relate their experiences. The eligibility criteria also included recent graduates who had completed their studies in the year of the data collection as they were able to offer insights into the complete college experience including attainment and progression (Appendix G: Eligibility criteria). None of the participants were students of the researcher at the time of the study.

3.5.2 Recruitment process

Recruitment of potential participants is a central issue in research and is an early factor that must be decided on when researching (Bryman, 2012). Due to lack of data on the numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students enrolled in social care programmes in Ireland, it was not possible to ascertain the size of the target population group. The researcher endeavoured to recruit participants from all HEIs in Ireland to ensure that there was a broad representation and included students in urban and rural areas. Access to students was sought through word of mouth and through contacts with lecturers within the Irish Association of Social Care Educators (IASCE). The recruitment process proved to be more challenging than anticipated. The first formal effort to create an awareness of the study was at the Social Care Ireland conference 2017 where the researcher met with lecturers from the different colleges offering social care programmes. The researcher also met with a number of Black Minority Ethnic students and recent graduates at the conference. Subsequently, and after ethical approval was granted, an email was sent to the IASCE members asking them to circulate the information sheet to the social care students in their colleges. The email provided an overview of the study and invited social care students that identified as Black Minority Ethnic to participate (Appendix D: Information sheet). However, only two responses were received from this approach.

The researcher then approached a number of lecturers that were known to her, had expressed an interest in this area and who were aware of the researcher's work and professional standing. These lecturers were asked to circulate the information on the study to students that they felt might identify with meeting the eligibility criteria (Appendix G: Eligibility Criteria). The particulars of the study were outlined in the information sheet provided (Appendix D: Information sheet). This approach to recruitment was more successful and resulted in 15 students consenting to partake in the study. Arising from this approach, the lecturers and academic staff became, in effect the gatekeepers to the participants. There is some commentary in the literature on the value of gatekeepers. Singh (2018) and Clark (2011) considered that they provide an efficient and pragmatic medium for access between researchers and participants, however, others (Singh & Wassenaar, 2016) highlighted the possibility of participants feeling compelled to participate when they have an association with the gatekeeper. The participants did not state that this as an issue in this study and reported that gatekeeper's positive recommendation for the researcher created a level of trust (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) that would have been difficult to establish without their backing.

The recruitment of the final four students was as a result of the snowball sampling method (Parker et al. 2019) whereby existing participants recommended other students that they knew. These students contacted the researcher and once it was deemed that they met the eligibility criteria and consented to the study, they became participants. Due to lack of data on Black Minority Ethnic students in Ireland, the target group was not quantifiable, therefore it was difficult to identify saturation point. Guest et al. (2020) suggest that saturation point is typically determined by the judgment and expertise of the researcher using base size, run length and new information as key principles. The researcher, in collaboration with the advisory group and supervisor decided that saturation point was reached when new themes, ideas, opinions and patterns were no longer evident in the

participants' stories. The total number of participants for the study was 21 Black Minority Ethnic social care students from five Institutes of Technology/Technological Universities. While the eligibility criteria did not stipulate gender, all the participants recruited were female and this reflected the female domination of the profession and the anecdotal reports of low numbers of Black Minority Ethnic male social care students in Ireland.

3.5.3 Informed Consent

The researcher ensured the study information sheet (Appendix D: Information sheet) provided to each participant had sufficient details to enable participants to make an informed decision on participation and the giving of consent (Appendix E: Consent form). This included information on how long the interviews would be, the nature of the study, what the data would be used for, confidentiality and data storage. Prior to the interviews, in the arranging of dates and locations, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study up to the point of data analysis and the interview schedule was made available to them in advance. This was important because participants initially might not know what they could possibly reveal during the interview and accordingly have a right to know what they will be asked. It was also important for participants regarding language competency to have time to reflect on their experiences before the interview. Prior to the interview all participants read and signed the consent form. Where the interview was virtual, participants gave verbal consent which was recorded. The researcher requested permission to use a Dictaphone to record the interview and also invited participants to express any concern or issue they had with the interview questions (Tanggard, 2008). Before commencing, the researcher reminded participants again that they did not have to answer any of the questions if they did not want to do so.

3.5.4 Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a small pilot study with three Black Minority Ethnic students in their final year of study in social care. to ensure that the terminology was appropriate, interview questions were relevant and the sequencing and layout were suitable. Bryman (2012) reported that the aim of piloting is "to ensure that the research instrument as a whole function well" (p.159). The participants in the pilot were previously students of the researcher and had heretofore expressed an interest in discussing the subject and were eager to participate in the study. The researcher was cognisant of the fact that sampling and interviewing are inextricably linked (Robinson, 2014) in that if participants are to engage in a referring process, they have had to feel positive and interested in the study.

A number of key learning points emerged from the pilot study. The language and terminology were contentious, in particular the term *migrant*. While all three participants in the pilot study identified as migrants, they found the term derogatory. One participant stated, *"You can call me a migrant, but don't dare call my children that"*. The research title was considered, further reviewed and revised and the term Black Ethnic Minority was chosen to best represent this group.

Another insight from the pilot was the researcher's ability to comprehend and understand cultural nuances, dialects and pronunciations. The researcher sought advice from staff at AkiDwA, a national network of migrant women living in Ireland and attended a number of events and training in cultural competence to learn more about how best to approach the research with this group. The researcher also attended a number of educational and cultural social events organised by the Migrants Rights Centre, The Refugee Council, NASC (Migrant and Refugee Rights Centre, Cork) and the UNHCR (The UN Refugee Agency) to improve knowledge, develop a sense of cultural awareness and improve comprehension of different dialects, accents, behaviours and cultural nuances.

The results from the pilot study also provided evidence of the necessity for the researcher to take notes so as to keep track of the more nuanced communication such as levels of eye contact, nonverbal cues and nodding in agreement that were not captured in the recording. The researcher's limitations and unconscious approach as an interviewer were revealed in the pilot study and the need to practice active listening and focus attention on what was said by the participants rather than moving on to the next question was highlighted. As the participants answered open ended questions in an indirect and roundabout manner, the pilot study highlighted the significant cultural differences in communication and especially how direct questions are managed (Hillen, 2013). The pilot study discovered that previous experience of interviews for the participants related to emotionally charged decisions such as migration, residency status and resource allocation. The word *interview* had negative connotations, had implied power imbalances and created vulnerability for these students. The researcher learned to use less emotionally charged words to describe the data collection such as a meeting or a chat to negate this factor.

The pilot study highlighted a number of gaps in the interview schedule and advocated a number of additions and adaptations. Questions about representation in the class by the elected class representative and also about complaint mechanisms within the college were added. The pilot study also recommended that participants should be informed of research in other countries on access, progression and attainment and experiences of social care students on placement during the interview so that they could relate this to their own experiences in Ireland. These topics were built into a number of the interview questions and added to opportunities for participants to tell their experiences through storytelling. The data collected in the pilot interviews were not used in the study and did not contribute to the findings.

3.5.5 Data Collection

The data collection phase commenced once ethical approval was sanctioned and the recommendations offered by the pilot study were addressed. Building rapport and getting to know the participants occurred through organising interviews, conversations explaining the study and introductions. This reduced formality, assisted in relaxing the participants and reducing barriers. Participants were asked to choose their preferred location for the interview such as the campus they were studying on, a private meeting room in a hotel or another location that was suitable for them. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 75 minutes, averaging 53 minutes. Some time was spent before and after the recording of the interview to explain the process and to debrief afterwards. All of the participants gave consent for their interview to be digitally recorded and transcribed (Appendix E: Consent form).

Several participants expressed surprise at being invited to tell their stories, explaining that they had not had any opportunity to offer their views as a student and described feeling empowered by sharing their experiences. Ladson-Billing's (2005) paper, '*Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education?'* asserted that HE has escaped the spotlight of any real critique in the area of racial inequality. This has resulted in the continuation of Eurocentric, inward looking, white, male domination that is beyond the scrutiny of such an approach (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Solórzano 1998). The interview questions focused not only on personal experiences and stories, but on wider institutional and structural change, based on the CRT principles of the social construction of race, differential racialisation, intersectionality and counter storytelling.

The researcher was conscious that terms used to describe the participants were open to interpretation, so time was spent explaining why these terms were used and reassurance was offered to the participants that the researcher was not evaluating or judging their

experiences. Considerable effort was given to clarifying the aim and purpose of the research and highlighting the researcher's social care practice experience, positionality and the rationale behind the study. The participants were encouraged to elaborate and speak at length with prompts. This facilitated the collection of rich, detailed data These data provided contextual data on the individual student's migration, family, cultural, linguistic and educational status and experiences before entering higher education, thus enabling a deeper understanding of their stories. The combination of circular questioning and storytelling enabled the participants to be more fluent and answer the questions without interruption or interpretation. The researcher also practiced active listening and focused attention on what was said by the participants.

The researcher noted that a number of the older participants used body language contradictory to what they were saying verbally, and this led to a difficulty in comprehension. Some examples of this was where a participant smiled as she described being subjected to racial abuse, another participant shook her head indicating her disproval while saying she agreed. While language competency may have contributed to this dissonance, they may have been trying to explain the irony of the situation. The multiple subjectively felt meanings and relationships between body, voice and psyche have been the subject of renewed attention in research in psychology and education (Koppe, 2014; Petzhold & Moog, 2017) and despite many different theoretical views, there is agreement that the body, voice and psyche, as well as the individual's relationship and communication with the surrounding world, must be regarded as a cohesive dynamic and organic unit (Nyon, 2021). Thus, the consequences for these participants when trying to express themselves went beyond communication and comprehension difficulties and affected their engagement with others and society around them.

In addition to recording the meetings, field notes were taken both during the interview and reflections recorded directly afterwards. This is described by Clarke (2005) "as sites of conversation with ourselves about the data" (p.202). These included comments on themes identified in the participants' responses, the researcher's reaction to the stories and feelings that the researcher had at the time. Also included were personal reflections on the performance of the researcher and observations on how interviews could be improved.

3.5.6 Data transcription and storage

The researcher used the NVivo qualitative data analysis (QDA) software in line with Braun & Clarke (2021) reflective thematic analysis of the data. The pilot study highlighted difficulties the researcher had understanding the participant's language, dialect and accent and as discussed earlier comprehension was an issue in many of the interviews. It was therefore imperative that the researcher transcribed the interviews personally and while time consuming, this provided an immersive experience into the conversations and stories which aided the interpretation of the responses (Davidson, 2009; Duranti, 2007; Ochs, 1979). Silverman (2006) noted the reliability of the interpretation of transcripts may be seriously weakened by a failure to transcribe trivial, but often-relevant pauses and overlaps. Therefore, consideration was also given to the nuanced non-verbal communication such as nodding, eye contact, gestures, silences and overlaps captured in note taking.

The first phase of data analysis identified by Braun & Clarke (2021) is data familiarisation, transcription and note taking. The phase one codebook (Appendix H: Phase 1 Codebook) provides an example of data familiarisation and the writing of familiarisation notes to integrate contextual factors such as coding assumptions, field notes and observations and the researcher's thoughts and ideas before commencing the

encoding process. The initial approach to coding was to use the core tenets of CRT as a basis for deductive coding. However, due to the individuality and complexity of the participants' stories it became apart that this approach was too linear and restrictive. After discussion with the advisory group and the supervisor, the researcher decided to engage a broader inductive approach to the coding which allowed for the more nuanced data from the interviews to be captured. The researcher also concluded that by using a deductive approach, there was a risk that CRT could impose a deficit perspective on the data. The interviews were anonymised at the point of transcription and digital recordings saved on an encrypted file. The data was securely stored in the researcher home office in a locked filing cabinet. Handwritten notes, reflections and consent forms were all stored similarly securely.

3.5.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is considered the most time consuming (Burnard et al., 2008) but exciting (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) aspect of qualitative research. The researcher engaged CRT as an analytical framework (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1989; Parker & Lynn, 2002) which challenges the dominant ideology, validates storytelling and narratives as research approaches and "highlights the relationship between race and other axes of domination" (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p.10).

Figure 3:
Critical Race Theory as an analytical framework.
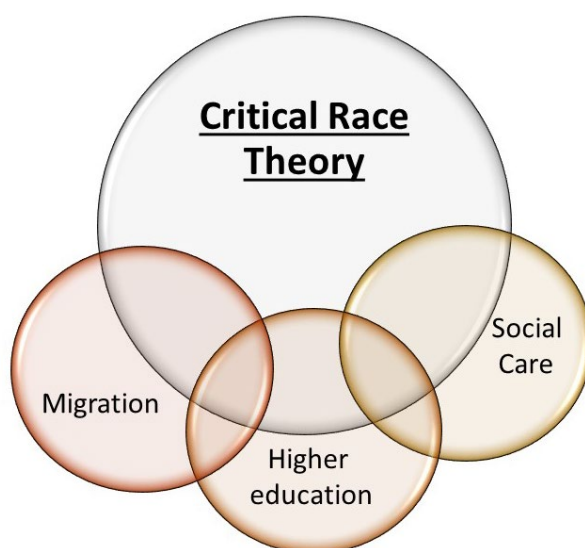
Figure 3 demonstrates how CRT provides the framework for the study and connected the elements of migration, HE and social care. A number of authors have used CRT as an investigative and analytical framework (Gustafson, 2013; Hiraldo, 2010; Lawrence & Davis, 2019) while others such as Crenshaw (2011) and Tate (1997) have used CRT to examine the role of racism in education. Ledesma & Calderon (2015) reported that "Scholars have looked to CRT, as an epistemological and methodological tool, to help analyse the experiences of historically underrepresented populations across the educational pipeline" (p. 206). It is worth noting that while CRT and participatory research have emerged from different activist traditions, they share a set of theoretical, ethical and methodological principles and practices. Based on the work of DeCuir & Dixson (2004), the researcher and the advisory group critical analysed what race is, how equity is conceived and how policies and practices impact on opportunities for Black people. These conversations informed the study by triangulating the data from the interviews, using the prism of the core tenets of CRT to conceptualise the meaning of the stories.

NVivo provided the analytical tool to reflective thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2021). RTA has been described as an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing the data which proceeds through six stages (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Once the first stage of familiarisation and transcription was completed, the researcher moved to phase two of systemic coding using open coding and descriptions.

Phase two codebook (Appendix H: Phase 2 Codebook) demonstrates how generating initial coding involves systematically deconstructing the data from its original chronology into an initial set of non-hierarchical codes. The researcher used her familiarity from transcription and notes to identify these initial sets of codes and descriptions.

Phase three involved generating initial themes from coded and collated data and this included merging, renaming, distilling and clustering related coded into broader categories of codes to reconstruct the data into a framework that makes sense to further the analysis. An example of this phase was the categorisation of data on the participants' migration journey, living in DP and resettlement in Ireland (see Appendix H: Phase 3 Codebook).

In Phase four the researcher developed and reviewed themes which involved breaking down the reorganised categories into more refined sub-categories to better understand the meanings embedded therein and organising refined categories into four identified broad areas or initial themes. These categories are: Experiences of HE; Journey to HE: Structural racism, White privilege and oppression; and Supports and recommendations (see Appendix H: Phase 4 Codebook for further information). Subcategories were used to organise the data and included findings on motherhood, trauma, accommodation and living conditions.

Phase five was where the data was refined, and themes were defined using more descriptive detail. Appendix H: Phase 5 Codebook provides evidence of defining, refining and naming themes involved in conceptually mapping and collapsing categories into a broader thematic framework. The final themes identified were: Individual perspectives and experiences, experiences and perspectives of racism, discrimination and inequality and experiences and perspectives of HE and social care.

Analytical memos were used to conduct a systematic review of the thematic framework developed in phase five to analyse, report and ask questions of data. Memos were used to reduce the data from a series of coded themes to a series of documents explaining outcomes of analysis retrieval and reporting on themes. Later, memos themselves were reduced through editing out overlapping and less important content to cohere findings into a cohesive findings chapter (Appendix H: Phase 6 Codebook).

Figure 4:
Codebook - Phase 6 – Use of Analytical Memos for Phase 6 - Writing the report (analysis and write up).
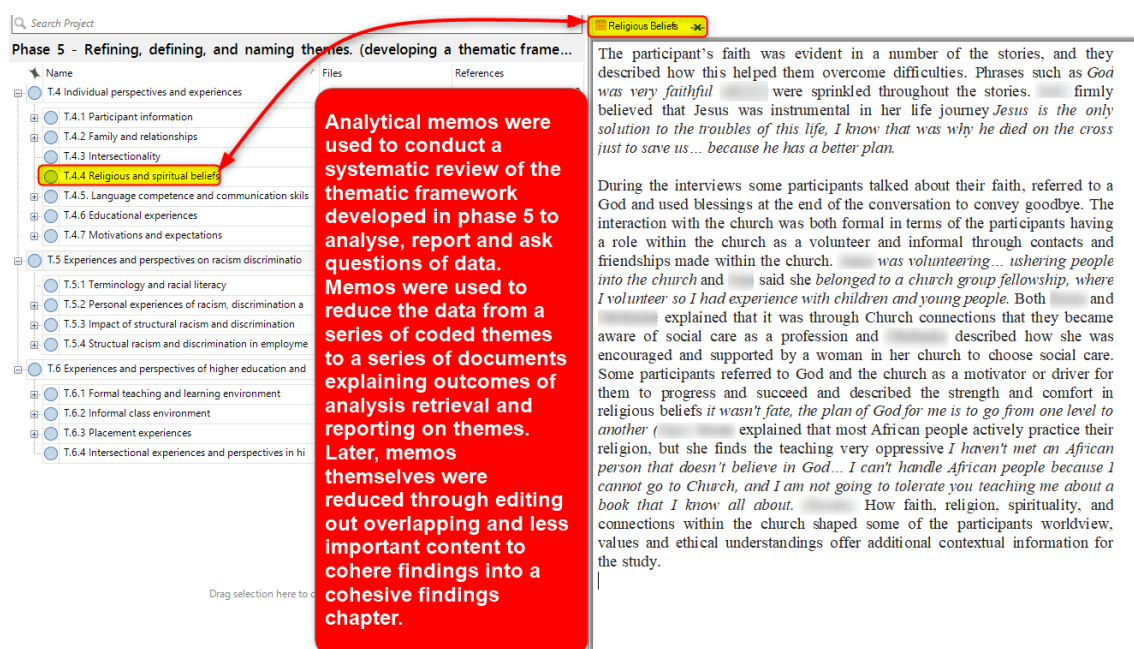
Phase six (see sample in Figure 4) supported the writing of the two findings chapters and aided structuring the discussion chapter. Examples of conceptually mapping codes, categories and themes and their relatedness to each other as a process during phase 6 analysis and write up are provided in Appendix H.

Samples of the process of conceptually mapping codes to categories to themes for are detailed in as Figure 5. This demonstrates how the NVivo tool enabled and supported the organisation of the analysis by providing an example of how codes such as belonging and othering, identity formation and perceptions of Black people in Ireland inform the category of the impact of structural racism. This then informs the theme T.5 Experiences and perspectives on racism, discrimination and inequality. The example demonstrates the flow from codes to categories to themes and more examples can be found in Appendix H.

Figure 5:
Codebook – Phase 6 - An Example of the Flow from Codes to Categories, to Themes.
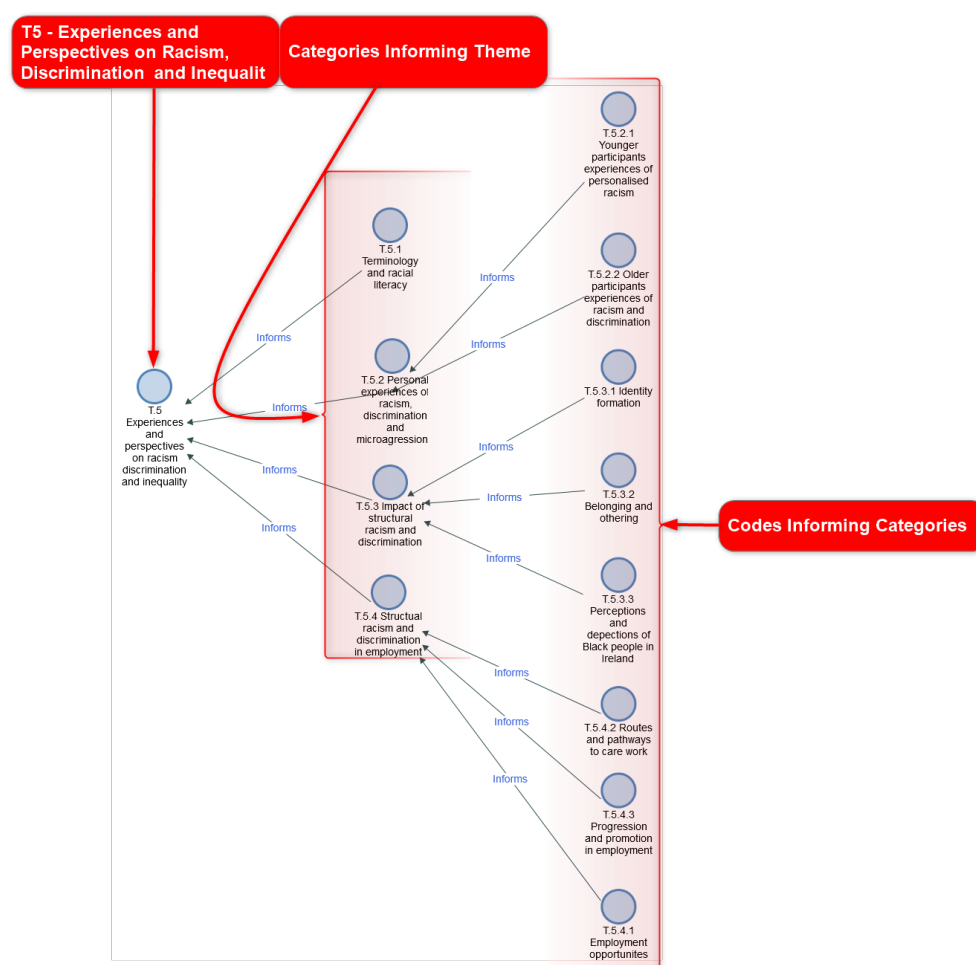
Guided by codebooks generated by the NVivo process, the participatory advisory group had a number of discussions in person and online to discuss the findings. Through a process of reflecting on experiences, rethinking, conceptualising, translating and engaging with the data, the members of the advisory group offered 'insider' understandings and insights to the identified themes which provided a basis for the discussion and conclusion chapters. As a result of this process, themes of loss, fear, distrust and adaptations were identified in the analysis as underpinning many aspects of the participants' experiences. These themes shaped personal, professional and academic expectations, motivations and perspectives and impacted on the participants' journeys to and through HE.

3.5.8 Dissemination of findings and responsibility to research participants

Rubin & Babbie (2008) noted that a common complaint in the social work field is that researchers exploit agencies to obtain data for their own intellectual interests and career needs and give very little back to the agency in useful findings. Most of the participants in this study expressed no expectation regarding their contribution to the study other than their participation in the interview. There was a sense of surprise and gratitude when the researcher offered to send them a copy of the completed research and informed them of plans for the dissemination of the findings. The participatory research approach highlighted the importance that participants felt their contribution was valued and that it would contribute to knowledge in this area (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The participatory advisory group played a pivotal role in dissemination of the findings through co-facilitating workshops and seminars and presenting the research at the Social Care Ireland (SCI) conference in April 2022. By ensuring the findings are made visible and contribute to current discourse on Black Minority Ethnic social care student experiences, the quality criteria and overall aims of the study were met.

3.5.9 Limitations of the study

As a small-scale qualitative study of Black Minority Ethnic social care student experiences in Ireland, there are a number of limitations. Qualitative methodology is time consuming, relies on the experience of the researcher and it can be difficult to replicate the results. Padgett (2012) suggested that as qualitative data is not quantifiable, it is not statistically representative therefore must limit the findings to individual experiences. This can be viewed as less applicable than producing statistics derived from representative population samples.

Another limitation relates to concerns with the issues of validity in qualitative research, which Patton (2015) contended are common. Literature addressing validity concerns refers to the importance of the researcher providing an explicit description of research steps including challenges encountered in this process (Maxwell, 2012; Shaw & Holland, 2014). With this in mind, the researcher has endeavoured to be honest and transparent in the account of the research methodology by proving a research paradigm to demonstrate the steps taken. Furthermore, by engaging in participatory research, conducting a pilot, having each stage of the study scrutinised by the advisory group and seeking supervisory feedback the validity of the research process was assured as far as possible.

Despite these validity safeguards, there is an awareness that the role of the researcher can be the greatest threat to trustworthiness (Poggenpoel & Myburg, 2003). Given the researcher's position as a White Irish middle class lecturer, the limitation of building solid trusting relationship with participants who are students and from different cultural backgrounds is challenging to eliminate. The power imbalance may be reduced somewhat by explaining and reassuring and the fact that the researcher is 'new' to the participant. The participants may also feel a sense of validation as their experiences have been sought, heard and valued by the researcher.

Another barrier to credible qualitative research is that the researcher can shape findings to support bias. The use of CRT as a framework mediated the level of unconscious bias and provided a structure in which the researcher could manage the data less subjectively. Validity was addressed through reflexivity and journaling to ensure that the researcher remained aware of her own feelings, thoughts and experiences. Through the use of field notes the researcher endeavoured to pay attention to personal values, ethics, perspective and biases that could influence the interpretation of the data. An example of this was reflections on how negative stereotyping of Black students had influenced the researcher

to think about some of the participants as having deficits in language and cultural understanding, rather than focusing on their strengths such as multilingualism, life experience, determination and resilience. However, while researcher reflexivity was central to the study, these measures may help minimise potential bias (Flick, 2014) but cannot eliminate it completely.

The eligibility criteria, recruitment and sampling strategy also had limitations. Some potential participants may not have got involved due to internalised fear, oppression or previous trauma. Students were asked to self-identify with the criteria and access to over half the participants was achieved through gatekeepers. There are challenges associated with gatekeepers as they can add another layer to the research and could be subjective in terms of recruitment of the participants (Clark, 2011). Another possible limitation of having gatekeepers is that they may hold control over access to participants, so the researcher worked with the gatekeepers to explain the value of the study and the need for bias awareness and control. The participants were also reassured that the gatekeepers were completely external to the data and had no access to the information provided.

The adaptations required to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic was also a limitation. The process of preparing, travelling to the sites, organising the venues and meeting the participants was affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Out of the 21 interviews, six were held virtually and, while there was some initial concern about the use of technology, these interviews enabled the participants to be safe, comfortable and relaxed in their own homes and this increased the storytelling element of the interview.

The researcher identified some limitations of combining storytelling with semi-structured interviews. The interviews were time-consuming, labour intensive and required an experienced and skilled interviewer. Ensuring that the participants' stories were relevant

to the research question required the researcher to use her skills and experiences as a social care professional to keep the interviews focused but informal.

The participatory research approach has a number of limitations. As the study was conducted over a six-year period, the engagement and commitment of the participatory advisory group was difficult to sustain. One member moved abroad, and COVID-19 resulted in meetings being held online. As the advisory group members were mothers, COVID-19 had a significant impact as they cared for children and juggled work and study commitments, so availability of time and space was a challenge. Managing relationships, online communications, paying attention to power imbalances and issues of ownership and dissemination of the research were all challenges that emerged. However, the strength of the relationships and the commitment to the study ensured the continued involvement of the members throughout the period.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter sets out the methodical approach of the study through an ordered research paradigm. Through the process of critical enquiry qualitative research was deemed the most appropriate methodology. The use of CRT as an investigative/analytical framework is justified and the adoption of participatory research approach explained. The ontological, epistemological and practical issues of the study are presented and through reflexivity the researchers' positionality is scrutinized. Ethical considerations are discussed, and a description of the ethical approval process provided. The chapter provides details on the method of adaptation of semi-structured interviews and storytelling, including information on recruitment, sampling strategy, piloting, data collection and transcription. The use of NVivo software as a tool to organise data analysis is explained and evidence of the six stages of reflexive thematic analysis provided. The role of the participatory advisory group at each phase of the research is evaluated and the

limitations of the study are presented. Having documented the methodological basis, the next two chapters present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data on the participants' perspectives as Black Minority Ethnic women living in Ireland. It is imperative the reader understands the wider contextual circumstances so that the interplay of personal, professional and academic experiences can be fully understood. The data is presented in four sections. The first section provides demographic details of the participants and their experiences of migration and resettlement in Ireland. The second section outlines the participants' relationships with families, mothering through migration transitions and explores religious and spiritual beliefs. The third section presents the participants' accounts of language competency, communication, and comprehension. Section four centres on the participants' educational experiences prior to enrolling in HE and includes data on participants' primary and secondary education in both host and home countries. It examines the motivations and expectations that participants had of HE and identified drivers for them personally, professionally, and academically.

4.2 Participant information

The 21 participants were students or recent graduates of social care in HE in five colleges and universities in Ireland at the time of the study. All were female and self-identified with the term Black Ethnic Minority. The demographic information summarized in Table 1. *Summary details of participants* is expanded on in the following pages and provides data on the participants' age, country of origin, citizenship, religion, family details, migration journey and the length of time they have resided in Ireland.

Table 1:
Summary details of participants (Names changed for confidentiality purposes)

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Citizenship	Religion	Family Details	Years living in Ireland	Route to Ireland
Chris	19	Ireland Parents: Congo	Irish	Christian	Lives with parents	19	Migrating parents
Zalika	43	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Single parent 1 child	14	Trafficked
Raelene	24	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Lives with parents	14	With parents
Dorothy	52	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Single parent 3 boys	19	Refugee-DP
Anne	28	Syria	Irish & Syrian	Christian	Single parent 1 child	10	Trafficked, DP, Refugee
Zanib	45	Nigeria	Irish & Nigerian	Christian	Married with 4 children	18	Family reunification
Neema	47	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Married with 4 children	15	Refugee-DP
Alyssa	19	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Living with mother	14	Irish Grandparent
Olufunke	43	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	3 children	12	Refugee-DP
Mesi	44	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Single parent 3 children	19	Refugee-DP
Monifa	40	Zimbabwe	Irish	Christian	Single parent 3 children	17	Family reunification
Afia	36	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Married 3 children	19	Asylum, DP
Kemi	24	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Single living alone	15	DP, Hostel
Jojo	37	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Mother 4 children	16	Asylum
Florence	22	Rwanda	Irish & Rwandan	Roman Catholic	Living with mother	20	Asylum, DP

Mary	38	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Single mother 2 children	15	Asylum, DP
Bethane	18	Italy	Irish	No religion	Living with mother	18	With mother
Lulu	34	DRC Congo	Irish	No religion	Single parent 4 children	20	Via Belgium, DP
Furala	42	Nigeria	Irish	Christian	Married 4 children	15	Visa via UK
Susan	28	Congo	Stateless	Not stated	Relationship not specified Mother of 4 children	12	Unaccompanied minor
Raziya	40	Zimbabwe	Irish	Not stated	Single parent 1 child	15	Asylum, DP

The age of participants at the time of interview ranged from 19 years to 52 years. Three of the participants were under twenty years, five were 21-30 years, four were 31-40 years and nine were 41 years and older. Of the 21 participants, 20 of them had migrated to Ireland with only one participant born in Ireland. The longest any of the participants had lived in Ireland was twenty years and at the time of the research all of the women had lived in Ireland for at least ten years. The average time residing in Ireland was 16 years. Thirteen were born in Nigeria, two in Congo, two in Zimbabwe, and one each in Rwanda, Syria and Italy. One participant described her status as Stateless. All but one of the participants currently had Irish citizenship and several of them had dual citizenship holding on to citizenship from their country of origin.

Fifteen of the 21 participants were mothers, and all of these were over 25 years. The other six participants were aged under 25 years and reported living with one or both parents or another relative. They all had siblings that were residing with them and none of this age

group reported having their own children or had direct childcare responsibilities. The researcher collected data about the participants' religious beliefs as she had noted in her role as a lecturer that Black Minority Ethnic students frequently referred to this in communications in class. In this study, seventeen of the participants said they were Christian, one specifying Roman Catholic, while two did not state any religious affiliations and two said they had none.

4.2.1 Categorisation of the participants

The participants have been categorised into two distinct groups, the older group, and the younger group. The older group (n=15) categorised as over 25 years old were all born outside of Ireland, were mothers to one or more children and accessed HE through the non-standard routes. The younger group (n=6) were participants under 25, none of whom had children and reported living with parents or relatives. Only one of the younger group was born in Ireland, however she referred to herself as a migrant. Therefore, while many of the younger group have grown up in Ireland they cannot be categorised as second-generation migrants. Within the younger group categorisation there were two sub-groups. The first subgroup included three participants under 20-years-old that had both primary and secondary school experiences in Ireland and accessed HE through the traditional CAO route. The second subgroup were three participants under 25 years old that had some experience of secondary school in Ireland and accessed HE through advanced entry from a PLC (Post Leaving Cert) programme, Further Education (FE) and access programmes. The rationale for these categorisations is based on the significant experiential differences of the participants depending on age, living arrangements, migration routes, motherhood status, previous educational experiences and routes to HE.

4.2.2 Migration experiences

The participants gave a broad range of reasons for migrating to Ireland and described their journey to Ireland. Table 2. Migration routes to Ireland provides details of the country of origin, migration routes, their age at the time of interview and the number of years they had lived in Ireland.

Table 2:
Migration routes to Ireland

Name	Age	Country of Origin	Years living in Ireland	Route to Ireland
Chris	19	Ireland/Parents Congo	19	Migrating parents
Zalika	43	Nigeria	14	Trafficked
Raelene	24	Nigeria	14	Joined parents
Dorothy	52	Nigeria	19	Refugee-DP
Anne	28	Syria	10	Trafficked, DP, Refugee
Zanib	45	Nigeria	18	Family reunification
Neema	47	Nigeria	15	Refugee-DP
Alyssa	19	Nigeria	14	Irish Grandparent
Olufunke	43	Nigeria	12	Refugee-DP
Mesi	44	Nigeria	19	Refugee-DP
Monifa	40	Zimbabwe	17	Family reunification
Afia	36	Nigeria	19	Asylum seeker, DP
Kemi	24	Nigeria	15	Asylum Seeker, DP,
Jojo	37	Nigeria	16	Asylum seeker
Florence	22	Rwanda	20	Asylum seeker, DP
Mary	38	Nigeria	15	Asylum seeker, DP
Bethane	18	Italy	18	With mother
Lulu	34	Congo	20	Via Belgium, DP
Furala	42	Nigeria	15	Visa via UK
Susan	28	Congo	12	Trafficked
Raziya	40	Zimbabwe	15	Asylum seeker, DP

The categorisation of refugee, asylum seeker and trafficked were used by the participants. Sometimes these terms were used interchangeably and may not have accurately described their migration status. Eleven participants categorised themselves as refugees or asylum seekers. Four reported that they migrated to join their families, two of these as adults joining their husbands and two as children joining their parents who migrated to Ireland

earlier. Three described being trafficked and one of these was deemed an unaccompanied minor on arrival in Ireland. Of the others, one held an Irish passport as they had an Irish grandparent and one travelled from the UK on a work visa. Only one participant was born in Ireland but as she had moved between home and host countries as a child, she self-identified as a migrant.

4.2.2.1 Seeking refuge and asylum- experiences of Direct Provision (DP).
As outlined above, over half of those interviewed (N=11) described themselves as refugees or asylum seekers on arrival in Ireland. They explained that their motivation to travel to Ireland was primarily to escape war, abuse, domestic or gender-based violence (DGSBV) and/or terrorist attacks in their home country. They understood Ireland would be a safe place where they could build a better life for them and their children. Furula captures the views of others in describing her motivation and need for safety:

> The reason why I came to Ireland was in 2003/4 there was loads of armed robberies attacks in my town ... my husband and I concluded that it was not too safe and I was just too tired to be living in this type of environment.

Two thirds of the participants lived in DP centres on arrival in Ireland and one lived in State care as she arrived as an unaccompanied minor. At the time of the interviews none of the participants reported living in DP. The participants described being processed initially in the reception centre in Dublin and then being placed in centres in rural areas. According to the participants' stories, living in DP was sometimes unsafe as communal areas were not always staffed and privacy at a most basic level was often unattainable. They described experiences of moving from centre to centre, often at short notice and without consultation. Afias' description offered some insight to the experiences of DP *"when I first came, we were put in a hostel and before I could settle in one hostel, we were moved from one hostel to another, moved to about two or three hostels"*.

The frequent moves left the participants disorientated and fearful. Zalika, who was initially trafficked to Ireland, ended up in DP after being arrested and imprisoned. She described living with the constant fear of being deported:

> It got to a stage where I packed all the little things I had … I put them in a bag so that when they (Immigration officers) come to say "you're going home to Nigeria" … they will not be scattered everywhere.

One participant described her experience of migrating to Ireland from Nigeria when she was aged 21, alone and heavily pregnant. She was placed in a DP centre in a rural area, gave birth in the local hospital without any family or friends to support her and got a taxi from the hospital back to the centre with her baby girl. Within days, she was transferred to a centre in another county leaving her confused, alone and frightened. Three of the other participants told similar stories of being pregnant and giving birth while living in DP and Afia's description of the lack of facilities for new mothers offered some insights into the fear and isolation that they experienced "*when I had my baby, I only had that one corner bed … it was so small, but I was just hanging in there with my baby and struggles with everything*".

Two of the participants had lived in DP for almost a decade and according to the women's stories, the length of time it took to have their asylum applications processed significantly impacted on their lives and their mental health. While they made close friendships with other women in DP and found solace and support in these relationships, once their asylum applications were approved, securing accommodation in the open housing market proved isolating and challenging. They both transitioned into homeless services and described the frequent moves from hotel rooms to hostels with their small children. After years in DP, acclimatising to Irish society, understanding societal norms and nuances took time and interactions outside of their immediate circle became mostly functional. While they

now had freedom to work, study and live as Irish citizens, they explained that the significant challenges in navigating everyday life in Ireland limited any capacity to progress in society.

4.2.2.2 Family reunification and work visas

Family reunification, possessing an Irish passport and getting a work visa were other reasons participants gave for migrating to Ireland. Four participants migrated to be reunited with family. Monifa and Zanib migrated with their children under the family reunification and work visa programme to join their husbands who were working here[26]. This afforded them a visa to stay in Ireland, but not to work or access a social security number. This status negatively impacted Monifa when she later separated from her husband as she had no visa to live or work in Ireland in her own right. As a result, she had to apply for leave to stay in Ireland based on the citizenship of her Irish born children. This took several years and during that time she lived in a women's refuge and homeless accommodation, unable to access basic supports such as financial, medical, and housing assistance.

Two of the younger participants described migrating to be reunified with their mothers who had travelled ahead to secure accommodation and employment before bringing their children to join them. Bethane, aged 18, moved to Ireland to join her Nigerian mother before she was one years old and Alyssa, aged 19, spent some time in the UK with her grandparents before joining her mother in Ireland as a small child. Florence and Raelene, two other younger participants, sought asylum in Ireland as young children with their parents and lived in DP while their application was processed.

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[26] Family reunification programme and work visa https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/rights/family-reunifications.

Some of the older participants (n=4) had lived in or travelled through other countries before arriving in Ireland and not all of them viewed Ireland as a final or permanent destination. One participant had lived in Belgium for most of her childhood and moved to Ireland as she had learned from friends about HE access programmes and financial aid for students in Ireland. She described how her initial plan was to obtain an undergraduate and postgraduate degree and move to Canada where some of her siblings lived but had recently reconsidered her decision as her children had settled in Ireland.

4.2.2.3 Trafficking and trauma

Not all of the participants made the decision to travel to Ireland by free choice. Three of the participants stated that they had been trafficked to Ireland from their home country. One participant explained how her family paid traffickers to bring her to Ireland where she had been promised work, but this job did not materialise. She was abandoned in Dublin port by her traffickers where the Gardaí placed her into residential care. Another participant told of being trafficked to Ireland and having to work to pay her traffickers back for the first two years in Ireland. While she did not make explicit the nature of the work during the interview, she indicated that it was some type of illegal activity and she was not free to leave. She described how Gardaí raided where she was living and as she had no passport, or identity papers, she was arrested. It was only through the guidance of the prison Chaplin that she realised she could seek asylum and subsequently moved to DP. She described how traumatising these experiences were:

> … if the police should catch me, I will be sent back to Nigeria and fearing for me life back in Nigeria I don't want to go back. I don't have any ID to present, so there I was in prison … I was really treated like a criminal.

Fear and trauma were also evident in the participants' stories about genocide, rape, murder and pillaging in their home countries. Several participants who reported Nigeria

as their country of origin explained that they migrated as they feared for their safety as women and expressed concerns about the heightened risk of SGBV for their daughters. While female genital mutilation (FGM) was not specifically mentioned, it was alluded to in some of the stories. Susan captured other views in outlining the dangers *"So, is it (Nigeria) a bad place to live? Absolutely, 100%, especially for a girl it's the worst".* Florence born in Rwanda but living in Ireland since she was two years old, described the vicarious trauma that she felt from her mother and aunts' accounts of their experiences:

> I would have experienced it through stories … about like my aunties, my mum and my sister recollects some stories … my parents would have experienced the genocide and horrific happenings in Rwanda and they left there to come here.

4.3 Personal relationships, responsibilities and beliefs

The participants described diverse backgrounds, family compositions and responsibilities. As outlined previously, the younger category aged under 25 years reported living with either one or both parents or another relative and some had siblings living with them. While their reasons and routes for migration varied, the sense of trauma and loss permeated their stories as they described the precarious living arrangements their families endured through the migration and resettlement process. Bethane and Alyssa described being separated from their parents as small children and while they were cared for by relatives and friends, they recounted the significant loss of not only nurturance of their mothers, but of the social, cultural, and economic capital lost by their families. Alyssa explained how her mother had lost all previous status and capital built in Nigeria *"it's like you start from nothing. It doesn't matter what you were in Nigeria ... when you come here, you're starting fresh. It's the same thing if you're an asylum seeker, you're literally starting from the very bottom".*

In the older group, the mothering role and parental responsibility underpinned their stories and experiences. Some participants described the additional challenges they faced when marital relationships broke down or ended. As the participants' family circle and community in Ireland was limited, they explained that family separation and divorce resulted in a sense of wider exclusion for them. Mesi, a 44-year-old single mother of three children was reluctant to disclose her separation because of the personal nature of her experience, but she highlighted the losses associated with fleeing a violent partner:

> I left everything, taking the children and when you don't have family it makes life very difficult, there is no support most especially when your people … I mean your Black Minority people … you're trying to get away from them.

Two other participants described having to seek refuge in women's shelters after fleeing the family home following domestic violence. For Kemi, this resulted in her continuing to pay the mortgage, but unable to live in the house, forcing her into homelessness with her children. Susan described the challenges of living in a refuge with small children while she was in first year in college and not feeling able to disclose her situation compounded the problem.

Financial challenges were referred to by several older participants and the dual responsibility of supporting families in Ireland and home countries was an additional burden in their lives. While they mentioned statutory supports such as family income supplements and children's allowance, it was a significant challenge for these women to provide the basic needs for their families while attending college. Lulu, a mother of four children explained that juggling family, financial and college commitments with limited knowledge of English while living in homeless accommodation was extremely stressful and exhausting. Mesi's description of the challenges of providing an income to support the family while caring for her children and studying fulltime echoed others' experiences:

I find it difficult … I'm working and I want to make ends meet for the kids … I'm always working ten or twelve hours and I still come to college … I find it difficult composing with my assignments, but I have to work.

4.3.1 Child rearing

The older group, all mothers, talked about how the mothering role and responsibility impacted on their perspectives of rearing children in Ireland. They described how their culturally learned understandings about parenting norms and approaches to discipline and punishment of children differed from those in Ireland. Some described how, in their country of origin, children were disciplined through slapping or other physical chastisement by parents, neighbours or community members and it was understood that this was an effective and appropriate way to teach respect. Anne described how she adjusted her thinking over time:

> In Africa there is a lot of violence against children … when a child is late you have to serve the punishment … in Africa we see it as normal … but I've got to learn, that wasn't the right approach … there are better ways to work with children to make them realise their mistakes.

A number of participants believed that children's conduct reflected parental control and described how children that behaved inappropriately needed discipline. The observed lack of respect demonstrated by some children in Irish society led some participants to be concerned about mixed race relationships. Zanib, a mother of four children expressed concern about the power imbalance in mixed race relationships and questioned if her children could have an equal relationship if they were involved with a White person "*Are you not going to obey my son, listen to him? Are you going to disrespect my son and say you're in power?*".

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4.3.2 Family support

The value of family support networks and the loss of social and community capital were all to the forefront of participants' stories. For the participants that had migrated alone, the lack of wider family and community support was particularly difficult. Mesi describes how Ireland is "*a different world*" for her and as she has no family in Ireland, she feels a huge sense of disconnection and sadness "*I miss them a lot and it's so sad when you're here. Its s a relief being with your family*".

Engaging, interacting and integrating into a new country with different cultural ideologies while juggling parenting, work and study was compounded by the absence of family or friends to lean on or to share the responsibility of parenting. Supports had to be sourced outside of family or friends and this incurred significant costs and stress along with a mind-shift for many of the participants who would have had inbuilt family and community supports in their country of origin. Mesi described the challenges "*being a lone parent, making ends meet, no real support from anyone can make life very hard … everything is on you*". Accessing and organising quality and reliable childcare that they could trust was critical for these participants. Furula explained the pressure she was under to secure a "*stable childminder*" before the start of the term as she would not be able to attend college unless she had someone to care for her children.

4.3.3 Religious and spiritual beliefs

How faith, religion, spirituality and connections within the church shaped some of the participants' worldviews, values and ethical understandings offered additional contextual information to the study. In the interviews, many of the participants used religious blessings when concluding the interviews and frequently referred to faith in their stories. Several participants described belonging to a church community as vital in terms of supporting them to manage the many challenges and adversity in their lives. The

participants' faith was evident in stories and phrases such as *"God was very faithful"* *(Zanib)* and "*Jesus has a better plan" (Jojo)* were frequently used. Raziya and Olufunke explained that it was through Church connections that they became aware of social care as a profession and Olufunke described how she was encouraged and supported by a woman in her church to study social care. Some other participants referred to God and their church as a motivator or driver for them to progress and succeed and described the strength and comfort their faith provided. These participants went on to seek support from the Chaplin in HEIs and described finding great comfort in this service when they had personal challenges and difficulties.

While many expressed strong religious beliefs, there were some younger participants that did not refer to their faith. Raziya believed that church leaders were supportive if you conformed to the teachings but were less so if you were questioning or challenging. Only one participant, Susan, explained that she experienced religious teaching very oppressive and recognised that this set her apart *"I haven't met an African person that doesn't believe in God … I can't handle African people because I cannot tolerate you teaching me about that book (Bible)"*.

4.4 Language competency and communication

Language competency was a thread in the accounts of many of the participants and this was also noted by the researcher in the interviews as accents, phraseology and creoles created significant challenges in comprehension. The sensitive and personal nature of the participants' accounts combined with a lack of commonly agreed terminology added further complexity. Language acquisition and competence were inextricably entwined. When, how and where the participants learned English had an impact on their level of language competence. The younger participants, that attended primary and secondary school in Ireland, had high competency levels and this enabled them to communicate with

clarity. Several of the younger participants explained that while English was taught and used in school, at home other languages were used so was difficult to gain fluency. The levels of competency of participants that migrated as adults was more varied and several described having little or no English on arrival to Ireland. Susan described starting school as a 16-year-old with no English:

> I had no word of English, I had to go to school to study English and do my Leaving Cert … it was kinda scary in a way. French is my first language. I probably knew five words when I came.

Other participants described having limited or pidgin-English on arrival to Ireland. Anne explained that in Syria *"we have like two versions of English, we have like standard English, and we have Leššānā Suryāyā"*. According to Olufunke and Zanib, attending a private school in their country of origin gave them the opportunity to learn English from native speakers. However, overall, the older participants reported significant challenges in engaging or participating in wider society, education, employment or community due to low levels of English competency. This resulted in reducing contacts and interactions outside their family networks, friends made through migration and DP and the African community.

4.4.1 Communication styles

Language competency also impacted on comprehension and being understood by others. Monifa and Olufunke described the challenge of understanding Irish accents, while Mary highlighted the speed at which Irish people spoke *"it's tough because White people … they speak too fast"*. Variances in tone of voice was another issue highlighted by some participants. Alyssa explained that Black people can be perceived to be aggressive by the tone of their voice *"when me and my friends are on the call to our parents sometimes, we get loud … that's just how I talk about things when I'm passionate. I'm not trying to come*

at you aggressively". Bethane also spoke about the widely held perception that Black people are aggressive and felt that this stereotyping provided a defence mechanism for White people *"you don't want to be classified under a stereotype of being like the angry person or the loud person ... your told 'oh, you're intimidating' because you're standing up for yourself or you're making people feel uncomfortable"*.

The older participants had a different perspective on pitch and tone of voice, explaining that it was culturally expected that they would only talk when invited and even then, their understanding was to use a quiet and submissive voice. According to their accounts, making eye contact unless requested was frowned upon between particular groupings and genders and demonstrating respect for elders through nonverbal communication such as lowering of eyes, bowing or other deferential behaviour was normal. Zalika echoed others accounts when she explained that it was difficult for her to re-learn, change or adapt to Irish communication norms:

> … initially it was difficult for me. Building myself from not making eye contact to making eye contact ... because where I come from, we don't look at somebody that is older, above us or someone in authority directly as a kind of disrespect.

4.5 Educational experiences

Primary and secondary school experiences lay the foundations for learning in HE and the previous educational experiences of the participants offer important contextual information for this study. Data on primary and secondary school experiences was not captured formally on the table, but the participants talked about their experiences in the interviews. As stated previously some of the younger participants had lived in DP with their mothers and had disrupted educational experiences during that period. Within the younger group, three participants attended primary and secondary school in Ireland and

completed the Leaving Cert. The other three had more diverse school experiences in Ireland, with one participant partially attending primary and secondary school, one attending secondary school from Junior Cert year and the other not having any primary or secondary school experiences in Ireland. The older group also had a broad range of previous educational experiences, but only one reported attending secondary education in Ireland.

4.5.1 Younger participants' experiences of primary and secondary school

Within the younger category there was a range of experiences in primary and secondary school. While some of the participants noted that they experienced racism in primary school, it was only when they attended secondary school that racism, discrimination, othering and belonging seemed to be recognised or have an impact. This could stem from the normal developmental needs of teenagers to create identity and Bethany's description demonstrated that labelling and othering in secondary school made her more aware of difference "*in primary school, I never really cared because people would not point out your race, but in secondary school it became a thing where people would point it out or do stuff that would make you think about yourself*". Kemi provided a visual account of the physical segregation that occurred in her secondary school:

> … in the canteens in the social area there was about 15 tables and two benches belong to the Blacks and the rest were Irish … the Blacks knew that was their bench and the Blacks would always sit around the bench.

Interactions with principals, teachers and fellow students were discussed by the younger participants and on reflection they could pinpoint particular impactful incidents of racism in secondary school. Chris believed that these incidents were not addressed appropriately and that Black students were blamed and categorised as loud and intimidating. As a result, grouping together and socializing with other Black Minority Ethnic students seemed to

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be a strategy adopted. Bethane, who had lived in Ireland most of her life, explained that in the last two years of secondary school she gravitated towards other Black school mates *"we have to stick with each other because we hardly knew anybody, it was really hard to adjust ... I was mostly hanging out with my Black friends in 5th year and 6th year.* Kemi was the only younger participant that described continuing to try and integrate and assimilate with Irish students *"I kept trying to fit in because I don't like not fitting in. So, I made the effort to just constantly keep persevering and learn the culture of Irish ... to do Irish"*.

4.5.2 Older participants' previous educational experiences.

The majority of older participant group (n=13) had primary and secondary school experiences in other countries. Eleven in Nigeria, Zimbabwe and DRC Congo, one in Belgium and one completed the senior cycle in an Irish secondary school. Olufunke explained that in Nigeria, access to quality education required money *"in Nigeria, you have to attend a private school to really get a good education ... when I was growing up back in Africa, because of the financial situation, I couldn't afford to go to college".* The 'Nigerian tradition' was mentioned by Neema who explained there was higher value attached to educating boys as girls were expected to take care of the home and this tradition restricted the educational opportunities for many women.

In contrast to the Nigerian participants, the participants educated in Zimbabwe reported they had access to private education and significant supports in school and Raziya highlighted that while apartheid was still evident in school, the quality of education was excellent:

> Even though we were segregated … Blacks were the B class and Whites were A class, the school would provide dinners for us, we never have to pay for education, when I did my Leaving Cert and Junior Cert, it was set up in England.

Having documented evidence of previous education was also an issue. Anne explained how the war in Syria resulted in her not being able to access her exam results and so she had to re-sit the Leaving Cert in Ireland:

> I did my Leaving Cert in Syria before I moved to Ireland but I never had the certificate because at that time there was a civil war, a lot of gangs, a lot of amenities destroyed so I did not get my Leaving Cert but I did the exams.

Several participants that had previous qualifications in their country of origin talked about the difficulty getting recognition for previous learning, qualifications, or work experience. Jojo, who was a laboratory technologist in Nigeria described her disappointment when she discovered that her qualification would not be recognised in Ireland "*I was hoping to continue from where I stopped. I was told it doesn't matter; you have to start again. When you don't have a Leaving Cert in Europe, you have to have an equivalent University [qualification]*".

4.5.3 Access and pathways to higher education

In Ireland there are two main access routes to HE, the traditional or standard route through the Central Application Office (CAO) and what is referred to as the non-traditional or mature student route, which provides access for applicants over the age of 23 years that have previous qualifications. As outlined on Table 3 access pathways to HE were varied. Of the six younger participants, three accessed HE directly through the standard CAO route, two completed FETAC level 5 programmes and one did a Post Leaving Cert (PLC) programme. In the older group, 13 participants had completed FETAC Level 5 or 6 programmes in health, social care or other disciplines and the other two used preparatory courses such as springboard to gain access to HE. Several of these older participants reported gaining advanced entry to HE and entering year two of the social care

programme as part of Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between FE colleges and HE institutions.[27]

Table 3:
Previous qualifications, routes to HE and year of study

Name	College Year	Route to Higher Education	Previous Qualifications
Chris	3rd year	CAO	
Zalika	Recent Graduate	Further Education and Access scheme	Trader
Raelene	3rd year	Further Education and Access scheme	Beautician
Dorothy	4th year	Further Education and Access scheme	Accounting
Anne	3rd year	Further Education and Access scheme	None specified
Zanib	4th year	Springboard	Banker
Neema	4th year	Further Education and Access scheme	Health care Assistant Level 5
Alyssa	2nd year	CAO	None specified
Olufunke	4th year	Further Education Qualification	Health Care Assistant Level 5
Mesi	4th year	Further Education Qualification	Accounting
Monifa	4th year	Further Education Qualification	IT and Elder Care
Afia	4th year	Further Education Qualification	1st Year in University in Nigeria
Kemi	4th year	Further Education Qualification	Health Care Assistant Level 5
Jojo	4th year	Further Education Qualification	Lab Technology
Florence	4th year	Post Leaving Cert course	Post Leaving Cert course
Mary	4th year	Further Education and Access scheme	Degree in Science.
Bethane	2nd year	CAO	None specified
Lulu	Recent Graduate	Preparatory Course	IT
Furala	4th year	Further Education Qualification	Economist
Susan	Recent Graduate	Further Education and Access scheme	None specified
Raziya	Recent Graduate	Further Education Qualification and Prep Course	LC in Cambridge College

Data on HEIs the participants attended was captured, but due to possible identification and confidentiality this information is not presented beside individual participant. The HEIs were; TU Dublin City Campus, TU Dublin Tallaght campus, Dundalk Institute of Technology, Waterford Institute of Technology, Limerick Institute of Technology and

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[27] MoU between the HEA and QQI provides an agreed framework for cooperation and communication between two organisations in the interests of the higher education sector as a whole.

Athlone Institute of Technology. Twelve of the participants were in their fourth and final year of the programme, three were in third year and two were in second year. There were also four recent graduates of the social care programmes.

4.5.4 Motivation to study social care

Despite all of the participants having studied social care for a year or more, there was a broad range of understanding of the profession. Some participants, such as Lulu and Alyssa described that their initial understanding was that they would be social workers rather than social care workers. The participants' motivations for studying social care were very diverse. Several participants, such as Mary decided to study social care when her application for nursing was repeatedly unsuccessful as she perceived social care to be an aligned profession. For others, like Lulu, the decision to study social care stemmed from their personal experiences of caring for people in their family, being foster parents, or other informal caring roles:

> … all my life I have been doing social care. I was taking care of my elderly Mum when I was 21. I was a foster parent of a young teenage girl and I also have a brother that had autism. I was doing these things; except I never consider these as a profession.

Others explained that they were motivated to enter social care to advocate for and empower others. This was particularly pertinent in the stories of participants who had spent time in State care or Direct Provision. Susan who had been trafficked to Ireland as a minor and lived in care explained that this experience motivated her to study social care as she believed that this would enable her to advocate for systemic change *"I wouldn't want another girl to go through what I went through … being in the care of the state"*. Zalika described her decision to pursue social care as motivated by her experience in DP *"when I was in the asylum system, I realised asylum-seekers don't have a voice of their*

own and they have nobody to advocate for them". As a mature student, Raziya believed that social care provided an opportunity to draw on life experiences to help others while learning and obtaining a professional qualification "*being a mature student, it gives you that opportunity to learn more and develop your skills that you already have".* Overall, the participants' motivations reflected their lived experiences, and this underpinned the desire to care and advocate for more vulnerable members of society.

4.5.5 Expectations of higher education

The expectations of what a degree in social care could provide were discussed and there were divergent views. The younger participants talked about achieving a degree, not necessarily to work in social care, but as a base to continue studying. They also spoke about pressure from parents and family to attend college and that social care was viewed as the first step in their educational journey. Chris explained that her African mother had expectations for her beyond social care:

> … coming from the African countries, they're raised to get higher paying jobs, so you can live a successful life so they're enforcing it on us. So, any jobs below their standards is not a good enough job … my mom says not to stop at social care … social care is so minor … I've to go up to doctoring.

The older groups expectations centred around how a professional social care qualification would enable them to have higher earning capacity, which would provide security and improve quality of life for them and their children. Raziya hoped that a social care qualification would facilitate career progression, help secure permanent employment and this in turn would provide security and tenure in the housing market *"I want a house of my own. I want a permanent job. I just want life security".* A few older participants such as Zanib hoped that a social care qualification would support them in their entrepreneurial endeavours to develop private care services for older people. Several of the older

participants talked about wanting to provide a role model for their children and Mesi hoped that attaining a degree would not only improve the outcomes and opportunities for her and her children but also show good example of what was possible if one worked harder "*the more I'm educating myself the more it will increase my children of hope of getting there and I want to do this for myself, I mean I'm struggling but I really, really want to do it*".

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter introduces the participants providing contextual perspectives on who they are at a personal level. The data examines the trauma experienced through migration transitions and resettlement in Ireland. As women, levels of vulnerability increased with human trafficking, domestic, sexual, gender-based violence (DSGBV) and inappropriate accommodation. Accounts of family responsibilities, relationships and mothering, experiences of communication and language competency and religious beliefs were related to building connections, accessing supports and building capital. The impact of previous educational experiences was discussed and the diversity of access routes, motivations and expectations of studying social care at HE presented. Migration transitions, linguistic knowledge, pregnancy and child rearing, lack of secure accommodation and financial responsibilities were further compounded by the absence of family and community. This intersectional lens provides an important contextual backdrop for the next chapter which outlines the participants' experiences of living, working and studying social care in Ireland.

CHAPTER 5: EXPERIENCES OF LIVING, WORKING AND STUDYING IN IRELAND

5.1 Introduction

This chapter builds on the previous chapter by examining the data as it relates to lived experiences of the participants and is divided into three sections. The first section analyses the historical positioning and the current discourses about Black Minority Ethnic people including the Black Lives Matter movement in Ireland. This section also explores how experiences of racism and discrimination frame all aspects of living, working and studying. Section two explores the participants' experiences as social care students in HE, presenting data on visibility and representation, experiences of formal and informal teaching and learning environment and on placement. The third section considers strategies and adaptations that were used to respond to these experiences, emphasising the intersectional and cumulative effect. It also presents data on support mechanisms and resources identified by the participants as being helpful in navigating their journey through HE.

5.2 Living and working in Ireland

The participants' accounts indicated that societal, structural, institutional and personal racism and discrimination were embedded in their daily lives. The challenges about the terminology used to talk about race, ethnicity and skin colour reflected the current uncertain positioning of Black people in Ireland. The participants reported that discourses are frequently value laden and contentious and discussing the complexities of terminology unearthed differing perspectives. Mary felt positive about the term Black Minority Ethnic "*the colour of our skin will always be Black so I think it's okay to say Black Ethnic Minority. At this stage some of us are Irish by nationalisation … even if*

you're born here, you're still from that ethnic grouping" For others such as Lulu, the term Black Minority Ethnic was viewed as a label *"how would you feel if they called you ... White majority? I understand that we have to have a name ... to distinguish things ... but for me ... it is just labelling people".* Monifa talked about wanting to be considered as an individual rather the assumption that she represented all Black people *"It's better to ask you where are you from? We are all different and it's good to be different, so that chance to speak about yourself as an individual and where you come from, it makes a difference".*

Zanib referred to the legacy of slavery as being unconsciously engrained in people's psyche and that the visual representation in Ireland of Black people as poor, starving and in need of help contributed to these unconscious biases:

> … when you switch on your television, they will show a Black kid rummaging down in a bin, or they show you a Black woman with an emaciated child. All these mentalities are being fed into the minds and so a White person in seeing this, automatically symbolises a Black person as a beggar, a Black person is charity orientated, you get the point?

The categorisation of Black people based on skin colour was identified as problematic and participants remarked how the negative representation of Black Minority Ethnic in traditional and social media was reflected in wider societal discourses and perceptions. Zanib who was a banker in Nigeria before she migrated to Ireland, explained that White people were surprised when they learned she was educated, *"they cannot see past you being a cleaner or being a toilet cleaner".* As a result of this negative portrayal, Kemi believed that being Black in Ireland was problematic and she explained that it *"excludes you from society. It frustrating because you feel like you constantly have to prove yourself in the country that you belong ... it's a constant battle even for me".*

Stemming from far-right social media videos and postings, portrayals of young Black people as "*dangerous*" was noted by some of the participants such as Kemi and she explained that this "*just labels Black kids as being troublesome*". Another problematic depiction highlighted by Alyssa was how young Black children are criticised and sexualised in social media in comparison to White children:

> A White girl … she'll wear something, and everyone will be like 'that's cute' … 'oh that's adorable'. But then you see a Black girl and they'll just start saying, 'oh, she's too young to be wearing that'. There's a lot of different standards … there's a lot of sexualization for Black little girls compared to White girls and it's just disgusting.

Alyssa believed that these negative presentations contribute to further positioning Black people as inferior, which consolidates the power of White Irish people "*Black people are seen as … I don't want to say… animal like … they're seen as loud … degrading like animals… like it's just Shit! And then White people are seen as just innocent*".

Despite the increased awareness of issues pertaining to diversity and ongoing improvements in anti-discrimination legislation and policies in Ireland, the participant's engagement with political, professional, sociological and institutional infrastructures further confirmed this inferior positioning. Zanib described how White citizens continue to be privileged over Black:

> … marginalisation is very high because the average White man has a mental block … I can step on you a Black person because I am superior to you … like White supremacy, that's there … it reigns … you see it everywhere.

5.2.1 Experiences of racism

While all the participants shared experiences racism there was a distinct difference in the accounts of the younger and older participants. The younger participants described more frequent incidents of direct racism discrimination and micro aggressions in everyday living. Incidents ranged from racist slurs being shouted out while walking on the street to observing racist abuse while travelling on the bus. Chris linked these directly to negative stereotyping of Black people:

> Racism is still strong these days. So, we were outcasted a lot by most people … it was very scary … in shops we'd always be followed because of the stereotypes … on the AstroTurf someone spray-painted out the N words.

Experiences of direct racism and microaggressions were not as prominent in the narratives of the older group and instead they shared stories about their children's experiences of racism. It was not clear if this was because their own experiences differed from the younger participants, or if they were more sensitised and protective as mothers to racist and discriminatory behaviour directed towards their children. Several mothers described how school, particularly secondary school, was a frequent site of discrimination and Afia's description offers some insight into children's experiences:

> … at secondary school, they don't believe that Black children can be Irish … they still ask them 'oh you're a Nigerian?', and my children would say 'no, I'm not a Nigerian, I'm Irish, I was born here, I have never been to Nigeria in my life' … You know like they ask questions that points towards racism.

The older participants noted that while overt racism decreased as their children moved into secondary school, it was replaced by micro aggressions and more nuanced racism and by the senior cycle it was endemic. According to the participants, these

microaggressions were more difficult to challenge. Afia gave an example where her daughter, as the head girl in school, was excluded from meetings and when she questioned why, the vice principal become defensive, declaring that he was anti-racist citing the school's anti-discriminatory policies. Afia explained that it was very difficult to confront or challenge those in positions of power when they use policies to defend discriminatory practices.

While there was a belief among participants that most White people were opposed to overt racist behaviour conceptually, Alyssa felt that they were reluctant to acknowledge or address it as the system worked in their favour *"there's denial where people don't want to believe that it's there. They don't want to be like ... considered a racist"*. Susan explained that she found some White people were offended when a Black person tries to assume any authority *"literally, they will not take it from you, they will find that very offensive ... you can't tell me what to do!"* Zalika found it difficult to engage in a discussion about race because it often put her in a position of having to argue for or defend Black people while Susan believed the reluctance of Irish people to talk openly about race compounded the problem:

> I think Irish people have this thing ... that race is something you don't talk about it, it is just there and you don't go into it … they don't want to offend, so sometimes by not offending, they're actually not dealing with any of it at all which can actually be more offensive.

The defensive or colour-blind approach adopted by some White people was referred to by several participants. Bethane suggested that because White people do not experience racism, they deny its existence *"people are so blind. They pretend it doesn't exist… because you haven't experienced it, you haven't seen it first-hand, it doesn't mean it does not exist"*. Raelene's words captured the views of others when she explained that White

people are often unwilling to challenge racism, preferring to adopt a bystander approach *"They (White people) just don't want to help ... just prefer to not say anything just watch and they tell us it's not fair ... but they are not willing to actually make a difference or make a change".*

The impact of these experiences was profound and shaped how the participants navigated daily living. Alyssa explained how the pervasive nature of racist encounters instilled a heightened awareness of danger in her everyday interactions:

> … those little microaggressions … I get scared because I'm thinking the bus driver might be racist. They're not that micro, you know, the underlying kind of the language, the words that people use and how offensive and abusive [they can be].

The omnipresence of racism resulted in feeling fear and anxiety about personal safety. Florence described how hearing the 'N' word used by an older woman on public transport instilled anxiety when travelling by bus. Chris echoed other's accounts in her description of the fear she feels in her daily life:

> Anything can happen to you when you're outside … like you always need some sort of security around you when you're walking alone. It's just not very safe. I am actually planning to leave here if I get a degree or become successful enough ... I want to move my parents out of here because it's not safe for them either.

5.2.1.1 The context of Black Lives Matter movement

Only the younger participants referred to the BLM movement and they had a range of perspectives. Bethane, who has lived in Ireland all her life explained that she had heard of BLM when she was younger, but it was only when she started college that she came to realise that it related to her as a Black Irish person. Conversations and reactions to the BLM movement on social media were a talking point for the younger participants.

Bethane described her annoyance at the hypocrisy of some social media posts, where the people that used racist language in her secondary school were now *"posting a Blackout Square on Instagram in solidarity for Black Lives Matter people".* Alyssa believed the BLM movement encouraged some far-right supporters to promote their agenda of a White only Irish nation, particularly on social media platforms which the younger participants engaged with. She described how hate speech and racist and exclusionary remarks online can be vitriolic:

> I've noticed … the people from Twitter that come to talk about it ... I want to say patriotic people because they have the Irish flag in their bio and they're always 'there's no such thing as Black Irish'. They're always saying 'we are the Irish ... we claim the Irish. You guys don't have Irish in you' and you post about something to do with Black Lives Matter in Ireland and they will literally come out of nowhere. They will like crawl out of the soup and just start typing 'Go back to your country then'.

The positive impact of activism and BLM was evident in the younger participants' stories, and they described it as an opportunity to have their voices heard and to feel represented. Raelene described how BLM validated her lived experiences and feelings of being an outsider in Ireland. However, Bethane expressed concern that there would be no long-term impact from the movement:

> … people think Black Lives Matter is just a trend … it's not a trend … it's really hard being Black … you're Black every single day, not just one day, every single year and I can't choose not to be Black.

Florence was not alone in her view that confronting and fighting racism had been exhausting and that this may be a reason why older participants did not refer to the BLM movement:

> I always used to fight it, but then it just came to a time where like I kept fighting and it kept happening … it wears you down. I don't want to give it my energy… like I'd rather put my energy into something else.

Chris noted that while the awareness of the BLM movement was very much alive within the community and wider society, it was not as active within HEIs, and she surmised that this may be due to the lack of representative numbers of Black Minority Ethnic students to drive the movement in HE.

5.2.1.2 Identity formation

The experiences of migration, resettlement, living in Ireland and activism impacted on the participants' development and formation of identity. Participants discussed racial and ethnic identity, knowing who they are, holding on to where they came from, all the while developing and embracing new possibilities and other identities. Bethane, one of the younger participants described the frustration of frequent questioning about where she came from, despite living in Ireland most of her life:

> … some random person is like, 'oh, where are you from? 'I just go 'from Kildare' ... I was expected to say like, oh somewhere in Africa because just because your skin tones different to people here … like, they had that kind of like programming in their head like, if you're Black, you're African.

Alyssa, another younger participant, who has lived in Ireland all of her life, described the difficulty developing an Irish identity when you are told to "'Go back to your country then', technically this is my country and there's nowhere else to go … they'll say, 'you'll

never be Irish". Florence echoed others in her belief that being Black superseded all other identities and that a person's uniqueness was lost in the categorisation "you're never actually you! We're seen as just Black woman, Black mother, Black single mother and we're never just Florence".

The intergenerational aspect of identity development and formation was also noted. Anne who was trafficked from Syria over 10 years previously explained how it was only after the birth of her child that she felt the need to develop an Irish identity so she could integrate into the community. Susan described how challenging it was for her to establish her own identity in the context of being a mother of mixed-race children, explaining that *"I'm just made in the wrong body!"* Monifa expressed concern that the cumulative impact of racist experiences would instil long term fear and distrust in her daughter while Jojo described the frustration of having worked so hard to integrate in Ireland to see her children, who have been brought up as Irish citizens, continually face discrimination "*My children, born Irish and grown-up Irish and that's their experience all their life and they experience racism or discrimination as Black Irish children*". Olufunke, a mother of three children born in Ireland, concluded that despite the outward impression that Irish born Black children seem to have integrated, she felt that White supremacy continued to exist

> … a lot of them have grown up here so they talk like them, they behave like them … their behaviour is completely different from we coming from Africa. But it's not working in the end, I think they're not going to have a good experience. They (White people) have the same power; they have the same attitude.

The cumulative and intersectional experiences resulted in some participants questioning if they were responsible in some way for being discriminated against. Mesi explained that "*I was thinking maybe because I'm a Black, I question myself … maybe I'm not good enough*". Susan's feelings of being unwelcomed, arguably based on her experiences in

DP and resettlement, underpinned her internalised view of her position in Irish society "*I don't belong here. I'm not supposed to be here ... I'm not entitled to most things, or I am not entitled to be here therefore I deserve this [discrimination]*". This internalised view was also a thread in Susan's interactions in work, college and in her description of placement "*I think the barrier I had was how I would be perceived by the service users as a Black person, whether they would be okay or used to having Black people around*". This indicated an internalised awareness of the fragility of the White person and how deeply embedded racism in a person's psyche fuelled the perception of themselves as the problem, rather than the oppressive system which they are trying to navigate.

5.2.2 Experiences in workplace

While the focus of this study was on the experiences of the participants as social care students, accounts of working in the care sector was interwoven in their stories and they explained the interplay of social, cultural and economic capital on employment opportunities in Ireland. For participants that were asylum seekers, the processing of applications to reside in Ireland took many years and during this period they were unable to work legally. This was a source of deep frustration and several participants described working in the 'black economy' for cash as in-home carers for elderly people while they waited for their asylum applications to be approved.

Once they could work legally, the participants described the difficulties they encountered, noting specific barriers to securing employment as migrants. As many of the participants had spent time in DP, their ability and capacity to build connections within the community were reduced. Mary identified the absence of family connections, local knowledge and social capital as obstacles for Black people to secure employment as many of the positions were filled through "*informal connections and word of mouth*". Some of the younger participant believed the difficulty they had in securing employment was a direct result of

racism and discrimination. Alyssa described feeling disenfranchised by how structures and systems are constructed to advantage White people "*White people don't have to say to themselves 'I won't get this job because I'm White'*".

Despite the challenges of securing employment, 13 of the 21 participants reported currently working in healthcare sector, 11 as Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) and two as home carers. According to their accounts, securing employment in care work was not difficult due to lack of regulation, no set minimum entry requirements and the shortage of staff. The work was primarily providing intimate and personal care for clients in nursing homes, residential units for people with disabilities and home care for elderly clients. The participants reported being recruited by other Black Minority Ethnic friends and family that were working in the sector. As many of the participants had previous qualifications and experience, care work was considered as a first step towards getting established and they believed that they were overqualified for these positions.

The precarious conditions of working in the care sector were evident in the participants' accounts of being placed on relief panels or working for agencies with no set shift patterns, identified location of work or employment security. They explained that the hourly payment was set at the statutory minimum wage level, sometimes paid in cash and often without additional allowances such as travel, uniforms, or unsocial hour payments. Furula, Mesi and Monifa described the expectation of employment agencies was that they would be available for work at short notice, travel long distances to clients at their own expense and do cleaning and heavy lifting work. Afia explained that the physical toll of care work motivated her to look for something better "*when I was working as a Healthcare Assistant, I was feeling the impact on my body so that's why I want something beyond being a Healthcare Assistant*".

The participants believed education was a vehicle to re-position themselves and hoped that a social care degree would not only increase their economic and social capital by providing security of employment, but also enhance their professional skills and widen their scope of practice. Neema explained how HCA was restricted in terms of role and responsibility and she wanted to broaden her knowledge and skill base *"Social care workers advocate for them[clients}, support them, look for the resources for them, connect them with the appropriate place that they need ... when I was a Healthcare Assistant, we don't do that"*. However, the participants identified barriers transitioning from HCA to social care worker and, without clear progression pathways and job titles, many continued to be employed as HCAs despite being qualified as social care workers. Neema believed that she was not considered for promotion because of racism and prejudice *"there are some people that think 'Where did you come from? You cannot come from some shit place and tell us this and that"*. Zanib concurred, explaining the inequitable progression pathways that currently exist:

> There will be some Irish people that have no qualification … they are now social care leaders, with no qualification at all. And then the Black ones that do have qualifications … they don't get that position because they've already given somebody else that don't have that qualification.

Raziya described how she was told she would not be eligible for progression despite having qualifications and experience in the sector:

> My boss told me 'I don't think you'll be able to function in that position because you're still new, you don't actually know the people yet. You need to take time before you can be able to' and I was like, 'I've been in Ireland, I have a degree, I was working as a social care worker before I came into this organization'.

Some discriminating experiences were less overt and Jojo's story of being verbally offered a promotion but not having it acted upon indicated a more underhand micro aggressive stance by the employer:

> My manager actually came to me and told me 'Jojo, you'll be the one to fit into that position' and I said, 'Thank you'… but every time I mention it to her, she just says hold on and the position is still empty.

Furula, described feeling manipulated by her employers as she had to fight for months for her qualification to be recognised to no avail. In the end, Furula left the organisation and got employment where her degree was recognised:

> They were twisting it for me, they were sending me care assistant forms and care assistant badges … I send them an email ... I am not a Health Care Assistant; I am a Social Care Worker. Change it! If you do not do that, I am not working for you.

For those that did get promotion, the salary and conditions for the role were often not what was expected. Furthermore, several participants described working harder for the same pay under a different title that was presented as a promotion. Mesi explained told that she was told she would be promoted if she completed a supervisory course, which she paid for herself. When she was promoted, she discovered that the salary did not reflect the extra responsibility of the post *"the manager says in front of everybody that Mesi is going to be our supervisor, but they didn't do well with the salary and I said this salary is one euro higher!"*. Mary was the only participant that expressed any trust in the promotion process and believed that if she was patient, did not cause any trouble, worked hard then promotion would follow.

5.3 Experiences of higher education

The experiences of migration, living and working in Ireland provided the backdrop for studying in HE. According to participants, engagement was framed by the wider HEI environment, the formal and informal interactions in the class and placement experiences. Within the wider HEI environment, participants spoke of particular communal areas where Black students met and when the researcher visited to do the interviews, she observed spaces in canteen areas where Black Minority Ethnic students congregated in each of the HEIs. Raelene echoed others' views in welcoming these spaces describing them as places for Black students to socialise with each other in an otherwise predominantly White environment. Susan believed that these spaces have emerged as a result of othering of Black students within the HE environment and while Monifa agreed that they provided a place to interact and integrate visually and culturally, she used the term 'ghetto' to describe the space *"in the college canteen, the Black students like sticking together rather than mixing with other students ... this is the Blacks area ... the ghetto"*. Chris explained that she actively avoids hanging out in these spaces as she gets distracted and skips class, while Raziya acknowledged that White students can feel intimidated by these areas and she felt pressure from other Black students in these spaces not to develop friendships or interact with White Irish students *"they make these remarks saying, 'oh you're behaving as if you're Irish"*.

5.3.1 Visibility and representation

While visibility of Black students in congregated spaces was notable in the accounts of the participants, it provided a sharp contrast to the invisibility or absence of Black Minority Ethnic staff in academic and leadership positions in HEIs. Zanib described how, despite the portrayals in prospectuses and advertising material of HEIs as multicultural environments, this was not evident or reflected within the lecturing staff *"look around ...*

I don't see one Black lecturer ... African students are highly represented but not one African lecturer ... what I did see was an increase of Black people cleaning". Several other participants also commented on the lack of Black Minority Ethnic educators, with only participant reporting having a Black lecturer teaching on the social care programme in her college. She described the significance of this, not just in terms of visibility, but also as a role model *"she is someone who has been one of my role models, when I see her or when I hear her, she makes me want to go further, if she could achieve that, I could too".*

According to the participants, there was also a noted absence of visibility and representation of Black Minority Ethnic students' history, culture and experiences in the curriculum, teaching materials and reading lists. Chris reported that the Eurocentric focus of the curriculum disadvantaged migrant students who did not have tacit knowledge associated with growing up in Ireland *"it would have been something that happened in Ireland that we have no clue about ... so we would have to go and do extra research on our own".* Bethane suggested that the social care curriculum was limited in terms of scope and depth and found it lacked any meaningful teaching on issues of race and ethnicity. Florence concurred and suggested that topics such as migration were not taught as in-depth as other topics which felt hurtful as it minimised her migration experiences *"it was just like get it over and done with, it wasn't taught in any depth"*. Zanib noted that in teaching materials Black people were presented as taking a supporting role or as service users and were not portrayed as professionals taking a lead:

> … don't show a video of just White people having a voice … show Black people chairing meetings, working one to one with service users or being key workers to the service user, so that Black people are not in the background … empower them.

5.3.2 Teaching and learning environment

Based on the participants' stories, experiences of the teaching and learning environment were pivotal to how the participants engaged in HE. Discussing and analysing race, ethnicity, migration and the implications of these issues was an integral component of many course modules. Several participants referred to how discussions on these issues were managed. Bethane believed that lecturers should provide opportunities for Black students to share their lived experiences rather than speak about these topics abstractly "*because I feel nobody else can understand the discrimination ... especially when you're White and Irish*". Afia reported that when the Black lecturer in her college talked candidly and openly about skin colour, racism and discrimination it was a very positive learning experience for all students. However, she realised that this did not always impact on student biases or result in change.

Kemi described how some lecturers avoided discussions relating to racism or discrimination and acknowledged that it can be difficult to navigate the issues:

> A lot of lecturers focus on addiction, disability … stuff that happens in society that we don't mind talking about, but in terms of racism, I do believe that the majority of lecturers would shy away from issues like that … it's a sticky one to touch on because you can get entangled in it if you say the wrong word.

Susan surmised that lecturers may avoid subjects such as migration and racism as they, as White educators, had limited knowledge, experience or understanding of the issues.

Afia made the point that despite many opportunities to learn about and discuss social justice issues, there was clear divergence between the theory, policy and legislation taught to the lived experiences of Back Minority Ethnic social care students:

We talk about discrimination, we talk about diversity, we talk about social justice, we talk about racism, but we as social care workers are not practicing that. We can't even stop discriminating against each other within the class setting so how are we going to practice that when we go out?

Kemi believed that if social care educators applied the principles of ethics, anti-oppressive practice and social justice in class it would provide opportunities to create awareness of unconscious biases and challenge discriminatory language and behaviour. Afia gave an example of a class discussion where some White students made comments about migrants dominating Irish society and these went unchallenged by the lecturer or other students. As a result, she felt that social justice was a "*myth*" due to the dissonance between what she was learning and her personal experiences in class. Neema understood that if discriminatory behaviour, language or discussion goes unchallenged it sets a low professional standard that does not align with best practice guidelines:

As a social care worker, we are there to challenge discrimination, so we are not supposed to practice something like that … the college should match that when they are teaching so that you experience that in the classroom and then that's how you carry it to your work or to your placement or whatever.

5.3.2.1 Interactions with lecturers

The participants identified communication and building connections as the key to interacting with lecturers. However, their expectations of lecturers and the support that they could provide went far beyond the teaching role. Lecturers that were open to interacting at a personal level were considered to have a positive influence on the participants' engagement. However, the converse was also evident and challenges of interacting with some educators were also reported. Anne reported feeling intimidated and frightened by one lecturer "*she's very strict … I was very scared of her; I was like,*

oh my God how am I going to face this woman". Others talked about lecturers acting defensively or adopting a colour-blind approach and Zanib provided an example of how some lecturers would preface discriminatory statements with '*I'm not a racist, but …*'.

Several participants said that they could not approach lecturers or tutors due to the absence of cultural understanding or empathy. Raziya believed that communication issues arising from English competency acted as a barrier for some Black students in their interactions and this impeded the development of relationships with lecturers. Zalika observed that White mature students were more at ease interacting with lecturers and Jojo felt that this gave them an unfair advantage over Black mature students:

> The mature Irish students … they were treated differently. They were treated more fairly than us because they have that kind of relationship with lecturers that we don't have … most of them won't be in class for a whole month and they still pass the exams.

Experiences of lecturers not acknowledging contributions or opinions were common in the participant accounts. Several participants expressed a belief that some lecturers did not want to hear their opinion in class and descriptions of being skipped over, ignored, or even silenced were shared. Zanib's story reflected other participants' experiences of this:

> If I have something to say she [lecturer] either shushes me or tells me to hold on when she finishes what she has to say, but then if a White person speaks up, she lets them put in the word. I observed that consistently in the class.

Olufunke explained how difficult it was to develop the confidence to engage with lecturers as culturally she believed it was disrespectful to make eye contact with those in authority. When she did overcome this challenge and her attempt was not acknowledged

it resulted in her withdrawing *"when you're there making eye contact and it still ignored, over time you stop talking and you stop contributing"*.

5.3.2.2 Communication and language competency

Communication and English language competency were common themes in the participants' accounts of studying in HE. Several participants noted the academic benefit of having English as a first language. Afia, born in Nigeria and living in Ireland for almost 20 years, believed that not being a native English speaker was a significant barrier to expression, participation, engagement and professional attainment. As the teaching pedagogy in social care is primarily discussion based, the participants were expected to communicate and share their understanding of topics and contribute to class. Raziya explained how vulnerable and exposed she felt when asked to contribute due to the fear of being judged by classmates *"They [lecturers] know that I can't speak properly, so why would they ask me?... if I speak and it's wrong, somebody's going to laugh"*. Mesi described how she withdrew and became silent in class as she felt that others were laughing at her because of her accent.

Comprehension was also reported as problematic. Speed of speech, tone of voice, phraseology and accents impacted on participants' capacity to understand and be understood. Monifa described how comprehension issues effectively reduced her confidence to speak and noted that others avoided conversing with her in class. Olufunke, Zalika and Dorothy reported that lecturers spoke very fast and this impacted on their comprehension of lectures and capacity to take notes. Dorothy emphasised how important it was to have access to lecture notes after the class so that she could listen to them repeatedly to understand the content.

According to the participants, the impact English language competency had on academic writing skills was a key factor in progression and grade attainment. Several participants

believed they were not prepared for higher-level academic writing standards and found communicating their knowledge through this format very challenging. Neema reported how spelling and grammar were particularly onerous and this was repeated in the stories of other older participants who as mature students had been out of formal education for a long period. Afia explained that her writing style was different to the Irish style and recounted how a lecturer pointed this out *"you Nigerians, you like to emphasise things and when you're writing, that emphasis always show"*. Academic referencing difficulties were of particular concern for many participants and Furula noted that difficulties in referencing can result in unintentional plagiarism, which impacted not only on grades, but on the student's reputation.

5.3.2.3 Feedback and grade attainment

The participants' accounts indicated that access to feedback on assignments and being able to approach the lecturer to seek clarification was fundamental to progression and attainment. Lack of confidence as a result of lower levels of English competency and ingrained fear and distrust based on previous experiences resulted in reduced interaction with lecturers. Several participants were reluctant to seek clarification or receive feedback and this resulted in assignments being misunderstood and subsequent lower grade attainment. Lulu described having to pursue and push the lecturers for feedback and she believed that many Black students did not have the same confidence or linguistic ability to do this. Anne described the additional barrier of having to go through the class representative for clarification and feedback *"that lecturer that doesn't like any of her students coming to her, she would prefer the class rep to come to her and talk to her instead of different people coming"*.

Several participants raised the issue of lower grade attainment of Black students in HE and there was a range of experiences and perspectives. Some believed that grading was

fair and equitable. This was reflected in Neema's view about student ability and work ethic *"it is about the capacity ... some of my friends that did Social Care came out with distinctions, so I don't think it is about colour"*. Raziya agreed and observed that if Black students received lower grades as a result of not putting in the effort some would *"use the race card, which is BAD!"*. Chris believed that the younger generation of Black students do not share same determination and motivation as the mature Black students *"they feel education is too much work or too much time, they'd rather just scratch a pass and get it over and done with than put their all in"*.

Others believed that the system favoured White Irish students and that lower English language competency situated migrant students at a disadvantage. Jojo described how misunderstanding the assignment brief resulted in lower grades *"we answer the way we understood, and the lecturer is looking for something else, and you will be marked down"*. Several other participants described feeling confused and exasperated when they discovered that White students achieved higher grades despite doing less work. Afia tried to make sense of how grading reflected the effort and time put in to an assignment:

> If a White person and I were given an assessment, I think they judge theirs on a lighter scale than mine … you have been preparing it for weeks and somebody did their CA [Continuous Assessment] in three hours and they still get more marks than you, how do you explain that?

Lulu did not trust that lecturers fully read the assignments and believed grade allocation was based on their stereotypical view of the ability of Black students. Raelene surmised that some lecturers might find Black students intimidating and grade without being aware of their unconscious bias:

… they don't want the outsider to be the best … Black students can be a bit intimidating … when they see someone not of their culture trying to get better grades … they don't want them to do as well.

5.3.3 Interactions with other students

The student experience is much more than the academic aspect and for many students HE is about making friends, socialising and feeling part of a wider community. The initial few weeks of starting college can be daunting for all students and the older group in this study used words like "*scared" "worried*" and *"anxious"* to describe that period. Dorothy's account mirrored other participants' experiences of the first few days in college:

> … it's a different and strange place, I remember when I went into my car I actually start crying, I burst out weeping, I'm like 'God what did I put myself into', I said 'Oh I don't think I will be able to continue'.

Zanib also described feeling overwhelmed and anxious, while Raziya, a mature student, expressed concern about keeping up with the younger students. She felt that the first few months were crucial in terms of getting to know others and positioning oneself in the class "*when we are all new, we kinda lay the boundaries, we are comfortable with each other today"*.

Some of the participants expected social care students to be more open minded and non-judgemental than students in other disciplines and believed that integration would be straightforward. However, once the initial settling in period was over, Afia explained that groups segregated naturally *"As time goes on the Whites would gravitate towards the Whites and the Blacks would gravitate towards the Blacks"*. Dorothy believed that Black Minority Ethnic students frequently felt intimidated by White students, while Kemi

described how she felt judged and excluded by the younger White students in particular *"they are pompous; they think they are big ... they think that they are superior"*. Micro-aggressive experiences in class were reported by many participants and they explained that while racism was not verbally expressed, it was evident to them in other student's feelings and expressions. Zalika described it as *"it wasn't said, but it was there! Its actions! The actions speak ... but they don't say to your face"*. Dorothy described the complexity of unspoken but deliberate micro aggressive behaviour *"I think it is hidden, some people know how to play racism in a very respectful way, you understand because I would see some people in my group that are racist, but they don't want to show it"*.

As a result of these experiences, some participants believed that they were excluded from various class activities. Communication systems used within the class group were referred to by participants and phone apps such as WhatsApp were identified as primarily used to share information, organise events and contact the class representative. Several participants shared experiences where they felt excluded in these communications and this resulted in being late for class, missing lectures or assignment deadlines. Afia surmised that, while there was no proof, she felt that *"there was possibly two group chats"*. If students had questions, concerns or problems they were advised to bring them to the class representative and some of the participants found this process problematic. Anne reported that the class representative did not respond to her questions but observed her act instantly if White students had an issue. Zalika felt it was futile to bring issues to the attention of the class representative and gave up *"because I realised at the end of the day that nothing will be done"*. Jojo surmised that because she was not in the majority (White Irish), she felt that her voice went unheard in the class *"it seems nobody was listening because it's always the majority, when your voice is not as much as other voices ... you tend not to be heard"*.

Socialising is an important component of the college experience and the participants described very mixed experiences. The younger participants talked about wanting to socialise with classmates after college but Afia's description of going out to a club illustrates the challenges of belonging when mixing in a predominantly White environment *"if I went to a club and I was just with like a bunch of White people ... I wouldn't feel comfortable personally, I'd be like, why am I here? I just I don't fit here"*. The older participants expressed less of a desire to socialise with classmates. Kemi explained that the class tend to meet in the pub and that she would not feel comfortable in that setting, while others explained that family responsibilities reduced availability to socialise with other students outside college hours. Lulu, a single parent with four children, believed that younger students had freedom to socialise that she did not have *"they have a totally different life, they can relax and all ... they can go home and get a dinner from their parents, and I have a totally different world"*.

Only three of the 21 participants described making friends with White students in the class and one of these, Furula, aged 42, described it as a very positive experience *"It was awesome. It was good. I mixed. I have friends. There was no racism. There was no problem"*. Raelene explained that while Irish students might extend the hand of friendship initially, she found that they were reluctant or even afraid to progress the relationship any further. Susan reported that she had no interactions with over half her class during her time as a student but did not specify if this was by choice *"I spent 4 years there and I can guarantee you there's at least more than half the class that I never spoken t*o".

The difference between interactions, casual friendships and more meaningful long-term relationships was noted and Kemi explained that while interactions were cordial and professional, she felt no sense of friendship with White students *"we'll say 'Hi' to each other as social care workers because we have to be professionals, but there's no*

friendship there". Other participants believed that the social, cultural and linguistic differences created barriers to developing long-term friendships with White students. Lulu explained that the friends she made in college were not lifelong friends *"they are circumstantial friends ... we are friends now because we go to school together but then once school is finished everything is finished"*. The participants, young and old, talked about how they found White mature students less judgemental and more open to making friends with Black students than the younger White students. Olufunke believed this was because they were more mature *"the difference between the mature students and the younger ones ... mature ones answer questions and say hello ... they don't laugh, the maturity is there"*. One participant reported being the only Black Minority Ethnic student in her class. She deduced that she would not make friends in the class after the first semester and described moving back home, commuting long distances to college each day. The sense of loss, sadness and lack of belonging came across in the body language of this young student, who became tearful when sharing this experience.

As a result of exclusionary and discriminatory experiences, the participants demonstrated a general reluctance to open up or share personal information with White classmates. Mary echoed other participants' views in her belief that sharing personal, or family information would make her vulnerable to further judgement by classmates *"the way they look at you, you feel like I am from a different planet, so no I didn't share anything. You'd be afraid they might judge you by the way they talk about.*

5.3.3.1 Staying together

The participants talked how they gravitated towards other Black students in the class where they felt a sense of welcoming and belonging, mirroring the congregation in communal spaces. Zalika described the sense of security and belonging that comes with feeling at ease with others:

I felt at home, and I felt really comfortable and I felt I actually belonged here

because we started to share stuff … stuff is safe ... this is my clique and has been

my clique since the first year.

Bethane, the youngest participant in the study, described her delight in seeing two other

young Black students on her course and explained that she still prefers to be with them

rather than other students *"I still kind of gravitate towards ... obviously only younger*

people that are Black in my class. I don't like mixing with other people ... like I only mix

it them when I have to".

The participants shared stories about working collectively with other Black students on

projects and assignments and this was particularly prevalent in the older group where they

had previously known each other in DP centres or had forged friendships and alliances in

HEIs access programmes. Raelene explained how *"it's easier to just get along with your*

own because they understand better rather than having to explain or teach others". These

participants described setting up exclusive WhatsApp group chats and organising study

groups and tutorials with other Black students. Neema explained that the WhatsApp

groups enabled them to ask questions, seek clarification, share resources and collectively

work on individual tasks, assignments and exam preparation. These collectives also

functioned at a broader support level and participants described carpooling, sharing

childcare and studying in each other's homes.

According to their accounts, the disadvantage of working in these exclusive groups was

that if an assignment brief was misunderstood or interpreted incorrectly, it impacted

negatively on all student grades. Jojo described the collective feeling of disappointment

with the results of an assignment as they were *"much lower than our expectation"*.

Despite this disadvantage, only one of the participants reported reluctance to working as

a collective. Susan, 28 who has mixed race children and previously talked about not

belonging with either White or Black communities explained that *"I just might be crazy, but I did find it challenging working with African people".*

5.3.3.2 Experiences of the groupwork environment

Groupwork is an integral component of social care education, and most modules have a groupwork element to assignments and assessments of the learning outcomes. From the accounts of the participants, groupwork was especially challenging as it intensified the outsider experience. Allocation to groups varied and participants described being allocated a group or allowed to choose their own. Many shared experiences of exclusion when students choose who they wanted in the group and Zalika's story captures the feelings of being left out and rejected:

> … if we are told to pick ourselves, they would not even come near you…they want to pick themselves … I would just stand, and no one would mention me ... so I just stand and when it is sorted, then I can join them, it goes on like that for very long time.

Raelene preferred when lecturers allocated students to groups as it provided an opportunity to interact with White students. However, Dorothy suggested that while in principle this approach seemed the most equitable, in reality segregation still happened once the groups started to work. Once assigned to a group, the participants continued to encounter challenges and difficulties, with older participants describing being ignored by younger White students. Dorothy's experience echoed other stories *"they want to prove that they are not bothered by you ... they are not going to tell you directly to shut up your mouth, but their reactions and their countenance and ignoring completely… especially the younger ones".* Kemi described her anxiety when doing a group presentation as she was aware that other students may judge her or not want to present the work due to her language competency *"presentations are nerve-wracking as it is and having a language*

barrier on top of it ... like you're freaking out because you know that your peers know that your English is not the best".

Experiences of group projects being completed and submitted without input from the participants were shared. Monifa described the conversation with other group members when her contribution to a group project was disregarded:

> I said 'guys we need to chat because I'm actually feeling shit. I've seen that you've discussed all the other people's work, and mine you left it out, and if we're going to present tomorrow, I think it's important that you also look at my work'.

Zalika explained that as a result of her work being ignored in small groups, she developed a passive attitude which impacted on her motivation *"any group work, I just do whatever they say. I just be in the group ... participate ... be present. I go get my own piece ... get my marks and get out ... I don't really put effort".* The frustration of working in groups with other students that had different styles, pace, language competency and expectations was discussed by several older participants. Monifa and Lulu explained that as busy mothers they needed to be organised and have assignments done in advance, therefore there was significant cumulative stress and frustration working with younger students that did not share the same work ethic, had less constraints on time or had no family commitments.

5.3.4 Placement experiences

Practice placements are an integral component of the social care degree and students are required to complete a minimum of 800 placement hours over two or more placements in different service areas (CORU, 2019). The descriptions of placement experiences were diverse, but participants reported that they were keen to engage in the placements and viewed them as opportunities to gain experience and position themselves professionally.

There was apprehension and fear when discussing sourcing and securing placement as some participants were concerned that, as a result of the cumulative and intersectional experiences, they would not be welcomed by staff or service users because of their skin colour or ethnicity. Diversity within the staff team on placement provided reassurance in some cases and Kemi described how having a diverse team made it a more enjoyable placement experience *"I enjoyed it, they had multicultural team members, we had Black, we had White, it gave me that sense of reassurance that there are Black people in this field"*.

5.3.4.1 Sourcing placements

According to the participants, some HEIs placed students while others expected students to source and secure placement themselves. Where placements were sourced by the college, the participants expressed anxiety about how they would manage practical issues such as travel to the location of the placement, limitations of public transport and juggling childcare when placement hours were unsocial. Susan described the difficulty in completing placement while living in temporary homeless accommodation which required her to move her family frequently to different locations. Other participants with children, family and work commitments found themselves in the difficult position of having to approach the placement supervisor to renegotiate hours to facilitate childcare and transport before they commenced. The practical issues of placement location, travel costs and rosters were a particular concern for mothers parenting alone when they were not consulted about the allocation process. Some reported deferring a placement because they could not manage to attend due to the constraints of family responsibilities.

In the HEIs where students sourced their own placements, the participants outlined difficulty securing placements and attributed this to their skin colour and ethnicity. Florence described how, despite persistent emailing and calling placement organisations,

she had no replies and believed this was because they knew she was Black due to her name. Mary explained that voice and accent were indicators of their difference and were used against them "*once they hear your voice, your accent on the phone they tell you 'Oh, sorry we're already booked we have student'... because you're Black, you won't get it*. Zanib found it easier to secure a placement in an organisation where the supervisor was non-Irish as they were both 'outsiders' in an Irish context. However, there were some advantages when students sourced their own placements. Susan acknowledged that it facilitated her to choose an organisation where she could use her lived experiences as an asylum seeker to help others "*I probably thought I knew the things they should do when they went to asylum ... when I got a placement, I enjoyed it because I knew how it felt*".

5.3.4.2 Experiences on placement

Once the placement was secured, the participants discussed the allocation of tasks and experiences of the work on placement. Florence and Alyssa, two younger students, described being assigned very basic tasks due to the low expectation of the supervisor and they felt this reduced their opportunities to demonstrate capacity. Furula and Kemi had very different experiences and described how they engaged in a diverse range of duties using their cultural knowledge, skills and experiences in their work. Kemi explained how her supervisor encouraged her to take on pieces of work that she felt were beyond her capacity and in hindsight this really assisted her to learn and build her skill base.

Participants had varied views on whether placement was a site of discrimination for Black Minority Ethnic social care students. Mary felt that "*placement is where you will really see the racism*" while Mesi reported that she did not experience any racism or discrimination on placement. The younger students told stories of older service users asking them repeatedly '*where they were really from?*' and while they understood that

older people might not have had much exposure to Black people in the past, they found this frustrating, upsetting and discriminatory. Other participants reported being subjected to regular racial slurs by clients and service users. Chris gave an example of being on placement in a disability service and a service user called her and other Black staff 'Beyoncé' (a Black singer) because of their skin colour. While she found this offensive, she was more annoyed that it was not addressed by the staff or the placement supervisor. Raelene surmised that when an organisation agrees to accept a Black student on placement, there is an understanding that they can be treated differently and expect they will do more menial work than White students. Furula provided an example of this when a staff member asked her to do cleaning tasks that other staff or students would not be expected to do:

> All the cleaning she wants the Black people to be doing it. I said 'I am not doing that, I am not here to do that, I am a student and I am here to do my placement, not here to clean the windows'... she asked me to wash the toilets, mop the floor.

Afia described being questioned by staff members if the placement was really suitable for her and she believed that this stemmed from unconscious bias as there were no Black professionals working in the organisation. Zanib described how she found some staff acting superior to her *"they were very stuck up … you have to do what I tell you to do kind of mentality, it was very pronounced"*. Experiences of not being trusted or respected by staff in the placement settings were shared and are captured in Bethane's story about an incident where a staff member searched her bag for something that one of the service users had mislaid and went on to announce to the large group present that it was not there *"one of the staff, without my permission, opened my bag … 'see look ... there's nothing in the bag' So it was kind of annoying me, but I didn't want to say anything"*.

Accounts of interactions and relationships with service users highlighted how communication difficulties contributed to clients perceiving Black Minority Ethnic students as different. Furula explained how her dialect, pronunciation, and speed of speech impacted developing relationships with clients on placement and in the workplace *"the service users, sometimes they can't understand what I am saying, and they get frustrated"*. Monifa explained that there was a reluctance from some service users to work with Black students, but believed that this might be more to do with disruption to their routine than racism:

> … some people with disabilities, they might not want to work with you because maybe they have structure, I think it is the reason why they would try to retaliate, but with time they get used to you and they don't want you to leave.

Progression on placement was discussed and, while none of the participants disclosed personal difficulties, they shared stories about other Black Minority Ethnic social care students failing placements. Neema believed that failing placements could be related to culturally different communication styles such as difficulty in making eye contact with supervisors or male managers. Bethane believed that supervisors needed to be more supportive, especially for younger students. She described how a young Black friend who was on her first placement *"was gaslighted by her supervisor and ended up having to repeat that placement because her supervisor was picking on her … she was like 19, which was not fair because she should have been looking after her"*. According to Florence, progression on placement was impacted by the internalised White privilege of some supervisors *"because you're Black, they don't want you to succeed … they want the opportunities for themselves [White people] … I feel like they're intimidated because they see that you work hard and that you're determined"*.

As many social care placements involve working with children and families, utilising, sharing and processing cultural knowledge on parenting and raising children was referred to by several participants. They noted conflicting values and beliefs, describing how their parenting styles were frequently at variance with the approach taken in services. Monifa described explaining to a social worker on placement that what was perceived to be possible child abuse in the Irish system was normal parenting based on the values of the African families. Raziya described how managing challenging behaviour on placement was at odds with her cultural beliefs and values and this impacted on her practice experience *"the way I raised my daughter, I think this is how it should be, but it was a different ball game! Oh, they traumatised me man! I don't want to lie ... I didn't like it at all"*.

5.4 Navigating the environment: strategies, adaptations and supports

The participants described different responses and strategies they employed to navigate the experiences of living, working and studying in Ireland. It appeared from their accounts that anger and frustration were more commonly and more profoundly felt among the younger group. Alyssa's description echoed the other younger participants as she explained that the circumstances usually dictated her reaction *"Sometimes you just freeze, then sometimes I talk back, sometimes I just call them out ... I'll just be like 'Just shut the fuck up!"*. Acceptance, resignation and normalisation of racism and discrimination was more apparent in the older participants' accounts. Mary reported, in a resigned tone that, as a Black woman living in Ireland, she expected to be targeted, while Lulu attributed the numerous attacks on her home to normal teenage behaviour rather than racist behaviour:

> … having people coming throwing eggs at the house and things like that … but I feel I was not really being discriminated … it's just because they are teenagers… because you are different, they will do this.

Jojo and Susan talked about this passive positioning, avoiding any confrontation by staying silent and waiting in hope that things might improve with time *"I don't like trouble. So, I just wait. I'm going to be patient; I'll just keep quiet. I just take whatever is given which is very wrong" (Jojo).* Susan explained that this approach increased her sense of powerlessness but had learned over time that if you don't support White people *"you will lose at the end of the day".*

Strategies to respond to racism in the workplace were also shared. Alyssa described being initially very nervous of challenging racist remarks made by clients as she believed it could exacerbate the issue. Anne reported that service users in the drug rehabilitation centre were reluctant to engage with her because she was Black, but she persisted and through building relationships she was able to overcome the difficulties. Neema described elderly clients directing racial slurs at her but explained that an acknowledgement or apology from their families assisted in repairing the hurt felt.

The resignation and passive positioning set out above did not extend to how the mothers in the study responded to their children's experiences of racism. Several talked about their children's encounters with racism in school and Jojo's response highlights the level of responsiveness in their accounts:

> I had to call my placement in the morning to say, 'sorry I won't be coming because of what just happened'. A boy and he's not even Irish, was throwing some stuff and was calling him 'Black monkey this that ... Black Black Black Black'. He was just telling me in the morning when he was having his breakfast and I was like 'No, I'm not putting this off until the next day'.

The older participants also talked about actively teaching their children strategies to assist navigating racist and micro aggressive encounters and Monifa's description echoed others accounts in how she advised her children to keep a positive mindset:

> … don't pay attention to it … I don't want my children to pay attention to things like that … because I'm Black that's why they did that, I just want them to be open minded. This has happened, how can you deal with it.

Mary agreed that racism and discrimination can become pervasive, and she has made a conscious decision to ignore or reframe it and encouraged her children to do the same "*I tell my son to try not to see because once you start to see … like every day you can see it … every day, you see it as something else*".

Another strategy was offering a positive counter narrative and Monifa description encapsulates others' stories when she details conversations with her children:

> I teach my kids 'if someone says you're Black … fine there's no problem with being Black, it's beautiful to be Black, isn't it? Yes, I'm Black, yes, I'm beautiful so what is the problem?' You know so I try to empower them, to encourage them, to love themselves not to look at the negative of Black.

Cultivating and strengthening African identity by building links and connections with family, country of origin and the Black community in Ireland was another strategy to navigate the world around them and their children. Bethane explained that while her biological family are still in Nigeria, she considers African friends as her family in Ireland and that helps her feel connected "*my cousins and my uncles they live in Nigeria, but the family friends that I have here are really close because they're like they're Nigerian as well*".

Strategies to transition from healthcare positions to social care and to get promotion were discussed. Alyssa recognised that education could reduce the disadvantage of not having local connections or knowledge *"It's hard for us to like build that true connection. So, we have to do that through education. That's officially the only other way… that's literally it!"*. Jojo, a healthcare assistant, whose promise of promotion to social care worker on graduation never materialised, felt the only way to progress was to study for a Masters *"I'm going to do my Masters … once I have my Master's, I can get that position. Most of my friends are in the same category"*.

Some of the younger participants had a more positive outlook about navigating the employment market. Raelene, while acknowledging the challenges of Black people working in social care, hoped to use the strategy of drawing on her ethnic background and experiences to inform practice and affect change:

> I feel like there's good opportunity as a social care worker to work in Ireland … I'm not too sure about being like a Black person working in the area. I just want to see if I can bring my background to it. If I'm able to make a bit of a difference … make a bit of change.

5.4.1 Adaptations

The participants' accounts demonstrated the many adaptations they made to successfully negotiate living, working and studying in Ireland. Several participants described choosing to adapt, change or shorten their names, or to allow have their names anglicised by others. Zalika believed that shortening her name made it easier to pronounce which supported integration. Conversely, Alyssa felt that changing her name robbed her of her true identity and reduced her power in interactions with others. Chris, aged 19, who has lived in Ireland all her life, described how she adapted through code switching and acquiescing to the White majority in the class in the hope of being accepted *"I didn't want to talk … to scare*

them away or anything. So, I would just to try please them or like I'd always agree. So, it was more of finding their common ground".

Adaptations in communication with others were described by several participants. Neema explained that the Irish interpretation of emotional expression is different to hers and that she worked to modify her tone of voice when working with clients:

> … when you are happy sometimes or you are just trying to express yourself, your voice goes up … but in Ireland, when your voice goes up like that it looks like you are fighting and they see that as aggressive … so I try to regulate myself.

Zalika was also aware of her tone of voice and described how she would try to adjust her responses to service users when she felt annoyed or frustrated *"I don't want to raise my voice ... the anger ... the frustration ... that it made me raise my voice. So, it was shhh, shhh... when you're in that kind of situation you just smile".*

Some participants believed that some of their cultural and religious ideologies, values and beliefs conflicted with Irish legislation, policy or norms and as there was no safe space for dialogue, they adapted by keeping silent. Dorothy recalled a class discussion where she had conflicting views to the lecturer and another Black classmate advised her not to share her opinion as it could affect her progression *"Dorothy don't discuss this is in class now, they will throw you out of social care practice".*

Several participants talked about African students using determination as an adaptive mechanism. Afia believed that this was a cultural trait *"Africans we are not ones to give up easy ... it's not in our bones to quit ... you have to triple your efforts"*. Zanib had a similar view to Afia and described finding this self-determination when she was challenged *"I did discover that I'm like an eagle, I'd rather face the storm".* Adopting a strong work ethic was referred to by several older participants and they shared a belief

that they had to work twice as hard than White students to achieve the same grade. This came at a cost, with these participants describing feeling exhausted, having high blood pressure and other health issues as a result of the juggling family, work and college life.

Neema, Lulu and Zanib described the stress of working part time to provide for their families while studying fulltime. Zanib worked at the weekends as her husband was also a student and her family were entirely dependent on her income. The lack of affordable, local and available childcare required further adaptations. Dorothy reported having to work additional hours to cover the cost of childcare which resulted in her not having enough time to spend on college assignments or with her family.

Another notable adaptation was how the participants created their own circle of exclusively Black students. According to the participants, this was as a result of the experiences of racism, discrimination, exclusion and othering and it stemmed from the need for a safe and comfortable non-judgemental space, based on ethnicity and skin colour. This adaptation enabled participants to have more control and power over their interactions, relationships and learning in HE. Having the opportunity to ask questions without comprehension issues or fear of ridicule from other students or lecturers was a feature of these exclusive groups. Mary explained that it was easier to work in a group with a similar culture and accent to her own. Zalika explained that using first languages, other than English assisted in a deeper understanding of assignment briefs. Lulu formed a study group with other Black students and through this increased her knowledge while supporting students that were struggling *"I discovered that I understand a subject better if I am able to explain it to other people and I saw that some other people couldn't keep up the pace of learning, so I taught them"*.

An interesting adaptation was to run for election as class representative. Two of the younger participants identified this an opportunity to regain power and control within the

HE system. Raelene described how she was successfully elected and explained that while this pushed her beyond her comfort zone, it helped her integrate and added to her resume. However, other participants such as Olufunke believed that it was not possible to get elected and perceived that White students would not vote for a Black candidate.

5.4.2 Positive supports and resources

The study participants identified a number of supports and resources that positively impacted and assisted them in their journey to and through HE. Several participants described the preparatory access courses as very helpful in terms of both the choosing of the programme and in the preparation for studying at HE. Jojo, Mary, Monifa and Raelene expressed gratitude for the SUSI grant and other financial supports which provided college fees, social security and housing benefits. Some of the younger students also referred to the support from SUSI grant system which took pressure off their parents to support them financially while they were studying.

Support for academic writing in the various colleges was discussed and participants had mixed views. Monifa explained that seeking support could add to student's vulnerability as it may expose weaknesses in language competency while Raelene believed that academic support needed to be provided sensitively and inclusively. Susan suggested that providing targeted academic writing supports may actually contribute to assumptions that Black Minority Ethnic students are less competent than White Irish students. Kemi made an interesting observation by comparing supports and accommodations provided to students with dyslexia to the lack of acknowledgement of the needs of students with language competency issues:

> … some of us have language barriers … I would phrase a sentence that is correct to me but may not be grammatically correct in English. If someone had dyslexia, they have that taken into consideration and assess them differently.

According to the participants, the support that some educators provided was immeasurable. Many participants identified particular lecturers that were open to interacting, connecting and building relationships or had reached out and offered additional support. They emphasised how pivotal these interactions were to their engagement and commitment as students over the lifetime of their study. Mary described the connection that she had built with a supportive and encouraging lecturer as being one of family which emphasised the significance of the relationship "*You forget she's a lecturer, you think your Aunty is right before you talking*". Zalika explained that she returned to education after 30 years and the informal support of these lecturers helped her navigate systems and technology which was critical to her progression. The older participants with children talked about the significance of lecturers who demonstrated empathy and understanding of the challenges they had juggling family life, work and study. Lecturers that facilitated late arrival or early departure from class to collect children from school or offered extended deadlines to accommodate family or work commitments were described as academically and psychologically supportive.

The participants discussed transparency and fairness in relation to progression and grade attainment and highlighted that having a clear understanding what was expected was central to their performance. Anne described being able to seek clarification from her lecturer which provided reassurance and built confidence:

> … she's a very direct person [lecturer] and when she gave us our first essay ... I did not understand it and I did not participate … the next one I went to her and said this is what I am thinking … she was very happy she said, 'this is exactly what I want from you'.

According to the data, smaller tutorial groups were identified as spaces where the participants felt more comfortable to share ideas, engage in discussion, ask questions,

seek clarification and receive reassurance. Mesi, echoing other participants, reported that it was more common to be invited to contribute in tutorials and the support and encouragement lecturers provided in these spaces was invaluable to engagement and progression. Lecturers that understood and proactively addressed exclusion in group allocation were also mentioned. Mary provided an example of a lecturer asking Black students if they worked better in a group with similar culture and reported that this was the most appropriate way to allocate students to groups.

An unanticipated finding was how the placement element of the programme provided opportunities for the participants to reposition themselves by reclaiming and building social and economic capitals. While preparation for placement seminars and academic tutors were mentioned as supportive, Afia believed that modules on diversity and social justice should be a prerequisite before going on placement to ensure that students get opportunities to learn, reflect on and discuss issues relating to racism and discrimination in social care work.

Once the initial challenges of securing placements were overcome, several participants described feeling more protected from racism and discrimination on placement than they did in college or in the workplace. The formal mechanisms of tripartite meetings, whereby the student, the supervisor and the college tutor meet to discuss progress, provide feedback and complete assessment forms provided opportunities to highlight concerns or discuss incidents that may have arisen on placement. Placement supervisors were identified as having a critical role in creating protective spaces for these students. Olufunke described how her supervisor created and maintained a high professional standard of non-discriminatory practice for the staff team and services users and this provided a safe environment for her to learn and engage on placement. Zanib observed how ongoing commitment to equality and support for Black Minority Ethnic employees

is required to counteract discrimination in the workplace and that leadership and modelling is one way to address racism in the workplace:

> … they need to ask themselves 'Is this an attack on the person because of the colour of her skin?' When you address that, that's the support you're giving, it trickles down, they know … look she has the support.

According to the participants, supportive action was more than protection from discrimination. Supervisors that tailored placements to accommodate personal circumstances such as rostering and location were reported as being pivotal to the participants' engagement as it reduced fear, stress and anxiety. Relationships and interactions with these supervisors increased trust and confidence. Neema gave an example of how her supervisor regularly reassured her that she would succeed, while Zalika explained how opening up in supervision really helped her to connect with her supervisor and develop a long-term relationship:

> I was so frustrated one day. I had everything bottled up inside of me. I just spit everything out when I was in supervision … now I'm part of the family. It was a very good experience. I still have relationship with her, we still call, she's still checks on me all the time.

According to the participants, critical feedback and support from placement supervisors was an important factor in developing professional skills, modifying responses and shaping culturally appropriate practice. Neema explained that her supervisors "*were very, very helpful, they told me what I need to do … if I need to improve in any area … they point that out to me*". Professional references from placement supervisors provided opportunities to address the career cul-de-sac that so many of the participants found themselves as HCAs. Receiving a professional reference from placement is an

expectation of most students, however, Anne's perspective was that the supervisor was good person rather that a professional doing their job "*my supervisor, we still contact each other. I asked him to be my referee and he is a very good man*". Zanib described how her placement supervisor gave her confidence to apply for a promotion *"she said to me 'apply for that post, you have the qualification, you have experience, you have the credentials' and I applied and she is in the background supporting me"*.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter builds on the previous findings chapter and presents the experiences of the participants' living, working and studying in Ireland. Issues of representation and discourses on skin colour, racism and inclusivity in society, the wider college environment and in the classroom are deliberated. Interactions and relationships with lecturers, classmates and on placement played a pivotal role in developing a sense of belonging, while language competency, comprehension and the interpretation of assignment briefs all impacted on capacity to engage, contribute and progress on the programme. Layering the additional challenges of academic writing and, for the mature students, returning to education after many years, it highlights the intersectional factors the participants faced when studying in HE. The strategies, adaptations and supports identified moderated some of the challenges encountered, providing hope for the participants as social care students. Combined with data in Chapter four, the findings are thought-provoking and provide a basis for discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

Using the lens of CRT, this chapter discusses the findings as they relate to the research question and relevant literature. The research question seeks to explore the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in HE, examine what shaped their journey to social care education and analyse the impact this had on their lives. The chapter is presented in five sections. The first section foregrounds the discussion by critically analysing how experiences of migration and resettlement transitions shape perspectives and engagement in Irish society and in HE. Section two builds on this contextual base by investigating the impact of racist and discriminatory experiences on engagement and participation in the workplace and wider society. The third section provides a discussion on societal perspectives and discourses about race, migration, equality and inclusion. It critically investigates how structural factors such as migration and employment policies, and intergenerational influences impact on the expectations, motivation and engagement of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. Using intersectionality as an analytical lens, this section also examines the experiences across race, gender, migration status and generational positioning. Section four explores perspectives on HE by analysing participants' experiences in the wider college environment, formal and informal interactions, groupwork and placements. This section examines how the Eurocentric nature of HE impacts on the learning experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students. It also analyses the identified structural and systemic supports, building a case for a number of core recommendations and actions.

6.2 Histories and migration transitions

All the participants, including the only participant born in Ireland, referred to themselves as migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. Their stories included pre-migration, migration and resettlement experiences. Many of the participants arrived in Ireland in the early 2000s and this was a period when there was prominent national discourse about 'citizenship tourism' and political assertions that African women were traveling to Ireland to give birth to Irish-born children so that they could gain rights of residency and citizenship (White & Gilmartin, 2008). Garner (2004) contended that the "figure of the 'non-national' pregnant woman was used to signify threats to Ireland, its sovereignty, its culture and its integrity and was used as a justification for changing the definition of citizenship" (p. 397). This characterisation had particular ramifications for participants that were pregnant or had children during that period, as they were particularly vulnerable to this racial personification.

The participants' accounts of migration transitions were underpinned by fear and loss. Notwithstanding that many participants migrated over a decade or more, they recounted life threatening attacks, fear of brutality, sexual and gender-based violence, death and torture of relatives and permanent daily danger in war zones. The majority of participants migrated from countries whose histories are marked by political and civil conflict and where traditional cultural contexts frequently value the rights of men over women (Gkiouleka et al., 2018). The participants described the circumstances that shaped migration journeys such as leaving children with relatives in home countries, transitioning through other countries, procuring visas, identity papers and money. The older participants recounted stories of migrating alone, with uncertain or undocumented migration status, poor levels of English competency, restricted economic opportunities, responsibilities of care for children and family members and limited access to community resources. The younger participants who migrated to Ireland as children spoke of the

trauma experienced when separated from family and parents, the depletion of economic and social capital and the wider losses of family and community connections.

Experiences of trauma as a result of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (DSGBV) was also evident in the participants' stories. Over a quarter of the participants reported having experienced DSGBV, however as it is very sensitive topic which can be difficult to speak about directly, this number could be an under-representation. Risks to physical and psychological safety were referred in the participants' accounts of migration and resettlement in Ireland. Three participants reported seeking refuge from violent situations and others alluded to fears for their personal safety in the areas that they lived. Research (Freedman, 2016; Kalt et al., 2013; Keygnaert et al., 2012; Oliveira et al., 2018) report that female refugees, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors are at increased risk of DSGBV during migration transitions. AkiDwA (2011) highlights the specific safeguarding needs of migrant women who experience DSGBV and identified barriers that may prevent women from reporting abuse including limited access to resources, dependent immigration status and cultural and language difficulties. These barriers were evident in the participants' stories. Therefore, it could be argued that the resulting trauma associated with DSGBV may not have been adequately addressed at that time or subsequently.

On arrival in Ireland, two-thirds of the participants lived in Direct Provision (DP). As a result of the slow pace that asylum applications were processed in Ireland during this period, many participants resided in DP for several years. They recalled experiences of the DP system as deeply distressing. The restrictions imposed in DP limited their choices and impacted on their parental autonomy. Decisions about the location, room size, type of food and access to other basic facilities were out of their control. When granted international protection, the participants encountered significant difficulties in securing

accommodation. Several reported living in temporary homeless accommodation, hotel rooms and women's refuges. During this period, considerable time was spent caring for children which impacted on their capacity to access skilled work and education. Financial resources, time and energy were required to meet the basic needs of food and shelter. The focus on mothering and providing for children seemed to override the participants' personal needs as individuals. The description of one participant of living in a hotel room with her four children with no access to kitchen facilities, vacating the room each morning and waiting for an allocated place for the next night offered insights into such challenges. The impact of these experiences was demonstrated in their stories and their body language and provides contextual background as to how migratory experiences shaped their identity and impacted on trajectory to social care education and practice.

6.3 Experiences of racism and discrimination

According to the data, racism was experienced in overt forms of racial abuse and in more nuanced microaggressions such as denial, defensive responses or lack of agency to address racial inequality. The accounts of the participants highlighted the awkwardness, hesitancy and reluctance of people to acknowledge skin colour or discuss race or ethnicity. Historical depictions were considered a contributing factor to the stereotyping of Black people as the 'other'. The portrayal of Black people on Trocaire boxes[28] as inferior was an example provided by one participant and she believed this contributed to the negative positioning of Black people as uneducated, powerless and subservient.

There were significant differences in older and younger participants' experiences and responses to racism. The older participants' perspectives were framed by their mothering and caring identities and roles, whereas the younger participants' experiences were more

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[28] Trocaire boxes were used to fundraise during the Lenten period.

akin to second generation migrants. Younger participants expressed more awareness and responsiveness about the presence of racism and they explained how this accounted for the heightened awareness of their safety in everyday living. Racist discourse online and in person was a disturbing reality for younger participants. Their levels of fear and distrust further increased when they challenged acts of racism and discrimination were subjected to defensive behaviours and reactions. Some younger participants described statements from the far-right White supremacists on social media to BLM movement such as "go home to your own country" and "you will never be Irish" deeply frightening.

From what the participants said, it appeared that race and skin colour superseded all other aspects of identity. One participant who lived in Ireland since she was an infant, described being asked 'where are you from?'. She believed that this demonstrated the embedded nature of race as a social construction; if you are Black then you cannot be from, or of, predominantly White countries such as Ireland. These types of questions were perceived as micro-aggressive and participants believed they stemmed from the false assumption of possible inferiority and criminality as well as exoticizing and colour evasion which have all been identified by Nadal (2011) as factors in covert racism.

Experiences of racism and discrimination generated lack of generalised trust that Smith (2010) attributed to historical, institutional and structural ethno-racial experiences. The data also indicated that there were lower levels of "particularised and strategic trust" (Uslaner, 2008, p.38) which result from personal experiences that impact on reputational concerns. The example provided by one participant of imprisonment following human trafficking illustrated how reputational damage lowered trust levels. Reduced trust levels were further compounded by perceived discrimination when interacting with institutions and public services. Racist incidents in daily encounters and interpersonal exchanges confirmed fears and further reduced trust levels. This was evident in their descriptions of

heightened states of vigilance when in shops, travelling by bus, or walking in the street. One participant's description of feeling unsafe in the area she lived and her desire to move her family to somewhere more secure once she graduated indicated how reduced levels of trust contributed to her motivation to relocate. This fearful state of mind appeared to permeate all aspects of daily lives as the participants found it difficult to trust that they would be treated fairly in any dealings in Irish society.

The data on the experiences of the younger participants is consistent with Michael's (2021) research which found that Black people under the age of 25 were the primary target of racial assaults in Ireland. This finding also concurs with research by Siapera et al. (2018) which states that second generation Irish people have been specifically targeted online in terms of biological or ethnic connection to Irishness. The Aístear Síolta primary school curriculum (Aístear, 2009), the EDI initiatives in second level schools (The Equality Authority, 2014) and the Yellow Flag[29] programme for primary and secondary schools (Galligan, 2018) all address racial equality. As most of the younger participants attended primary and secondary school in Ireland, these initiatives led them to believe that policies, legislation and ethical standards in Ireland were designed protect them from racial abuse. However, this rhetoric was incongruent to many aspects of their interactions both in person and online. As younger participants were more inclined to socialise and interact with others, they had an expectation that White people should know what is appropriate. Growing up in Ireland as Irish citizens they expressed anger and frustration at negative societal positioning based on race and skin colour. Actions to address racism seemed devoid of any genuine or tangible results, creating a sense of powerlessness to challenge embedded racial bias and discrimination.

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[29] Yellow Flag is a practical programme that supports primary and secondary schools to become more inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities.

There was a marked difference in the accounts of the older participants. Their perspectives were predominantly shaped by motherhood as their accounts of racism were less about themselves and more about their children. They described highly responsive reactions to adverse incidents that their children encountered. They tackled these with urgency by taking time off work and college to address them. Where they did talk about personal experiences of racism, the impact was minimised and justification provided as to why it occurred. They described interactions with older people, people with disabilities and addictions, but explained that these racist encounters may have been unintentional due to lack or knowledge or capacity. As many of the older participants had lived in DP for long periods of time, they formed complex support networks with other migrant mothers. These networks provided emotional, social and economic support and paradoxically, reduced interactions with wider society. This may be a factor in the why the older group reported lower levels of overt and covert racist encounters.

Experiences of racism and discrimination were also evident in the participants' accounts of the workplace. The loss of previous economic, social and educational capital in the migration process, combined with responsibility for caring for children and family members, resulted in the participants adapting to the work that was available. Care work was the primary gateway to employment and over two-thirds of the participants reported working as healthcare assistants in Ireland. However, care work was considered by them as a downward trajectory given their previous professional qualifications and positions in countries of origin. The participants described exhaustion and burn out from working in the care sector and recognised the toll on their physical and emotional health.

Despite attaining qualifications, the participants highlighted difficulties in progression and promotion. One participant resorted to changing employment in order to gain recognition for her qualification, while others described various micro aggressive actions

by some employers that thwarted efforts to progress. Others described promotion opportunities as being non-existent or presented as a change of title without any increase in pay or conditions. They expressed anger, mistrust and hopelessness when overlooked for promotion despite having met the requirements by the organisation. This was particularly frustrating when they had been encouraged to apply for promotion and were subsequently ignored or the post remained unfilled. These micro aggressive actions reduced progression pathways and validated feelings of distrust and powerlessness.

6.4 Societal perspectives and discourses.

The migration journey has been described in literature as involving three major sets of transitions: premigration, migration and post-migration resettlement (Giacco, 2020; Kirmayer et al. 2011). Starck et al. (2000) and Jesuthasan et al. (2018) emphasise how each phase is associated with specific risks and exposures, particularly for women. Erel and Ryan's (2019) research on migrant women's capitals argue that opportunities and limitations for building capital depend on the socio-political context at a specific time and place. Migration not only results in the practical loss of land, homes and possessions, it also leads to the erosion of family support and community connections which are integral to the safety, security and wellbeing for women and their families (UNHCR, 2018). As women, survival and caring for others were prioritised in migration transitions therefore, higher needs of belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943) were difficult to achieve.

Experiences of living in DP and subsequent vulnerability to homelessness further contributed to fear, uncertainty and disempowerment. The absence of the fundamental security of a home added to social isolation and loneliness. Lack of family and community support contributed to concerns for personal and family safety and wellbeing. International research on the impact of migration transitions (Kuo, 2014; Noh & Kaspar,

2003; Sangalang et al., 2019) demonstrates that migratory experiences can provoke or aggravate distress, fear, depression and can have long lasting effects on mental health. In the study of stress, social isolation and loneliness in migrant mothers with young children Lim et al, (2022) also found high levels of reported stress and anxiety.

6.4.1 Discourses and terminology

Discussions and debates on migration and service provision for asylum seekers and refugees are underpinned by contested language and terminology. Appropriate and contextually relevant terms and language are required in order to have measured and balanced discourses on the subject of racial equality (Darby, 2022; Wagner, 2011). Discussions on migration are frequently underscored with racial subtexts and terms such as 'illegal aliens' and 'undocumented migrants' which conjure up a false dichotomy of race and alienage (Garcia, 2017; 2019). On the other hand, the claim of colour blindness and race evasiveness can lead us to believe that we live in a post-racial world. Critical race theorist Bonilla-Silva (2014) suggests that there are purposeful rhetorical moves employed to avoid discourse of race, racism and racial inequities so as to maintain privilege and power within the White community. Some theorists (Ahlberg et al., 2019) suggest that the rise of neoliberalism globally has played a major role in silencing the voices of Black Minority Ethnic people through 'othering' or rendering racism invisible through a colour-blind approach. Discussions on migration, race, ethnicity and skin colour commonly occur in polarised and public online spaces where there is little room for tentativeness, inquiry or uncertainty and individuals can be judged, targeted and

'cancelled[30]' without recourse. As a result, conversations frequently occur in an environment of fear of allegation, litigation and gaslighting[31].

While the current discourse about EDI has been expanded to include disability, LGBTQI and neurodiversity, Pollack (2021) contends that there continues to be negative discourse on race, skin colour and migration. It could be argued that embedded anti-immigrant sentiments in current political narratives, in the media and within wider society play on the uncertainty and ambiguity of citizens and are designed to instil fear of the 'other'. Indeed, it is the premise on which Brexit was built (Hutchings & Sullivan, 2019; Taylor, 2016), the backdrop for the increase in the right-wing political agenda (Embrick & Moore, 2020; Lynch 2020) and the global context in which Black Minority Ethnic people navigate their lives. International literature indicates that levels of racism and hate crime increase when communities feel under threat (D'Angelo, 2018; INAR, 2019). The question is how to change this complex global phenomenon given its enmeshment in history, neoliberalism, capitalism and colour-blind ideology (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017; Kitchin et al, 2012). Ireland, as an entity, has experience of been colonised and inward migration is a relatively new phenomenon (MacEniri ,2005). This situates Irish citizens in a unique position to carve a path through historical and structural inequalities. This can be achieved by agreeing contextually appropriate terminology and having conversations based on openness and trust.

Critical race theorists (Crenshaw, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2007) argue that the alienation and negative stereotyping of Black people can be used to discredit and deflect from the real issues of power and control. This positioning acts to silence dissenting

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[30] Cancelling and cancel culture have to do with the removing of support for public figures in response to their objectionable behaviour or opinions. This can include boycotts or refusal to promote their work.
[31] The phrase "to gaslight" refers to the act of undermining another person's reality by denying facts, the environment around them, or their feelings (Duignan, 2019, np).

voices and was evident in the participants' descriptions of passive strategies such as ignoring racism, attempting to be invisible, code-switching and complying with perpetuators. While these strategies may assist in navigating the hostile societal environment, Delgado & Stefancic (2001) suggest that adopting a passive position can feed White fragility and acts to further silence Black peoples' voices. Therefore, while adopting a passive approach may avoid confrontation, critical race theorists (Bhopal, 2015; Ladson-Billing, 2016; Warner, 2018) argue that it risks prolonging the problem of racism and further victimisation.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement provided a vehicle for the alienation and anger articulated by the younger participants. While they expressed gratitude that BLM drew attention to issues of racism which validated personal lived experiences and felt empowered by the opportunity to collectively voice and raise awareness of racism and racial inequality, some expressed concern that BLM may be a trend with no lasting results. Literature (Lee, 2005, 2011; Shimpi & Zirkel, 2012) suggests that such contradictory experiences can spark anger and create further alienation in Black Ethnic Minority communities. The recent push-back against the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has resulted in the emergence of the White Lives Matter Too movement (White et al., 2020) and campaigns to ban CRT in schools in the USA (Meckler & Natanson, 2022) and the UK (Murray, 2020). These refutations could be attributed to the embedded nature of racism in society and interest convergence, two of the core tenets of CRT (Bell, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). If racism is considered to be a problem for only those that experience it, the issue is further exacerbated, by burdening Black people with sole responsibility to tackle the problem.

6.4.2 Institutional and structural factors

One of the core tenets of CRT is that racism in society is normalised (Crenshaw, 1989) and structures and institutions serve to protect the interests of the dominant White majority by maintaining racial inequality. Critical race theorists claim that racism is deeply rooted in the psyche of people and structures that serve it (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1995). Joseph (2020) argues that the social construction of race has led to a negative cultural stereotyping of Black people in Ireland. Crenshaw (1993) claims that race neutral immigration legislation, policies and practices have been historically intertwined with racial prejudice and perpetrate racial subordination. Other critical race theorists contend that these structural factors have positioned Black people as inferior, poor, uneducated and needing charity (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano et al., 2000).

The Irish DP system provides an example of structural and institutional oppression. Research by Murphy (2021) demonstrates that almost half (46%) of DP occupants suffered from severe distress, with women being particularly at risk. Moran (2019) reports that the DP environment had a specifically negative impact on the emotional and social development of mothers and children. It is therefore not surprising that O'Reilly (2018) hypothesises life in DP as "ontologically liminal," whereby "a chronic sense of fear, insecurity, invisibility and a highly controlled existence are lived and internalized" (p.26).

The failure of migration policies relating the DP have been highlighted by the Refugee Council (2012), Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (2014) and Amnesty International (2018). The numerous reports (McMahon Report, 2010; Mont Trenchard Report, 2019; Joint Oireachtas Committee report on Direct Provision and International Protection, 2019) reiterate the negative impact DP has on those that have lived in it since its inception. The most recent White Paper on ending Direct Provision (2021) proposes the current system will be replaced with a new structure that is "grounded in the principles

of human rights, respect for diversity and respect for privacy and family" (p. 2). However, the Movement for Asylum Seekers (MASI), The Irish Refugee Council (IRC) and Amnesty International, while broadly welcoming the plan, highlight that those currently in DP will be unable to gain from the proposed changes. They also express concern that as no legislative changes are proposed, it may reduce the effectiveness of the reform. The recent influx of Ukrainian refugees has resulted in serious doubts being expressed that the target to end DP by 2024 will be met, and the plan is currently under review (Business Post, 2022).

Migrants not only encounter obstacles in migration and housing, but also routinely experience the devaluation of capital in terms of employment (Nohl & Kasper, 2003). Doras (2020), NASC (2019) and the Irish Refugee Council (2020) contend the loss of social, economic and cultural capital in migration transitions create an environment where migrants are particularly vulnerable to the uncertainties of the private rental system and can lead to homelessness. Restrictive governmental policies on the employment of migrants reduces opportunities to engage with paid work which has a direct impact on financial means. Accumulating money for rental deposits or acquiring references required for accommodation without the ability to work is an example of how these restrictions impact on migrants' capacity to progress in Irish society.

There is comprehensive research on the negative impact of global care chains, care drain and remittances on women's lives (AkiDwA, 2020; De Tona & Lentin, 2011; Démurger, 2015; Hochschild & Ehrenreich, 2002; IOM, 2020). The neo-liberal situating of women in the wider caring role, which Lynch et al. (2021) argues is unspoken, unacknowledged and unpaid, impacts on women's capacity to focus on personal health and wellbeing. The psychological burden resulting from the emotional labour of negotiating relationships,

caring for children and older family members in in home and host countries (Degiuli, 2007), while difficult to quantify, impacts on the welfare of women.

The findings showed that the care sector was an entry point to employment in Ireland. Many of the participants had previous qualifications and experience, but these were not accounted for in recruitment. TASC (2022) describes how this type of devaluation can lead to long-term de-skilling and downgrading of migrant workers. As the privatisation of the social care sector increases, demand for care workers has resulted in hierarchical access to labour markets. Therefore, as a result of lack of recognition of prior learning, language competency issues and visa requirements, migrant workers often enter the care workforce at the lowest level of pay and conditions (AkiDWa, 2019). Research by Higgins (2021) and the Irish Refugee Council (2021) report a lack of regulation and protection in the Irish care work sector for migrant workers. Without standardised employment conditions for care workers, employment legislation and policy, or lack thereof, can indirectly contribute to employment precarity for these workers.

The findings of the study highlight the lack of alternatives or progression opportunities in care work. This increased vulnerability to exploitation further contributed to experiences of loss, vulnerability and powerlessness. Critical race theorists (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2018; Joseph, 2020) recognise employment organisations as important racialised structures that play a fundamental role in distributing how social and economic resources are distributed unequally (Acker, 2006; Ray, 2019). CRT scholars assert that a lack of attention to the pervasive nature of racism in the workplace results in the implementation of policies and practices that create inequitable situations in employment (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Tate, 2005). The power to exclude others is arguably the most powerful privilege and benefit of Whiteness (Joseph, 2020). Critical race theorists contend that this

power is regularly exercised in institutions and structures to maintain positions of social and economic superiority (Harris, 1993; Tate, 1997; Taylor, 2009).

6.4.3 Intergenerational influences

A key finding of this study was the intergenerational differences in perspectives and the impact this had on trust levels and identity formation. The older participants' instincts as women and mothers were to the forefront and they harnessed challenging experiences by demonstrating determination and perseverance to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves and their children. The data demonstrated the significant capability of the participants to surmount adversity. While reluctant to use the term "resilience," which suggests unexpected positive outcomes in the face of severe, even life-threatening adversity (Rutter, 2012; Ungar, 2014), resilience was evident in how participants endeavoured to avail of the contradictory outcomes of migration, by adapting to the challenges that initially hindered opportunities. The consequences of battling adversity were apparent in the manner the participants told their stories, as they sighed loudly and used their hands to express weariness and fatigue. The emotional conflicts and personal sacrifices may lead to what Baumeister et al. (1998, p.1252) refers to as 'ego depletion' draining willpower, energy and reducing cognition and ongoing racial oppression may result in 'racial battle fatigue' (Smith et al., 2007, p.63).

The motivation to progress and create a stable and meaningful life for their children is consistent with other studies on the experiences of migrant women (Erel & Ryan, 2019; Siriwardhana, 2014). These studies report that migrant women want to contribute productively to host countries and focus on education of the next generation. Kalmijn (2019, p.1424) suggests that migration is often described as a 'family project' in which parents not only migrate for themselves, but also migrate to foster the economic opportunities for family. Herrero- Arias et al. (2021) study of Southern European mothers

living in Norway describes the ambivalent and often contradictory emotional journey of motherhood in migration. This is evident in Tyldum (2015, p.56) study on female migration for care work where the motivation of mothers to migrate is described as an 'act of sacrifice'.

The younger participants primarily identified female family members as the providers of care, security and protection. Loss and trauma associated with migration transitions and resettlement were managed and moderated by their families especially by their mothers and aunties [32]. This finding highlights the significance of the protective role of women in migration transitions. It echoes previous research on the elevated burden of responsibility on women in migration transitions (WHO, 2017) and on the protective role of women in navigating migration and resettlement phases (Gilmartin & Migge, 2016; Herrero-Ardias et al. 2021). Some younger participants described being acutely aware of the trauma that their mothers and other female family members experienced prior to, and during the migration process. This awareness seemed to frame the perspective of the world as unsafe. Research by Bogic et al. (2015) and Walker et al. (2021) argue that the cumulative toll of fear and trauma can create cycles of worsening physical health, altered brain function, maladaptive coping responses to other stressors and a significant increase in mental health difficulties. Without targeted research, it is difficult to ascertain if the harmful effect of these combined stressors has a transgenerational effect, however Devakumar et al. (2014) suggests that the trauma, loss and stress associated with migration can lead to physical and mental health problems later in childhood and into adulthood in the children of migrant women.

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[32] Aunty in Nigerian culture is primarily an assigned identity and role for any woman who is significantly older than you (Verna, 2020).

Intergenerational perspectives also impact on trust levels. Research by Arday (2018b) and Ljunge (2014) indicates that in the general population, older more trusting generations are being replaced by younger more cynical generations, therefore, overall trust levels can be expected to fall. However, Putnam (2000) explains that levels and significance of distrust of Black people are consistently higher than in the general population and this can trickle down generationally. According to Best et al. (2021) accumulative injustices in media portrayals, unequal wealth distribution, modernisation and a decrease in social interactions all account for reduced trust levels in Black people. Critical race theorists (Ladson-Billing, 2016; Warner, 2018) argue that reduction of trust stems not just from the above factors but from the wider social construction of race and personal experiences of 'othering'. While there is a notable lack of research on migrants' trust levels in Ireland, Ní Raghallaigh's (2014) study on unaccompanied minors in Ireland suggests that reasons for distrust are entrenched within the social contexts of experiences of asylum seekers and that these are intensified by the circumstances in which they currently live.

From a psychodynamic standpoint (Freud, 1965; Klein & Seligman, 1976) it could be argued that transference and countertransference[33] between mothers and children contribute to the unconscious cultivation of cyclical intergenerational reduction of trust. Research (Darmody, 2022; Siapera et al., 2018) on second generation migrants demonstrate that trust levels underpin perceptions and confidence in government agencies such as health and social services, financial institutions, employment agencies, the media and wider society.

Intergenerational perspectives also contribute to the development of identity and shapes an individual's interactions with others within a given environment (Divala, 2014).

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[33] Transference is the concept of a person redirecting feelings meant for others onto another, countertransference is the reaction to this transference, in which the other person projects his or her feelings unconsciously back.

Despite the adversity encountered, the mothers in the study described an inbuilt responsibility to negotiate and navigate identity for their children in Ireland. They highlighted the additional complexity of mediating identity of home and host countries with mixed or biracial children and families. Research (Erel & Ryan, 2019; Tinto, 1987) report that women, especially mothers frequently carry the additional burden as mediators of identity and culture for all the family. The younger participants were much more vocal about the challenges they encountered when developing an Irish identity as a Black Minority Ethnic young person. Previous studies (Darmody, 2022; Machowska-Kosiack & Barry, 2022; Siapera et al., 2018) highlight that younger generation migrants are constantly negotiating and creating identities that are dual, complex, and multifaceted. If the development of identity occurs in an environment of loss, fear and distrust, it could be surmised that it will negatively impact on the integration and belongingness of second-generation migrants.

Intergenerational expectations influenced motivations and decisions to study in HE. The older participants described the need to increase economic and social capital as the primary motivation to attend HE. However, they also talked about the imperative of providing positive role models for their children. The younger participants described their educational expectations and motivations as being directly shaped by their parents. While some viewed their parents as 'inspirational', others found parental expectations overpowering and directive. An example of this was the description of parental views of attaining a social care qualification as a mere steppingstone to advance into other fields such as medicine.

A number of the younger participants expressed an opinion that younger generations of Black Minority Ethnic people are no longer conforming to the educational expectations of their parents. Heath et al. (2008) suggests that children's educational achievement can

be used as an indicator for parental success and attainment is positively evaluated by migrant parents, serving to benefit the intergenerational relationship. Others (Engzell, 2019, p.83) argue that the pressure on children of migrants to succeed educationally has created an 'aspirational squeeze', whereby they struggle to live up to parental expectations, resulting in relationship difficulties. The rejection of parental expectations frequently built on 'sacrifices' made through migration, were reported in the literature as the cause of some tension in families and between generations (Portes & Haller, 2009, p.1097).

6.4.4 Intersectionality

The data highlighted the many intersectional challenges experienced by the participants. The intersectionality of race, gender, mothering, migration and resettlement transitions and for some experiencing DSGBV was evident in the data. Over two thirds of the participants were mothers and more than half were lone parents. These factors reduced work opportunities, impacting on economic and social capital. Additional responsibilities for wider family networks in home and host countries, resulted in the dual obligation of managing resettlement in Ireland while financially and emotionally supporting those left behind.

By engaging intersectionality as an analytical lens, the rigorous examination of the connection of reorientation and loss of capitals across race, gender and generational positioning provides an understanding of the participants' experiences. Critical race theorist Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) contend that the effects of combined and cumulative challenges further compound and magnify the experiences and impact of racism and discrimination. Feminist researcher Hochschild (2010) and critical race theorist and feminist writer hooks (2016) articulate the imperative to acknowledge the additional impact on Black migrant women and mothers where race and skin colour

resulted in diminished opportunities to actively engage and participate in society, therefore negatively impacting on future personal and professional progression.

6.5 Perspectives on higher education

Higher education institutions can be viewed as microcosms of society. Kaldis (2009) suggests they provide opportunities for students to situate themselves in the wider world. However, research confirms that racial inequality in HE has long been problematic, resulting in the marginalisation of diverse student populations (HEA, 2015). Building on the work of Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995), Patton (2016, p.316) claims that education institutions functioned for centuries as 'a bastion of racism and White supremacy, crafted by and for elite interests, have developed institutions and infrastructures which control governance of knowledge circulation and resource distribution to ensure that they retain power. As a consequence, this form of interest convergence and elite capture[34] reduce educational pathways, participation and attainment for Black Minority Ethnic students in HE (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race theorists' view race as central to HE institutional structures, arguing that as a result, embedded discriminatory policies in HEIs guide daily practices (Delgado, 1993, Taylor, 1999; Walker, 1998). CRT provides a paradigm to help recognise and acknowledge how power, White privilege, and racial oppression are responsible for the homogeneous workforce, the devaluing of core human attributes and the necessity of affirmative action policies (Delgado, 2003; hooks, 1994).

Analysis of the data demonstrated the experiences racism and discrimination encountered in migration transitions, in society and in the workplace were mirrored in HE. The inclusive and multi-cultural promotional material and advertisements indicate that HEIs were welcoming of Black Minority Ethnic students. However, participants described this

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[34] Elite capture describes circumstances where public resources are biased for the benefit of a few individuals of superior social status in detriment to the welfare of the larger population.

visual representation as being at variance with their student experience. According to participants, the absence of diversity in the academic staff team resulted in the lack of appropriate role models for Black Minority Ethnic students. They also reported how the dominance of Eurocentric curriculum, teaching resources and reading materials resulted in their diverse cultural histories, values and norms not being represented in a meaningful way.

The findings highlight the impact of the dissonance between the outward facing image of culturally inclusive campus environments and the reality of the exclusionary experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students. Ahmed (2012, p.142) refers to such superficial attempts of addressing inclusion as the 'Diversity Smile' suggesting that changing images of whiteness, rather than changing the whiteness of institution, is the real objective in HEI. Ghosh et al. (2007, p.277) claims that students in HE makes sense of identity through exposure to the "norms, values and the hegemonic ideology of the larger society", it could be argued these rhetorical contradictions amplify the experiences of discrimination in wider society. As racial constructs intersect with other dimensions of student's identity such as language, gender and class, it can potentially elicit multiple forms of oppression. CRT emphasises that intersectional experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students need to be understood from the perspective of their own lived experience and not through the 'White gaze' (Morrison, 2001) of the researcher. To address this, institutions and individuals working within them must be open to critically analysing unconscious and conscious racial biases through rigorous examination of professional and systemic practices (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

The motivation of the participants to study social care directly related to migration experiences, cultural and family norms, a desire to progress and to regain personal autonomy. Participants expressed a belief that their social care qualification would

provide opportunities to address losses experienced through migration and resettlement transitions. The older participants had previously acquired FETAC Level 5 and 6 qualifications and viewed entry to HE as the next step in their educational trajectory. Others accessed HE through the traditional CAO route and the reasons provided for choosing social care were diverse. Experiences of migration transitions, living in DP, DSGBV and ongoing racial oppression were identified as key drivers in their choice of social care. The participants believed the skills gained in managing adversity such as resilience, negotiation, cooperation, flexibility and communication would be recognised and valued in the social care sector.

6.5.1 Allyship

The data on experiences of formal teaching environment demonstrated that interpersonal relationships with lecturers were fundamental to the participants' educational journey. Several participants referred to individual lecturers who were particularly supportive and described how pivotal they were to their engagement, progression and attainment in HE. Providing opportunities to converse individually, often at the end of class or outside of the formal learning environment, facilitated the provision of feedback and clarification in a non-threatening space. This offered a sense of security, reduced fear and mediated losses incurred by missing class to attend work or having to leave early to collect children. These lecturers also aided with comprehension issues, offered guidance on assignment briefs and provided support for academic writing.

The significance of 'one good person' was a key finding in this study. Individual academic staff, chaplains, librarians, auxiliary staff and mature students that demonstrated allyship though inclusive behaviours, actions and communications provided significant support for the participants. When these individuals constructively engaged and demonstrated empathy, the participants reported feeling supported which

increased participation and belonging in college and class. The identification of 'one good person' can be traced to the biblical good Samaritan parable, but is also reflected in recent literature on mental health (Jigsaw, 2022), substance misuse (SAMHSA, 2019) and adolescent behaviour (Smyth & Darmody, 2021). Because of the insidious and dehumanizing nature of racism in society, researchers (Joseph, 2021; Ni Chonaill, 2016) reiterate how important it is to have individuals willing to commit to anti-racist praxis within HEIs. Research by Hafford-Letchfield (2007) on factors that contributed to student success in social work education, highlight the benefit of positive relationships with educators and the impact of affective factors on the learning process. It could be concluded that this would be similar for social care students.

Support by the 'one good person' was provided informally, outside of timetabled hours and frequently by people who were not charged with the role of directly supporting students. While the impact at a micro level may be beneficial, without being formally acknowledged or resourced by HEIs, this important supportive mechanism, dependant on the good-will of individuals is unlikely to be sustainable. In fact, it may be that the actions of these well-meaning individuals unintentionally mask the need for wider institutional and systemic reform. Arday (2018a) advocates for greater diversification and development of formal mental health support systems for ethnic minority students which could augment informal support provided by tutors, educators, chaplains and auxiliary staff. The data confirms that a holistic suite of student services are required including supports for relationship building and active problem solving, spirituality and social supports.

6.5.2 Insider-outsider perspectives

The participants accounts of the teaching and learning environment indicated that a race evasive ideology was prevalent amongst some lecturers. They reported some lecturers as

detached and dismissive, describing experiences of being ignored, passed over or not invited to contribute to class discussions and understood this to indicate a colour-blind approach. Accounts of feeling fear and apprehension when seeking feedback from some lecturers indicated possible entrenched hierarchy and power imbalances between students and some academics. Cynicism was evident in experiences of grading. Some participants believed that marks allocated did not reflect the quality of work submitted and questioned if this was a result of lecturer bias and racial stereotyping (DeVita, 2007; Singh, 2018). There was a commonly held view among participants that most lecturers preferred to engage with White students so as to avoid awkwardness in comprehension, understanding accents or pronunciation of African names. When lecturers were unable or unwilling to pronounce their names or engaged in avoidant and defended behaviours, it created additional embarrassment for the participants in the class setting. Some participants described shortening or changing their name to reduce their vulnerability and facilitate the lecturer.

West et al. (2021) argue that as mechanisms that produce inequality become more covert and subtler, the language of explicit racism has given way to a neo-liberal discourse based on colour blindness and political correctness. Gordon (2005) suggests that adopting a colour-blind approach "is a bid for innocence, an attempt to escape our responsibility for our White privilege. By claiming innocence, we reconcile ourselves to racial inequality" (p.143). Race evasive ideology provides a false justification for not acknowledging or engaging with students from diverse backgrounds. By conceptualising the data through the lens of Goffman's (1967) theory of social interactions, it could be argued that people engage in particular avoidant practices to prevent revealing or embarrassing themselves or others. Educators may fear mispronunciation of names and this fear is well founded. Critical race theorists Kohli & Solórzano (2012) suggest not learning the names of

students is a micro aggressive behaviour and can demonstrate disrespect for the student, their family and culture.

Working with peers in groups is an integral element of social care education. Analysis of the data demonstrated that exclusionary behaviours occurred at all stages of the groupwork process. Chris's painful description of waiting to be picked for a group captured her sense of alienation and othering in the selection phase. For the majority of other participants, the group formation stage was a deeply impactful othering experience, contradicting core social care principles, in particular anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice. The data indicated that groupwork reduced opportunities for social interaction with classmates, increased feelings of distrust and suspicion and had potential to negatively impact on Black Minority Ethnic students' rates of progression and attainment. Accounts of groupwork experiences demonstrated that without standardised methods or formats to guide educators in establishing and managing group work, this pedagogical tool has the potential to be a site of discrimination.

The preference to retreat to the safety of working with other Black students seemed justified as it provided security and reduced the risk of being rejected, excluded, laughed at or ridiculed by the White majority in the class. However, progression and attainment were negatively impacted as there was a tendency to excessively rely on the collective to complete group projects. According to the data, the assignment briefs were sometimes misread or misunderstood by the group which adversely impacted on the grades of all members. This approach also created a vulnerability of unwittingly risking plagiarism as the work submitted may have high levels of similarity with other students. Previous research (Dee & Jacob, 2012, Strangfeld, 2019) shows that unintended plagiarism can impact on the long-term reputation of individual students.

The data indicated that the choice of curricula content, module resources and pedagogical approaches did not reflect the histories, culture or learning styles of the participants. For education programmes to be inclusive, the subject material must also be inclusive. Andrews (2020) and Kendall (2013) suggest White lecturers may be more inclined to take a Eurocentric approach to teaching and have poor racial literacy (Blaisdell, 2016; Warikoo et al., 2016). Yosso & Solórzano (2007) contend that the tenets of CRT should underpin educational curricula, encouraging educators to contextualise and include Black Minority Ethnic students' experiences in curricular design and implementation. However, Joseph (2020) argues that due to the lack of Black Minority Ethnic academics employed in Irish HEIs, and the insecure tenure for those employed, there is no appetite to address issues of racial inequality in HEIs. Without this being addressed, the current deficits in diversity and representation will continue to be problematic.

6.5.3 Socialising

The younger students with Irish secondary school experiences provided examples of seeking out other Black Minority Ethnic students to sit, socialise and study with from the start of their college experience. Lowe & Cooks' (2003) research on settling into college reports that the initial three to six months is a period of significant importance in a student's educational journey and patterns of engagement established at the early stages can last through the entirety of the programme. Torres & Taknint (2015) describe how Black students with segregation experiences, such as those reported by the participants who attended Irish secondary schools, were less open to developing friendships with those outside of their community. They found that proactive responses predominantly came from Black students from integrated backgrounds as they were more hopeful of their voices being heard than students with segregated experiences.

The participants reported being ridiculed, judged and disregarded by White students in social interactions as well as through their formal educational interactions. These experiences conflicted with their expectation that the core principles of social care, taught and assessed across all modules, would be evident and enacted throughout the delivery of programme. These core principles include interpersonal relationships underpinned by a non-judgemental attitude, empathy, effective communication skills, self-awareness and an ability to engage in critical reflection (CORU, 2018; SCI, 2017). This dissonance resulted in confusion, exclusion and the effective silencing of these students by the ascendant White student group. By using CRT as analytical lens to examine social care scholarship, it reveals that despite the rhetorical moves to teach non-discriminatory principles, the lived reality reflects the dominant embedded culture of racism and discrimination not only in wider society and HE but in social care education and practice.

Numerous descriptions of code switching (D'Angelo, 2011; DeBose, 1992) were identified in the data such as adjusting style of speech, appearance, behaviours and expression, changing, shortening or anglicising names. D'Angelo (2011) explain that code-switching strategies include expressing shared interests with others so as to offer a sense of affiliation and downplaying and avoiding negative stereotypes associated with Black racial identity. According to what participants said, the consequences of adopting code switching strategies included being accused of 'acting White' by other Black students. By feigning commonality, there was also a reduction of authentic self-expression which research suggests could lead to stress, burnout and ego-depletion (Johnson et al. 2021; Smith et al., 2011).

Socialising, connecting, developing relationships and friendships are important aspects of student life. However, racial segregation in canteens, open spaces and classrooms limited opportunities to integrate and patterns of inside-outsider groupings were created.

The younger participants expressed an interest in socialising with classmates but felt uncomfortable and out of place in the pubs and clubs White classmates choose to go. The older participants' experiences of socialising with classmates were limited due to time constraints and family commitments. While a few participants developed friendships with White students, they did not socialise outside of college and had no expectation that friendships would last beyond HE. As socialising with White classmates was constrained, opportunities to build friendships or integrate with peers were reduced.

Several participants believed that they were excluded from the class phone app because of their race, skin colour or ethnicity. Consequently, they were not informed of room or time changes, resulting in being late or missing lectures which impacted on their participation and reputation. Moreover, they described feeling hurt and betrayed by their classmates. Exclusion on social media, texting and group apps were perceived to perpetuate the outsider positioning. When experienced in the context of exclusion already encountered, it further confirmed and accentuated feelings of othering and distrust. The student class representation system was also identified as problematic. Participants described how the class representative did not listen, signpost, respond or inform them, therefore issues they highlighted were not prioritised or addressed. This further alienated the participants, resulting in loss of voice and power in the class. Only one participant believed that being elected as a class rep would empower her and hoped that this would prove to other Black students that change was possible and power could be shared.

6.5.4 Safe and brave spaces

Previous educational experiences framed how the participants engaged and participated in HE. They described feeling compelled to congregate and group together with other Black students in college as a survival strategy as they expected the predominantly White environment in HE would mirror secondary school experiences. These congregated

spaces are commonly referred to by critical race theorists (Garcia, 2017; 2019; Masta, 2021; Ramirez et al, 2005) as counter spaces where individuals from minority groups gather in critical numbers. Morales (2021) and Yosso & Solórzano (2007) suggest that counter spaces are part of a suite of coping strategies for Black Minority Ethnic students in HEIs. Garcia (2017; 2019) contends that such spaces reduce the odds of encountering racist remarks or othering within a majority White institution. Ramirez et al. (2005) argues that counter spaces validate Black people's lived experiences providing space to critique the dominant narrative in college. Nonetheless, these counter spaces have created a culture of segregation (Calmore, 1995) and as Darby (2020) suggests, have become an ethnic enclave for some students on campus, a space of inclusion for them, yet overwhelmingly viewed by others as an exclusionary space. By drawing on 'border epistemologies'[35] (Anzaldua, 2012, p.205), critical race theorists Holly & Masta (2021) note the inherent values and risks of counter spaces, acknowledging the complexity of racial identity, the push back against Whiteness and missed opportunities to challenge hegemony in predominantly White institutions. The data demonstrated that need for belonging and integration was overridden by the need to feel safe and secure in the company of other Black Minority Ethnic students. However, the counter spaces diminished interactions within the wider college environment, reduced opportunities to form friendships and impacted on engagement in class activities and groupwork.

6.5.5 English language competency

The significance of English language competency was a key finding in this study. The younger participants had opportunities to acquire English in primary and secondary school. While they reported multilingual home lives, they did not view language

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[35] Border epistemology, derived from decolonial theory, is based on the idea that the theoretical and the epistemic must have a lived dimension to them, and that theories already exist which sit at the very borders of the colonial matrix of power (Anzaldua, 1999, p.205)

competency as a significant barrier to progressing in HE. Early acquisition also resulted in younger participants developing Irish accents, acquiring local colloquialisms and having a clear understanding of the academic standards in oral and written communication. The older participants explained how it was much more difficult to acquire competency in English as an adult and described how levels of proficiency impacted adversely on their personal, profession and academic lives. Verbal communication was a particular concern, with many older participants highlighting speed and tone of voice, accents and phraseology as problematic. Examples of previously learned non-verbal communication styles from home countries such as lowering eyes, bowing heads and speaking only when invited were evident at the interview phase of the study. These practices are at odds with Irish norms and standards and reduced engagement with educators, other students and impeded communications with service users on placement. Lower levels of English language proficiency also impacted on academic writing and referencing, contributing in class and making presentations. Despite these challenges the participants did not avail of academic writing supports provided, explaining that lack of time, work and family commitments were barriers to accessing such services. One participant believed she would be negatively perceived for availing of academic writing support. Another participant expressed a need for discipline-specific supports rather than generalised tutoring for students, so did not see the value in availing of writing support.

Competency in English has material value as a commodity, allowing those fluent access to the top of the racial hierarchy. Delgado & Stefancic (2001) argue that the social construction of race has contributed to making certain languages more valuable than others. CRT scholar Harris (1993) notes that linguistic fluency accorded the same privileges and benefits ascribed to holders of other types of property. Therefore, it could be argued that "Whiteness" has become synonymous with English language fluency,

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valuable in its own right. Previous research on the impact of diverse, disrupted or unconventional primary and tertiary education on academic skills (NUS, 2016; Singh & Kwhali, 2015) demonstrates that competency levels are directly related to when and how English was learned. Chiswick & Miller (2001) contend that mastering the host country's language is beneficial to the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees and this is especially true if language skills were promoted early after arrival. This knowledge should inform provision of academic support services in HE, however, Ní Chonaill (2014) highlights "the lack of any systematic or integrated approach to language support at third level" arguing that HEIs often "fail to recognise the heteroglossic local environment or the diversity of student population" (p. 86).

The findings also showed little recognition of multilinguistic capital and not one of the participants reported perceiving it as a strength. King (2018) argues that the employment market is multilingual, and employers increasingly require levels of language competence and intercultural sensitivity in addition to high levels of English and native language capability. However, social constructs and linguistic standards in HE continue to be based on Eurocentric norms. Despite EDI initiatives (HEA, 2022) there appears to be limited effort in harnessing the multilingual and multicultural strengths of Black Minority Ethnic students. Recent Universal Design for Learning (UDL) initiatives have identified opportunities for non ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students to demonstrate capacity to think, read, write and translate in multiple languages in HE (Levey, 2023). This should contribute to the overall improvement of teaching quality and campus climate for all students. However, if Eurocentric systems remain unchallenged and unchanged, the wider student group will not benefit from the full productive capacity of all students.

6.5.6 Placements

Practice placements are an integral element of social care education and for many students the first opportunity to get direct experience. Over half of participants reported working in care settings before becoming students and all expressed high levels of interest and motivation about the placement element of the programme. For the majority of the participants, the placement provided a space where they could utilise previous work experiences, demonstrate commitment, draw on cultural knowledge and engage the skills acquired through managing previous adverse circumstances. The core competencies for social care professionals, such as determination, strong work ethic, ability to adapt, willingness to take responsibility and a heighted sense of empathy (CORU, 2017) were evident in their accounts. Specifically, they were able to apply these to practice and this may account for the generally positive experiences of placements. The data showed that placement experiences increased social, linguistic and cultural capital and offered prospects to build professional connections and endorsements.

However, the placement component also presented challenges. Despite having prior work experience, securing placements were problematic and there was a belief that this was a result of overt and covert racism and discrimination in the care sector. Challenges such as scarcity of financial resources, lack of local knowledge and informal connections within placement organisations were also highlighted as barriers to securing placements. As a result of reduced social and cultural capital, many of the participants depended on family, friends or contacts made through their church to search for placement opportunities. Some described securing placements on the phone so that their skin colour or race was not identifiable. Others described anglicising or modifying their names to secure placement. The data showed the intersectional challenges associated with caring and motherhood were not recognised in the placement allocation process. Securing and completing placements were impeded by caring responsibilities, in particular for lone

parents. Lectures and tutorials could be planned for as they were timetabled in advance, however, arranging childcare and transportation around work shift patterns, unsocial working hours and night duty while on placement was challenging. This created significant anxiety and stress for the students affected.

The participants' descriptions of modifying names or concealing their skin colour or ethnicity in order to secure a placement contributes to the body of research on the efforts that Black Minority Ethnic students take to 'fit in'. Akel (2019, p.1) study on the experiences of Black and minority ethnic students at Goldsmiths University found that 34% of students attempted to modify their ethnic or cultural identity in order to 'fit' more closely into prevailing western norms. This included changing their name, appearance and altering their accent. At the time of the study, placements predominantly were sourced informally through an ad-hoc system of approaching agencies seeking a placement. This was similar to the social work placement allocation, described in Wilson et al. (2009, p. 642) research on social work students as the 'cap in hand' approach. This placed Black Minority Ethnic students in potentially vulnerable positions as they were directly exposed to inherent organisational and individual racism and discrimination. Regulation by CORU has ensured that placement allocation is formalised, underpinned by written working agreements with placement providers (CORU, 2016). This should provide some level of protection for Black Minority Ethnic students when allocating placements going forward.

Despite experiencing racism and discrimination on placement, the participants reported placements as being very positive. This finding is contrary to research in the UK on social work students (Carter, 2021; Hillen, 2013; Tedam, 2014, 2022) which reported that Black Minority Ethnic social work students had adverse placements experiences which impacted negatively on their engagement and progression. By analysing this interesting finding through the prism of CRT, it could be surmised that because the majority of

participants in this study were mature students, and had previous work experience in the field, they may have become somewhat desensitised to racist encounters. The experiences of migratory transitions and continuous traumatic stress resulting from habituated racial oppression may contribute to the high levels of reported acceptance of discriminatory behaviour and language, in particular from elderly clients. It could also be surmised that inbuilt feedback mechanisms, designed to continuously monitor student progress on placement such as tripartite meetings, individual tutorials and supervision may inadvertently provide protection from racism and discrimination.

6.5.7 Structural and systemic supports

The participants identified a number of structural and systemic supports that assisted in accessing and participating in HE. Access and widening participation initiatives, such as Springboard and preparatory courses, provided pathways and preparation for studying in HE. Financial supports such as the SUSI grant system, housing benefits and childcare subsidies enabled participants to avail of opportunities to attend HE. Critical race theorists Reed & Adams' (2020) study on the risk and protective factors for young Black American students identify social supports, education, positive regard, access to care and protection from aggression as key protective factors against racial inequality. Religious and spiritual practices and the assistance received from church leaders and chaplains in HEIs provided significant support for the participants to navigate journeys to and through HE. Previous research (AkiDwA, 2020; Yuval-Davis et al., 2005) suggests the accumulation of loss or adversity can draw individuals to seek answers to the reasons why these challenges exist and to look for support to manage them. AkiDwA (2020) in a study on the mental health of migrant women note that prayer supported the increase in feelings of safety, built a sense of self-esteem, helped maintain healthy relationships and minimised stress.

The participants highlighted the importance of addressing systemic racism in HE and the need for additional supports for students from migrant backgrounds. There are currently eight Universities in Ireland that have committed to the University of Sanctuary[36] initiative to protect and support asylum seekers and refugees. In the UK, the Race Equality Charter (Advance HE, 2021) provides a framework for HEIs to identify and self-reflect on institutional and cultural barriers and aims to improve the representation, progress and success of Black Minority Ethnic students and staff. While there is no similar Charter in Ireland, EDI initiatives must move beyond aspirational discourse and have clearly stated commitments with identified actions. Promoting equality in HE is more than providing education services on equal terms to all. Unless the ethos and subsequent resource allocation in HEIs consider Black Minority Ethnic students, they cannot be positive learning environments or places where equality can flourish (Creswell, 2014; Sibley, 2002).

Carello (2018) suggests that adopting a pedagogical trauma informed approach in education can promote healing and reduce risks of re-traumatisation of students. The majority of participants reported high levels of direct and vicarious ongoing trauma resulting from migration, resettlement and racial oppression. International research (Newcomb et al., 2015; Jung, 1951) contend that those with significant trauma experiences can be drawn to working with others in the hope that they can learn to heal themselves. International research (Jung, 1951; Rizq & Target, 2010) report that high numbers of social work and caring professionals had experienced prior 'wounding' or traumatic experiences which motivated them to enter these careers. By being cognisant that students affected by trauma may require compassion and sensitivity, educators may

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[36] University of Sanctuary Ireland (UoSI) is an Irish initiative to encourage and celebrate the good practice of universities, colleges and other education institutes welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants into their university communities and fostering a culture of welcome and inclusion for all.

be in a position to reduce risks of re-traumatisation by adapting sensitive learning materials and flagging potential triggers in advance. Social care educators would particularly benefit from understanding how trauma triggers behaviours and impacts on learning capacity and be mindful of the manner in which personal trauma can impact professional relationships (Brown & Lyons, 2020; Leitch, 2017).

Placement management systems were also pivotal in addressing issues of inequality and discrimination. Placements within multicultural teams increased opportunities for inclusive experiences, as issues of race and ethnicity may have previously been addressed within the staff team. Some placement supervisors provided strong leadership and guidance on anti-racist praxis for the staff team and the client group. When racist incidents occurred, acknowledgements and apologies from staff or family members mitigated the impact. Joseph (2020) and Ladson-Billing & Tate (1995) argued that the impact of racial abuse can be reduced through restorative justice practices, such as discussion, reparation and apology. By acknowledging racial inequalities and encouraging expressions of recognition and apology, placement supervisors created 'safe and brave spaces' for Black Minority Ethnic students to grow, learn and develop a sense of belonging.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study by drawing together the wider contextual information on experiences of migration transitions, racism and discrimination and education. By engaging CRT as an analytical lens, the discussion provides new knowledge on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland. It also contributes to knowledge on the intersectional impact of migration transitions, gender, motherhood, age and linguistic competency on Black Minority Ethnic social care students experiences of HE. On the surface, it would seem that there are significant development and improvements in EDI in HE, yet there are persistent problems that

potentially impact on positive outcomes. The attainment of a social care qualification offered hope to remediate loss, regain trust and establish protective factors. However, reflecting on the study data, it is reasonable to conclude that educational attainment is not enough to override the structural, institutional and systemic barriers that are deeply embedded in society, in HE and in the social care sector. The discussion provides a cogent argument for the final chapter which seeks to advance the lessons learned through a number of recommendations and related actions.

CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out how the research question was addressed, highlighting the contribution to existing literature and offers key recommendations and related actions. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section revisits the research question and aims of the study outlining how they were achieved and highlighting contributions to new knowledge. The second section lists key recommendations targeted at higher education, social care scholarship and wider society. The third section provides details of actions stemming from the study, including the Race Equity Informed Common Space initiative currently piloted in TU Dublin, and signposts direction for future research. The final section concludes the chapter with a short personal reflection.

7.2 Aims and claims: Contribution to new knowledge

The research question set out to explore the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland, understand what shaped their journey to social care education and practice and to examine the impact this had on their lives. The findings contributes to academic literature on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students. The study provides new knowledge on the cumulative and intersectional impact of migration transitions, racial discrimination, gender, motherhood and intergenerational learning on Black Minority Ethnic students journeys to and through HE. It also contributes to academic literature on Black Minority Ethnic social care students experiences of HE. New knowledge on their perspectives of the wider landscape of HE, experiences of teaching and learning, socialising, groupwork, and placements can inform current and future teaching pedagogies. This research also adds to literature and research on EDI in HE and

highlights the importance of the wider contextual factors that impact Black Minority Ethnic students.

This research contributes new knowledge to the body of literature on research approaches that focus on minority ethnic groups. The study adopted a collaborative approach, guided by the core tenets of CRT (Delgado, 1989; 1995; Crenshaw, 1995), in particular the use of storytelling to giving voice. The participatory advisory group advised all phases of the study, offering views and insights on terminology, methodology, data analysis, coding, interpretation of findings and dissemination ideas. This study demonstrated that by combining CRT as a theoretical/analytical framework with a participatory research approach, issues of positionality and unconscious bias can be addressed by active listening, relationship building and reflexivity. This unique approach generated insights that otherwise may not have come to the fore. The tenets of CRT reinforce the engagement of a participatory research approach and align with the key principles of social care practice; advocacy, human rights, strength-based perspectives and anti-oppressive practice (SCI, 2018). This distinctive approach could be applied to research in social care and allied professions because it reflects the core ethical principles of the sector.

Migration transitions set the contextual background to the challenges the participants encountered. The study demonstrated that Black Minority Ethnic social care students experience institutional, structural, inter-personal and systemic racism in their daily lives, in the workplace and as students in HE. The intersectional and cumulative impact of navigating migration transitions, encountering racism and discrimination in daily living, in HE and social care practice provides new insights into their experiences, motivations and expectations of social care education and employment. By utilising the data from this

study, key recommendations are made to address the lessons learned for society, HE and social care scholarship.

7.3 Recommendations

Drawing on the findings from this research, there are a number of key recommendations for HEIs, social care scholarship and wider society. Through targeted EDI measures and the enhancement of identified protections in HEIs, there are opportunities to mediate losses, lower fear levels, increase trust and support adaptations. The researcher acknowledges the complexity of the interplay between HEIs, social care and wider society and emphasises how the multifaceted elements hinge on each other.

7.3.1 Equality, inclusion and diversity in higher education institutions

This study reiterates the need for robust data on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic students to ensure that they are not systematically denied representation in HE. For structural and institutional inequalities to be addressed, appropriate data are required which can be used to shape strategies, policies, practices and performance indicators in HEIs. Without data on Black Minority Ethnic students, as Foucault (1988) suggests, full participation in the sharing and creation of knowledge, in particular knowledge that offers power and opportunities within the dominant culture is unjustly denied

The findings reinforce the need for robust legislation and polices that target racism, discrimination and microaggressions at an institutional, structural and programme level. This study recommends that an EDI directorate is established in all HEIs in Ireland and the remit clearly includes racial inequality. As with the Athena Swan award, outcomes should be linked to funding and HEIs held accountable for their actions in this area.

This study recommends increasing the percentage of Black Minority Ethnic academic staff in HEIs in Ireland to reflect the multicultural society in which we live. It

recommends proactively appointing Black Minority Ethnic lecturers through the creation of tailored positions not unlike the recommended gender quota initiatives at professorial level in HE under the Gender Action Plan, 2018-2020. The creation of discipline specific posts would provide diversity of cultural knowledge, skills, and experiences for students and staff in HEIs.

This study recommends that educators, students and allied professionals are taught the historical, cultural and institutional dimensions of racism and discrimination and participate in reflection and training on unconscious bias and cultural humility. Increasing educator and student awareness of racism, discrimination and inequality align with a number of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) including Quality Education (SDG4), Reduced Inequalities (SDG10) and Peace, Justice and Inequality). These goals underpin the strategic plans of HEIs in Ireland. EDI initiatives, communities of practice and seminars provide a space to critique the White privileged Eurocentric nature of HEIs. The content should be underpinned by CRT, but also draw on the psychodynamics of trust/distrust, fear and loss. By acknowledging the challenges of difficult knowledge and having uncomfortable conversations this study recommends that there are also informal culturally appropriate opportunities to discuss the issues such as 'meeting for a cuppa' or having a chat.

This study recommends that bespoke anti-racist training should be provided for social care educators, students, practice supervisors, staff and service users. However, training in isolation is insufficient. Even the most collaborative of educators and practitioners must be willing to unpack these issues within supervision or reflective practice. Adopting a participatory research approach could be useful for ensuring the core social care principles of advocacy, collaboration and anti-oppressive practice are to fore in social care education and research.

This study recommends that the University of Sanctuary initiative be extended to all HEIs in Ireland and the remit be broadened to include individualised assessment of needs, mentoring, academic support, financial support for childcare, travel expenses, mental health and counselling services. Fundamental conversations about constructions of citizenship are necessary to ensure that this initiative adopts a strengths-based approach.

Acknowledging and understanding the counterspace and the role it plays in providing a safe environment is critical to the advancement of EDI in HEIs. Collaborative and consultative discussions with students on the complexities of counter spaces in the wider college environment, groupwork allocation and presentations would provide new knowledge about the role and function of these spaces and places. This study urges social care educators to encourage experimentation by redefining the classroom as a place of risk. By providing opportunities to discuss, share, reflect and redefine previously held views and ideals, bias can be challenges and changed.

The inclusion of Black Minority Ethnic students and staff in the design of curriculum and pedagogical approaches at institutional and programmatic level is integral to minimising the 'danger of privileged experts colonising the experiences of subordinated groups' (Lynch & Baker, 2005, p. 747). This inclusive approach would also address interest convergence that has previously reduced the efficacy of existing EDI policies and strategies. Through accommodating alternative perspectives, epistemologies and content, the longstanding, hegemonic Eurocentric production of knowledge and dominant values can be contested and addressed.

Inspired by the social care principle of 'Nothing about me without me' (Lyons & Brown, 2020) it is recommended that a participatory approach be utilised in the design, delivery and the evaluation of the social care curriculum and pedagogical teaching methods. This would ensure that the voice and agency of all students, staff, placement supervisors and

service users are represented and included in the programme. The participatory research approach should be particularly embedded in research methods modules and social care students provided with training and opportunities to engage with this approach.

The regulatory requirements, as outlined by the Social Care Workers Registration Board (SCWRB), present opportunities for social care educators to embed proficiencies that relate specifically to racism, discrimination and inequality into the curriculum. This would ensure that racist and micro aggressive behaviours are addressed across the programme and assist in producing critical, creative and reflexive practitioners in an evolving professional space

7.3.2 Building on protective factors

A number of important protective factors were identified in the study and acknowledging, enhancing and resourcing these supports are a key recommendation of this study.

This study recommends maintaining and extending SUSI, HEAR, DARE and Springboard initiatives while strengthening non-traditional pathways to HE through working in partnership with FE colleges. HEI responses to regulatory processes for health and social care professionals (CORU, 2016) that result in reduced access routes require careful examination so that entry into these professions is not denied for non-standard students.

This study recommends the provision and resourcing of holistic supports for students from diverse backgrounds to support their integration in HE. These include targeted language supports, discipline specific academic writing, tutoring, mental health and counselling services as well as religious and spiritual supports. Where possible support services should have diversity within the staff team to represent the student population. These services should be context sensitive, adopt an intersectional approach and be co-

constructed, individualised, organic and tailored to meet the specific needs of these students.

The study recommends that a trauma informed praxis (O'Toole, 2022), sensitive to the structural nature of racial trauma, should be adopted across all programmes. By applying a trauma informed approach to social care scholarship, the core principles of safety; trustworthiness and transparency; support and connection; collaboration and empathy; empowerment; voice and choice; social justice; resilience; growth and change can be addressed.

This study recommends that the practice education team adopt an individualised approach which is person-centred and reflexive, yet cognisant of the wider systems and structures in which individuals and communities are embedded (Byrne, 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Through collaboration, the personal circumstances of students with additional intersectional responsibilities can be identified and addressed. Additional considerations should be made when securing placements for Black Minority Ethnic students to ensure that supervisors have been trained in anti-racist praxis prior to supervising students and that the wider team are informed of non-discriminatory practices. This study recommends that placement supervisors' role be enhanced and supported to include the sharing of anti-discriminatory practices in the workplace with students and tutors in preplacement seminars.

As education providers are currently reviewing and reshaping curricula and programmes to meet CORU requirements (SCWRB, 2017a), there is an opportunity to incorporate a number of key proficiencies in the updated curriculum. This would ensure students develop professional skills to challenge racism, discrimination and inequality in social care practice (Appendix A: CORU standards of proficiency as the relate to anti-discriminatory practice.). If these proficiencies are taught, assessed and evidenced to fulfil

and maintain the CORU requirements, then curriculum construction and pedagogical design may address some of the deficiencies highlighted in this study.

7.3.3 Global and societal factors

These recommendations are made within the wider global context of tackling racism through legal, political and economic measures. Taking positive measures for family reunification and prioritising protection from DSGBV for women and their children is essential. The vicious intersectional cycle of gender, ethnicity, skin colour and loss of capitals in migration and resettlement needs to be accounted for in assessing impact and must include the emotional labour that is provided by women in migration. The professionalisation and regulation of domestic and care work would reduce exploitative recruitment and working conditions and address some of the consequences of global care chains and remittances. These broad global recommendations align with a number of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2016) and the study supports the ongoing work in achieving these targets.

The harm caused by DP was vividly evident in this study and the findings support the recommendations of the advisory group on Direct Provision (Day, 2021) to transform international protection by 2023. Providing human rights-based training and information for politicians, public and private agencies, employers, the judiciary and others that work with migrants would offer a deeper understanding of the implications of policies in practice (INAR, 2022). The establishment of a racism strategic working group by the Department of Justice would contribute to the development of appropriate, contextually sensitive language and terminology, reflecting Ireland's unique positioning. Drawing on the principles of CRT and participatory approaches, this working group could build on initiatives such as Black History Month for wider inclusivity ensuring Black Minority Ethnic peoples voices are central to policy and legislative decision making. Addressing

the blame and cancel culture currently prevailing in social media is the responsibility of all citizens and if responses to mistakes and errors could shift from individualised blame to a more tentative enquiry about the underlying causes, people could engage in honest discussions about fear, unconscious bias, positioning and resistance.

7.4 Actions stemming from research

A number of actions stemmed from the study including the development of the Race Equity Informed Common Space initiative in TU Dublin, interactive workshops and conference presentations. Engagement, reflection, discussion were core actions in themselves, however, the participatory advisory group emphasised that the lessons learned were acted upon so as to address the core findings of the study.

7.4.1 Race Equity Informed Common Space initiative

The first action was the establishment of a Race Equity Informed Common Space Community of Practice (CoP) in 2021 by the TU Dublin EDI directorate and the subsequent awarding of funding under the Teaching and Learning initiative in TU Dublin. The CoP, informed by this study, grew from a Race Reading group facilitated annually by the EDI directorate. The remit is to promote reflection and discussion on the dimensions of discrimination and advocate for anti-racist practices in lecture halls and common spaces such as canteens, coffee docks and libraries. The core aims of the CoP are:

- To deepen knowledge on dimensions of racism and on how to implement structural change;
- To foster a better understanding of the intersectional dimensions of discrimination;
- To acknowledge harm and to explore what healing from harm involves;
- To examine how to transfer knowledge to practice. It will explore measures that enable us to both survive within and transform existing systems and structures.

- In achieving these aims, the CoP is shaped by a commitment to CRT and a participatory approach. The initiative aims to empower Black Minority Ethnic staff and students to take a leading role in the exchange of knowledge without carrying the burden of this alone. There have been five CoP sessions to date:
- Introduction to Critical Race Theory;
- Participatory approaches to race-related research;
- Presentation of the community development and youth work anti-racism placement training resource;
- The 'Building Multi-Stories' project which aims to embed inclusive teaching and learning resources to support a diverse curriculum;
- Natural justice, restorative justice and transformative justice approaches to addressing harm and discrimination.

The Race Equity Informed Common Space will also be used by the researcher in her role as a lecturer to provide 'safe and brave' spaces for students to reflect and discuss racism, inequality, positionality and intersectionality. There are limitations to the Race Equity Informed Common Space approach in its current form. Student participation is absent and the members are predominantly White female professional and academic staff and these gaps need to be addressed so as to widen the scope and potential of the initiative.

Other actions that emerged from the study included collaborative projects with the participatory advisory group members. A workshop titled *Is there racism in social care?* was facilitated by the members for final year social care students in TU Dublin Blanchardstown campus in 2021 and 2022. The advisory group have also been invited to facilitate similar workshops in other colleges in Ireland. The advisory group presented a Workshop at the Social Care Ireland conference in April 2022 and at the TU Dublin EDI showcase in June 2022. The members continue to work together to advance the lessons learned from the study.

7.5 Directions for future research

By drawing on the findings from this study several areas for future research and practice have been identified. As this was a small-scale study, drawing on the experience of 21 Black Minority Ethnic social care students in five HEIs in Ireland, it could expand to include more participants and HEIs which would give a more in-depth understanding of the issues for this cohort of students. The remit could also widen to include the emerging generation of Black Minority Ethnic students born in Ireland and also incorporate first year students as they may have valuable insights regarding induction anxiety, fear, stress and adaptations. Further research on mature and non-standard social care students' experiences would also be valuable and could inform policies on access routes, resource allocation, childcare, blended teaching methods and placement requirements.

As the participants in this study were all female, it would be valuable to research the experiences of other genders of Black Minority Ethnic social care students. Research on the experiences of other students from ethnic minority groups such as travellers, or from allied health and social care professions would provide opportunities to compare and contrast experiences. The researcher used CRT as a framework and noted that further research is required to develop and relate the concepts to the Irish context. Research on CRT and gender could also be expanded to include a focus on motherhood through migration and on the intergenerational impact of migration and vicarious trauma on Irish born Black Minority Ethnic young people.

7.6 Concluding reflection

When starting on the journey of the PhD, I expected to learn about the experiences of others, how theory reflects this and to develop a deeper understanding of the core issues pertaining to the topic while improving my academic research and writing skills. What I did not expect was the emotional rollercoaster that the journey took me on. Exploring the

lived experiences of others generated an internal dialogue and stirred up many emotions. I was repeatedly faced with considering the ethics of researching the lived experiences of others who were significantly disadvantaged in comparison to my privileged life. This dilemma led me to adopt a participatory research approach, in the hope that it would somewhat mediate and address inequality, alleviate my guilt and make me feel better. However, the members of the participatory advisory group did their job well and held me accountable for my positioning, so throughout the research journey I continually questioned, processed and lived with the discomfort of this dichotomy. The formal PhD process further exasperated me as the outputs are primarily measured by dissemination through publication rather than concrete actions and I perceived this as providing additional advantage to me as the researcher rather than working on impactful actions that would affect change.

The participants' stories are like pebbles in my pocket, and I grappled with how best to present them. I became fixated on presenting their words literally rather that interpreting them to find deeper meaning. Thanks to my supervisor's advice and direction, I was able to get over this hurdle and can only hope that in the end I have honoured the participants' stories in the work. Other emotions that I navigated were the frustration of the length of the process - I now know I prefer a sprint to a marathon. The useless emotion of guilt was constantly present. The personal guilt as a mother for taking time and resources from my family, the guilt for the privilege I was born to, guilt as a social care educator working in a sector that claims to promotes advocacy and equality, but presides over a system that disempowers and further compounds disadvantage and the guilt at not doing more to address the issues identified in the study.

There was significant personal learning throughout the journey and my world view has pivoted me from being an outsider looking in to having a more self-forgiving

understanding of what it is to be human in community with others. I hope that the journey re-positions me as an agent for change, maybe not on social media platforms, but more like the ripple effect of slowly and strategically dropping the pebbles in my pocket in a pond:

> *All too often we think of community in terms of being with folks like ourselves: the same class, same race, same ethnicity, same social standing and the like ... I think we need to be wary: we need to work against the danger of evoking something that we don't challenge ourselves to actually practice."* (bell hooks, 2016)

7.7 Conclusion

The landscape of Irish society is rapidly changing. Globalisation, migration, economic, environmental and political instability, neo-liberalism and privatisation are shaping the world and country we live in. The increase in far-right politics and subsequent push against migration, BLM and CRT indicates the elevated levels of fear and distrust felt by all. The HE environment in Ireland is also rapidly changing with an increase in the diversity of student population and the demand for learning across the life span. This requires HEIs to respond, adapt and change to the new and competing needs and allocate resources appropriately.

EDI initiatives may ensure that systemic, structural and institutional racism and discrimination are addressed over time, however Black Minority Ethnic students continue to experience overt and covert racism, discrimination and inequality in HE. Diversification of the curriculum, adaptation of teaching and assessments and the provision of enhanced supports need to be addressed with urgency. There is an opportunity for the social care sector to take a lead by actively and collaboratively

engaging in anti-racist work to ensure that the key principles of social justice in social

care practice are upheld for every Black Minority Ethnic student and graduate in Ireland.

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Appendix A: CORU standards of proficiency as the relate to anti-discriminatory practice.

CORU standards of proficiency as the relate to anti-discriminatory practice (Adapted from the CORU Social care workers standards of proficiency (2016))

- **Domain 1.1**: Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession

- **Domain 1.8**: Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups

- **Domain 1.23:** Be able to see the world as others see it; be able to practice in a non-judgemental manner and be able to understand another's feelings and be able to communicate that understanding

- **Domain 2.15:** Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

- **Domain 4.4:** Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately

- **Domain 5.2:** Understand and be able to apply principles of social justice in one's work including being able to challenge negative discrimination and unjust policies and practices; demonstrate an understanding of cultural competence; and work towards social inclusion

- **Domain 5.3:** Understand and apply a human rights based approach (HRBA) to one's work including the promotion of the service user's participation in their own care; ensure clear accountability; apply principles of non-discrimination; support other staff members to empower service users to realise their rights; be aware of the legality of actions within a service including the need to comply with any relevant legislative requirements including adhering to human rights obligations

Appendix B: Participatory research advisory group

Title of the study:

Black Minority Ethnic social care students experiences in Ireland

Participatory research principles

The participatory method of research places participants as joint contributors and investigators in a time limited research project. This method attempts to validate and highlight the experiences of participants rather than taking the traditional route, where the researcher takes the lead and the participant is the subject. The approach is a collaborative, consultative process will be led and advised the participants which are identified as 'community members', with community meaning the target research group (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2005; Chambers 2009, Heron, 996; Bell et al, 2004).

The researcher and participants will collaborate actively in a loosely defined group process to study and change their social reality (Whyte, 1989). Participants treat each other as colleagues. Through the give and take of a dialogic process, the researcher and participants learn together. The researcher's role as one of many 'co- learners' in not as an expert, but as a 'co-producer of learning. As Sohng (1995) comments, participatory research is a collaborative and empowering process because it (a) brings isolated people together around common needs and problems; (b) validates their experiences as the foundation for understanding and critical reflection; (c) presents the knowledge and experiences of the researchers as additional resources upon which to critically reflect; and (d) contextualises what might have previously felt like personal, individual problems or weaknesses.

Figure B1:
Principles of feminist Participatory Action research
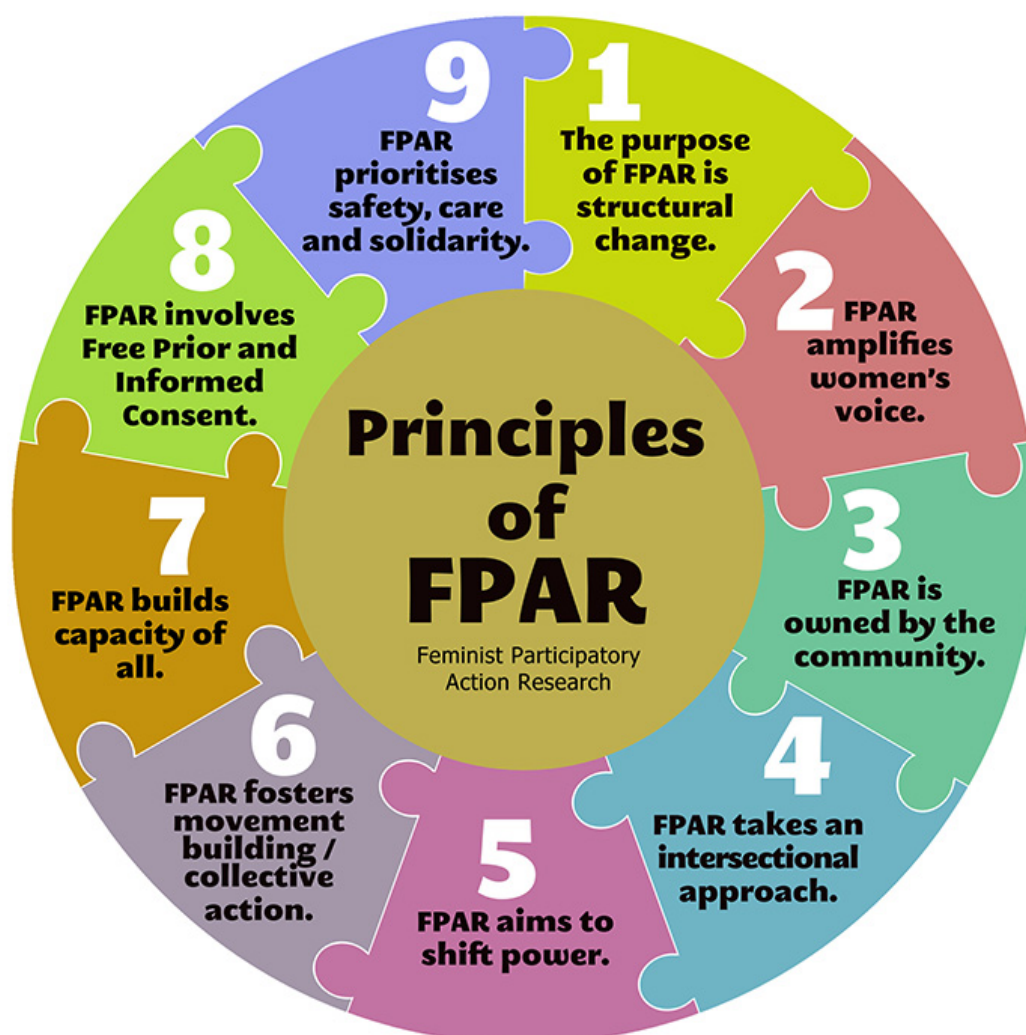
Principles of feminist Participatory Action research

- Purpose is structural change
- Hearing women's voices
- Community led and informed
- Intersectional approach
- Aims to shift power
- Fosters collective action and collaboration
- Builds capacity for all
- Free prior informed consent for all
- Safety, care and solidarity

The participatory research advisory group for this study

Diane Ihirwe

Evonne Mushonga

Caroline Munyi

Lisette Mugambo

Kemi Ayelabola

Margaret Fingleton

The parameters:

The advisory group developed from before the study began and the members were students of the researcher. They provided the initial impetus to study this area and highlighted the key issues to the researcher in the early stages of the study. In phase two the members participated in the piloting of the study and through this offered insights into language and terminology, methodology and methods. At the next phase it was decided to discuss how to formalise this interaction and the researcher wrote a position paper on the participatory research approach. It was agreed to adopt this approach and the parameters for the advisory group were discussed.

Working agreement for this group

Participation is based on the ethical principles outlined above

Time limited- can opt out anytime and the group will end when dissemination is complete

Agreed output

Risks and benefits identified and discussed for all members

Agenda for advisory group.

Wider global and societal context; BLM, COVID-19, personal experiences, motherhood and family

Literature; Migration, Higher education and social care

Literature and research has identified many themes and sub themes-

Would they like to read this or even a synopsis of it/ can they provide feedback

Framework: Critical Race Theory informed by feminist theory and intersectionality

Methodology: Qualitative, participatory research

Methods: Interviews adapted to allow for story telling (CRT)

Participants; Black minority ethnic students in 3rd or 4th year or recent graduates

Data collected: Pilot interviews (3) Stories (21)

Co-interpreting, analysing and presenting the data

Reflexive thematic analysis.

Co interpretation: the member agree to reading sections of the data and offering interpretations

Perhaps telling the story of this experience through an interview?

Discussion: Consult and advise on how and what the data means.

Dissemination and activist work

Agreed outputs of Workshop for social care students, presentation at SCI conference and publication. Also tweets, blogs and press releases

Sample of minutes of advisory group

Minutes of meeting: August 14th 2020 6-7pm

Zoom meeting

Present; Evonne, Diane and Margaret

Initial meeting so catching up and connecting again.

- Both Diane and Evonne have been active in the Black Lives Matter movement, so we discussed some of their recent work.
- We discussed the research progress and Evonne agreed to review an anonymised interview against the codebook. Margaret will send this to her in the next day.
- Discussion about gender imbalance in the sampling and if it was worth trying to interview or include male students. Explained that I did have some interest from a male student but that the interview did not materialise yet.
- Talked about dissemination and Diane would prefer that it was in an accessible format that would be transformative and call for action.
- Evonne agreed to provide feedback before the next meeting on September 4th 2020

Appendix C: Social identity map

Figure C1:
Social Identity Map

Social Identity Map
Margaret Fingleton

Class: Middle
Impact: Education, quality of life, driving license, extra curricular activities, opportunities
Emotions: Knowledge, security, love, commitment, responsibility

Ability: Able
Impact: Taken for granted, mobility, use of space, privilege, skills
Emotions: Easy, fit and healthy, feel good

Age/Generation: Mid 50s/Middle aged
Impact: Experienced, standard of living, security, family bonds
Emotions: Security, smugness, responsibility, commitments

Gender: Female
Impact: stereotypical role, feminist, mother, Glass ceiling, safety
Emotions: Juggling, dependency, commitment, responsibility, Irish mammy syndrome

Sexuality: Heterosexual/cis
Impact: Social approval, familial base, conformity
Emotions: Acceptance, no stigma, belonging

Citizenship: Irish
Impact: Freedom, rights, cultural understanding, knowledge, ease of travel
Emotions: Connection, common understanding, belonging

Environment: Rural Ireland
Impact: Space, tacit and local knowledge, transport/ commute
Emotions: Safe, secure, recognition, family ties, connection

Race: White
Impact: Identity, privilege, institutional ease
Emotions: Comfort, understand systems, fit in, sameness

Appendix D: Information sheet

As part of my PhD Research in TUDublin I am conducting research on Black Minority Ethnic social care student experiences in Ireland. I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to participate.

What is the study about?

I have noted in my previous academic studies and my lecturing role in the social care field the lack of research in Ireland on Black Minority Ethnic students' experiences in higher education and in particular in social care. The experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care in an Irish context are thus absent in academic studies. The study aims therefore to examine Black Minority Ethnic students' views experiences and perspectives of social care practice and higher education.

What will you have to do?

You will be required to an agreed location at an agreed suitable time on a single occasion for a maximum of sixty minutes.

What are the benefits to you?

Your contribution will add to the knowledge and understanding about migrant students' experiences in social care education. The findings of the study may also highlight the importance of how practice wisdom may promote more effective social care practice and education. In addition, it will enhance the credibility of the social care profession.

What are the risks?

I do not envisage any risks; you will not be required to answer any questions you do not wish to.

What if I do not want to take part?

Participation in study is voluntary. You can choose not to consent or withdrawn consent at any time.

What happens to the information?

The information that is collected will be kept confidential and stored on researchers' computer with a protection password. All data stored on non-QUB password protected computers (for example, on laptops or USB devices) will be fully encrypted. The information will be anonymised and kept for a period of two years after which it will be deleted.

Ethical Undertaking

I undertake to protect the identity of all research respondents. There are, however, ethical and legal limits to confidentiality. If information is shared revealing that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse this information will be passed on to Child Protection Officer in Tusla Health Service Executive.

What happens at the end of study?

At the end of the study the information will be used to present the findings, but the information will be completely anonymised. All data gathered from the research will be held by the researcher for up to two years in a password-protected computer.

What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

If you have any questions related to any aspect of the study you may contact me. It is important that you feel that all questions have been answered

What happens if I change my mind during the study?

At any stage, during the study should you feel that you want to discontinue being a participant there are no consequences should you change your mind about your participation.

Contact name and number:

Margaret Fingleton

Margaret.fingleton@TUDublin.ie

086 3618571

Appendix E: Consent Form

Study: Black Minority Ethnic social care student's experiences in Ireland

Should you agree to participate in this study please read the statement below and if you agree to them, please tick and provide your signature.

I have read and understood the subject information sheet. _____

I understand what the study is about, and what the results will be
used for. _____

I consent for the data to be used anonymously in report format and
Published output. _____

I am fully aware of all of the procedures involving myself, and of
any risks and benefits associated with the study. _____

I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw
from the project at any stage without giving any reason. _____

Date:

Signature:

Researcher signature

Appendix F: Interview/ Storytelling Schedule

Research Questions/ Objectives

Why do BME students decide to study social care and what influenced their choice of College?

What expectations do BME students have of the course and what do they hope to achieve in their studies

How did they experience access to higher education and what barriers and supports did they encounter?

What is their understanding of social care practice and the role of a SCP?

What was their experience of higher education in IOTs?

What recommendations would they make to improve experiences?

Interview Questions/ Topics/ Prompts

Section 1: Personal Information and Motivation (Tick box)

Age

Gender

Nationality/ Ethnic origin

Religion

Residential location

Parental status

Immigration status

Years in Ireland

What campus are you studying on?

What year of study are you currently in?

Prompts: Motivation/ Background

Tell me about your journey to here?

Can you tell me about what led you to study social care?

Talk to me about previous or current work experiences or qualifications in social care?

Can you explain the factors that influenced your choice of University/ College?

Section 2: Experiences of HE Academic supports

Prompts:

Did you face/ experience barriers or challenges in the following areas? (Tick box)

Information about the College

Information about the program

Resources or supports

Financial challenges

Language competency issues

Cultural issues

Assessments

Discrimination

Can you tell me about any supports you know are available for Black Minority Ethnic students in Irish HE?

Can you identify and talk about the three most supportive aspects in your student life today?

Section 3: Experience of teaching and lecturers

Prompts:

Can you tell me about your experiences of teaching on the program?

Would any of these describe your experiences? (Tick box)

- Hostile
- Supportive
- Respectful
- Tolerant
- Racist
- Friendly
- Other (specify)

Describe what it was like to work on group projects or collaborations?

Explain about the tutoring system to me

Section 4: Experiences of Assessment and Feedback

Prompts:

Can you tell me about your experiences of teaching quality and feedback from lecturers?

Can you talk about the assessments- are they inclusive and equitable for BME students?

What do you think could be done to make improvements in this area?

Section 5: Experience of the curriculum

Prompts:

What is your opinion on the curriculum on your course – does it reflect issues of diversity, equality and discrimination? Are you able to bring in your perspectives as a black student

during lectures or smaller tutorial groups? What do you think can be done to make the curriculum more inclusive?

Section 6: Experience of culture within the institution

Prompts:

Can you tell me about any equality policies in your College? If you know of some, what impact do you think they have and why? Do you think that the college promote an ethos of welcoming for diversity and for Black Minority Ethnic students?

Section 7: Experiences of attainment

Prompts:

Research in the UK has shown that Black Minority Ethnic students are less likely to achieve a better qualification relative to white students. Can you talk to me about your views on this? Why do you think that is? Tell me how you think this can this be addressed?

Section 8: Placement experiences

Prompts:

Tell me about your practice placements. Were they what you expected?

Did you experience any of the following barriers or challenges?(Tick box)

- Difficulty in finding placements/ choice of placements
- Racism- direct or indirect?
- Discrimination by staff or service users?
- Different expectations from other white students
- Language or communication difficulties?
- Other (specify)

Research has shown that Black Minority Ethnic students in social work are more likely to fail placement than White students. Can you talk to me about your thoughts on this?

Are there any measures that could be put in place to support Black Minority Ethnic students on placement?

Section 9: Experiences of complaints structure in the college

Prompts:

Can you talk to me about any experiences of racism or discrimination in the college? If you have had experiences can you tell me about it? How was it dealt with? If you did experience racism or discrimination would you make a complaint? Would you know how? Do you trust the college would deal fairly with your complaint?

Section 10: Experiences of class representation?

Prompts:

Can you tell me about the class representation in your class? Do you know who your class or year representative is? Do you feel that your views and experiences are fully represented by this rep? Have you any ideas about how you think this could be improved?

Section 11: Understanding and experiences of Social Care Practice

Prompts:

Can you tell me what is your understanding of SCP in an Irish context and what is the role of a SCW? Do you think that this is different in your country of origin?

Section 12: Recommendations

Prompts:

If you had three wishes to create a better experience for Black Minority Ethnic social care students what would they be? Can you identify any small changes that could assist Black Minority Ethnic social care students in higher education?

Is there anything more you would like to tell me or talk about?

Section 13: For graduates only

Prompts:

As a graduate, are you currently working in social care practice on the SCW grade?

Do you plan to study further in this area?

Do you think there any other questions I should ask students about their experiences?

As a recent graduate, have you any recommendations to make which might improve student experiences of higher education?

Appendix G: Eligibility criteria

As part of my PhD Research in TUDublin I am conducting research on Black Minority Ethnic social care student experiences in Ireland.

The eligibility criteria to participate in the study is:

- Black Minority Ethnic students studying social care in higher education institutions or Universities in Ireland.
- Students should self -identify with the terms Black Minority Ethnic
- Students should be in second, third or final year of their studies or have recently graduated (in the last year).

Appendix H: Codebook Phases

Codebook Phase 1

Data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes. An example of familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes to integrate contextual factors such as coding assumptions, field notes and observations and researcher's thoughts and ideas before commencing the encoding process.

Codebook Phase 2

Generating Initial Coding involved deconstructing the data from its original chronology into an initial set of non-hierarchical codes.

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding (open coding) 89 Initial Codes Identified in Phase 2	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Academic assignments, writing and communication	Ref to academic writing, completing assignments, supports required and challenges faced	17	46
Access schemes	Ref to access, springboard or other supports	4	16
Access to Higher education	Ref to how the student accessed HE	13	26
Accommodation. living conditions and moving locations	Ref to finding accommodation, homelessness, moving to find accommodation	6	24
Adaptation anxiety and stress	Ref to anxiety about how they would get to know other students, make friends and have someone to sit with	12	14
Assessment and grade allocation	Ref to assessments and grade allocation	14	27
Black Lives matter	Ref to the BLM movement	6	9
Challenges	Ref to challenges to accessing HE	11	38
Changing or shortening names	Ref to changing, shortening or anglicising names	2	6
College Experience		2	2
Contributing in class	Ref to talking in class, offering opinions, taking part in discussions, asking questions	11	40
Contribution to the class on cultural experiences	Ref to students being asked about their different cultural experiences	12	21
Corona virus	Ref to the pandemic	1	2
Cultural competency		15	35
Cultural competency on placement		6	12
Cultural expectations- mixed race	Ref to cultural norms and expectations regarding, dating, mixed race relationship and children	3	7
Cultural norms	Ref to cultural norms in communicating, behaving, expectations	14	28
Denial of racism	Ref where participants hear denials about racism	3	3

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding (open coding) 89 Initial Codes Identified in Phase 2	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Direct provision	Ref to experiences of students in Direct provision centres and the impact this had on their social care studies	8	11
Discrimination and racism in the class	Ref of discrimination and racism in class	18	32
Discrimination on placement		14	20
Expectations	Ref to whether expectations about Higher education were met Also if the student used their degree to progress to SCW	13	27
Experiences in the class and lecture hall	Students experiences in the class and lecture room	6	8
Experiences of teaching	Ref to experiences of classroom teaching	14	34
Experiences of the curriculum	Ref to students experiences of the social care curriculum	12	20
Experiences on placement		19	35
Failing placements	References to BME students failing placement	9	20
Fear	References of fear in the community	2	2
Fear of Black minority ethnic people	Ref to fear of other people	3	10
Feedback and grading	Ref to feedback from lecturers and how it was communicated	19	37
Feedback on placement	References to feedback on placement by supervisor or tutors	8	12
Financial issues	Ref to financial concerns, paying fees, childcare, bills, rent, and supporting family	12	26
Formal interaction	Ref to interaction through class activities, groupwork and participation	15	33
Further education program	Ref to Further education programs - Fetac level 5, 6, 7 in all discipline related to social care	13	19
Groupwork	Ref to how groupwork was managed by lecturers	16	51
Health care assistant	Ref to Health care assistant roles as a pathway to Social Care	10	19
How to talk about race or being Black	Ref to how difficult it can be to discuss race or colour	9	26
Identity	Ref to identity and, belonging	7	12
Informal interaction	Ref to the social interaction such as outings, coffee and lunch breaks, going out and who to sit with socially	18	48
Institutional responses to racism	Ref to how the institution respond to racism, discrimination	7	12
Integration	Ref to how students tried to integrate into the class group	16	47

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding (open coding) 89 Initial Codes Identified in Phase 2	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Interaction with class mates	References to how the students interacted with other students	16	33
Journey to Higher education	Ref to how students came into HE and into social care	9	11
Juggling parenting and study	Ref to having children, parenting and trying to study and work	13	59
Knowledge and understanding of Social care work	Ref to what the student knew about social care and what they believed Social Care practice to be	11	33
Language competency	Ref to language competency, English as a first language, challenges associated with language	17	31
Language competency on placement	Ref to communication and language issues on placement	5	13
Learning environment	Ref to how students learn, study and work on assignments	15	52
Mature students	Ref to mature students and interactions	7	10
Medias portrayal of Black ethnic minorities	Ref to what is presented in the media about BME	5	7
Motivations to study Social Care	Ref to why students chose Social care	21	66
Negative supports	Ref to supports that became barriers or were negative	3	5
Other		1	1
Placement	Students experiences of placement	4	5
Placement experiences		1	1
Plagiarism	References to plagiarism	4	6
Positive Supports	Ref to helpful supports, resources and people	11	31
Previous Qualification	Ref to any previous qualifications that is not Fetac	11	18
Principles of Social care in the classroom	Ref to experiences of basic principles of social care in the class- Respecting diversity, anti-oppressive practice, human rights based perspectives, advocacy and amplifying voices, inclusion and equality	14	43
Progression and attainment	Ref to progression and attainment levels	15	34
Progression from Health care assistant to Social care	Ref to progress from HCA to Social Care role	2	2
Proof reader	Ref to the need for a proof reader	1	2
Racism, discrimination and microaggressions in society	Ref to the broad experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions that the participants have	14	46

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding (open coding) 89 Initial Codes Identified in Phase 2	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Racism, discrimination and microaggressions in teaching	Ref to any exp of racism, discrimination or microaggressions by lecturers or tutors	9	12
Recommendations	Responses to question on what recommendations they would make to the institution to improve things for BME students	19	50
Relationship with lecturers and tutors	Ref to the relationship with lecturers and tutors	14	36
Religion and beliefs	Ref to religious beliefs, being part of church, volunteering in church	7	15
Repeating and querying marks	Ref to students querying marks or repeating work including the costs associated	3	8
Representation for BME students		7	10
Representation in class	Ref to class reps and how students experienced or got involved in class representation	9	15
Responses to Racism	Ref to how participants responded when they experienced racism, discrimination or microaggressions	11	39
Responsibility	Ref to responsibility for children, being on their own, having no support	15	34
Role models	Ref to role models and the presence of BME staff in HE	12	31
Route to Ireland	Ref to how the student migrated to Ireland	16	41
School experiences		10	27
Settling in and induction	Experiences of the early days of the classroom - induction and getting to know other students	13	22
Sourcing or securing placement	References to finding a placement	12	19
Sticking together	Ref to staying with other Black minority ethnic people- including study groups, WhatsApp groups etc	12	34
Stories of other people's experiences of racism	Participants talk about knowing other people experiences in wider society of racism and discrimination	8	17
Supervision on placement	References to experiences of supervision or relationship with supervisor on placement	12	18
Supports	Ref to supports offered by lecturing staff, other students and wider support services	13	42
Supports and information		7	14
Susi grant		9	11

Phase 2 - Systematic data coding (open coding) 89 Initial Codes Identified in Phase 2	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Tasks and role on placement	References to task that students were expected to do on placement	12	20
Trauma	Ref to trauma experienced either in country of origin, on route to Ireland or as a refugee in Ireland	5	14
White privilege	References to white privilege and power	8	25
Work ethic	Ref to work ethic among BME students	13	25
Work opportunities	Ref to work opportunities for BME students in social care or wider	16	45
Work permits	Ref to the ability of the student to engage in work overall - in particular in the care sector	2	3

Codebook Phase 3:

Codebook - Phase 3 - Generating Initial Themes from Coded and Collated data involved merging, renaming, distilling and clustering related coded into broader categories of codes to reconstruct the data into a framework that makes sense to further the analysis

Phase 3 - Generating Initial Themes from Coded and Collated data (developing categories) 15 Categories of Codes identified from 92 Initial Codes	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Access to Higher education	Experiences of access programs, SUSI assistance and other supports and challenges. Motivations to study social care, understanding of social care and expectations of students.	21	142
Accommodation. living conditions and moving locations	Ref to finding accommodation, homelessness, moving to find accommodation	10	37
Challenges, supports and recommendations	Ref to recommendations and supports identified for BME students	21	101
Class experiences	Exp within the class group of racism, discrimination and microaggressions. Anxiety and stress including Induction and settling in, interaction through class activities and informal through socialising. Ref to mature students and representation of their views in class. Integration and belonging	21	381
Cultural norms	Ref to cultural norms in communicating, behaving, expectations	14	35
Experiences of Higher Education	Ref to access, teaching and lecturing, class room and working with other students, feedback and grading, attainment. Also, ref to social care education	21	100
How to talk about race or being Black	Ref to how difficult it can be to discuss race or colour	10	41
Lecturing and feedback	Exp of interaction with lecturers, groupwork, feedback, grading, plagiarism and repeating. Experiences of progression and attainment	21	503
Placement	Overall exp of placements including sourcing and securing placements. Cultural and language competency on placement, Relationship with supervisor, task and role, feedback and supports	19	36
Racism, discrimination and microaggressions in society	Ref to the broad experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions that the participants have	17	98
Societal factors	Ref to experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions in the community and responses to racism. White privilege, identity, belonging, Role	21	160

Phase 3 - Generating Initial Themes from Coded and Collated data (developing categories) 15 Categories of Codes identified from 92 Initial Codes	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
	models, Media portrayal of BME community, Black lives matter, and fear. How to talk about race and colour. Cultural norms and integration		
Supports and information		18	97
The college experience	The experiences of the overall learning environment	17	89
Wider experiences and journey to HE	participant exp before arriving in Ireland, arrival and living in Ireland. Exp of primary, secondary school, previous qualification and experience of FE, work opportunities. Identified supports and trauma experienced.	20	161
Work opportunities	Ref to work opportunities for BME students in social care or wider	18	70

Codebook Phase 4:

Developing and reviewing themes (coding on) involved breaking down the now reorganised categories into more refined sub-categories to better understand the meanings embedded therein and organising refined categories into 4 identified broad areas or initial themes.

Phase 4 - Developing and Reviewing Themes (coding on) 15 Categories Mapped to 4 Key Domains or Initial Themes	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Experiences of Higher Education	**Access to, participation and engagement including exp of teaching and assessment, progression and attainment. Classroom experiences and placement experiences**	**21**	**1278**
Access to HE	Journey to higher education, access routes, challenges, supports and expectations	21	142
Challenges	Ref to challenges to accessing HE	18	79
Classroom experiences	Classroom Experiences Induction and settling in Interaction with class mates- formal, informal, mature students Integration Representation Sticking together Work ethic Changing names Contribution to class	21	334
Motivations and understanding of Social Care	What were the motivating factors for the students to decide to study Social care and what was their understanding of Social Care practice	21	95
Placement	Placement Sourcing and securing placement Experiences on placement- integration, racism Cultural competency on placement	21	87

Phase 4 - Developing and Reviewing Themes (coding on) 15 Categories Mapped to 4 Key Domains or Initial Themes	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
	Language competency on placement		
	Task and role		
	Failing placement		
	Feedback and supervision		
Role models	Ref to role models and the presence of BME staff in HE	12	32
Social Care Principles enacted	How are the basic principles of social care practice that are taught in the class, experienced by Black Ethnic Minority students. These include advocacy, inclusion, anti-oppressive practice, Human rights based approach and social justice.	16	47
Teaching and learning experiences	Experiences of teaching and learning, curriculum, groupwork, relationship with lecturers, feedback and grading, assessment, plagiarism and progression	21	462
Journey to Higher Education	**The experiences of BME students in engaging in HE. Their route to Ireland, primary and secondary school experiences, Further education and previous qualifications and accessing HE. Challenges of living in Direct Provision, homeless services and moving house while juggling parenting and home responsibilities and HE**	**21**	**212**
Accommodation, living conditions and moving locations	Ref to finding accommodation, homelessness, moving to find accommodation	10	37
Juggling parenting and study	Ref to having children, parenting and trying to study and work	15	91
Route to Ireland	Ref to how the student migrated to Ireland	16	42
School experiences		10	28
Trauma	Ref to trauma experienced either in country of origin, on route to Ireland or as a refugee in Ireland	5	14

Phase 4 - Developing and Reviewing Themes (coding on) 15 Categories Mapped to 4 Key Domains or Initial Themes	Code Definitions (rules for inclusion) for Coding Consistency	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
Structural Racism, white privilege and oppression	**Wider societal experiences of Black Minority Ethnic Social care students in Ireland. How Blackness is talked about and portrayed in the media. How being Black impacts on integration, development of identity and how the students integrate their own cultural norms into their lives. Fear of being Black, experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions in the community and society. How Black lives Matter movement has impacted on perceptions of Black people by whites. White privilege, work opportunities**	**21**	**303**
How to talk about race or being Black	Ref to how difficult it can be to discuss race or colour	10	41
Identity, social bonds and integration	Ref to identity and, belonging	16	41
Racism, discrimination and microaggressions in society	Ref to the broad experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions that the participants have	19	126
Work opportunities	Ref to work opportunities for BME students in social care or wider	18	70
Supports and recommendations	**Students experiences of barriers, challenges and difficulties. Also identified supports and recommendations that they have to improve others experiences in the future**	**21**	**151**
Recommendations	Responses to question on what recommendations they would make to the institution to improve things for BME students	19	50
Supports and information		18	90
Susi grant		9	11

Codebook Phase 5:

Defining, Refining and Naming Themes involved conceptually mapping and collapsing categories into a broader thematic framework.

Phase 5 - Refining, defining, and naming themes (developing a thematic framework) 3 Major Themes Refined, Defined and Named in Phase 5 with 15 Elements Associated with the 3 Themes	Interviews Coded	Units of Meaning Coded
T.4 Individual perspectives and experiences	**21**	**1278**
T.4.1 Participant information	21	142
T.4.2 Family and relationships	18	79
T.4.3 Intersectionality	21	334
T.4.4 Religious and spiritual beliefs	21	95
T.4.5. Language competence and communication skills	21	87
T.4.6 Educational experiences	12	32
T.4.7 Motivations and expectations	16	47
T.5 Experiences and perspectives on racism discrimination and inequality	**21**	**303**
T.5.1 Terminology and racial literacy	10	41
T.5.2 Personal experiences of racism, discrimination and microaggressions	16	41
T.5.3 Impact of structural racism and discrimination	19	126
T.5.4 Structural racism and discrimination in employment	18	70
T.6 Experiences and perspectives of higher education and social care	**21**	**212**
T.6.1 Formal teaching and learning environment	10	37
T.6.2 Informal class environment	15	91
T.6.3 Placement experiences	16	42
T.6.4 Intersectional experiences and perspectives in higher education	10	28

Codebook Phase 6: Example 1

Example of process of conceptually mapping codes to categories to themes for T5 – Experiences and Perspectives on Racism
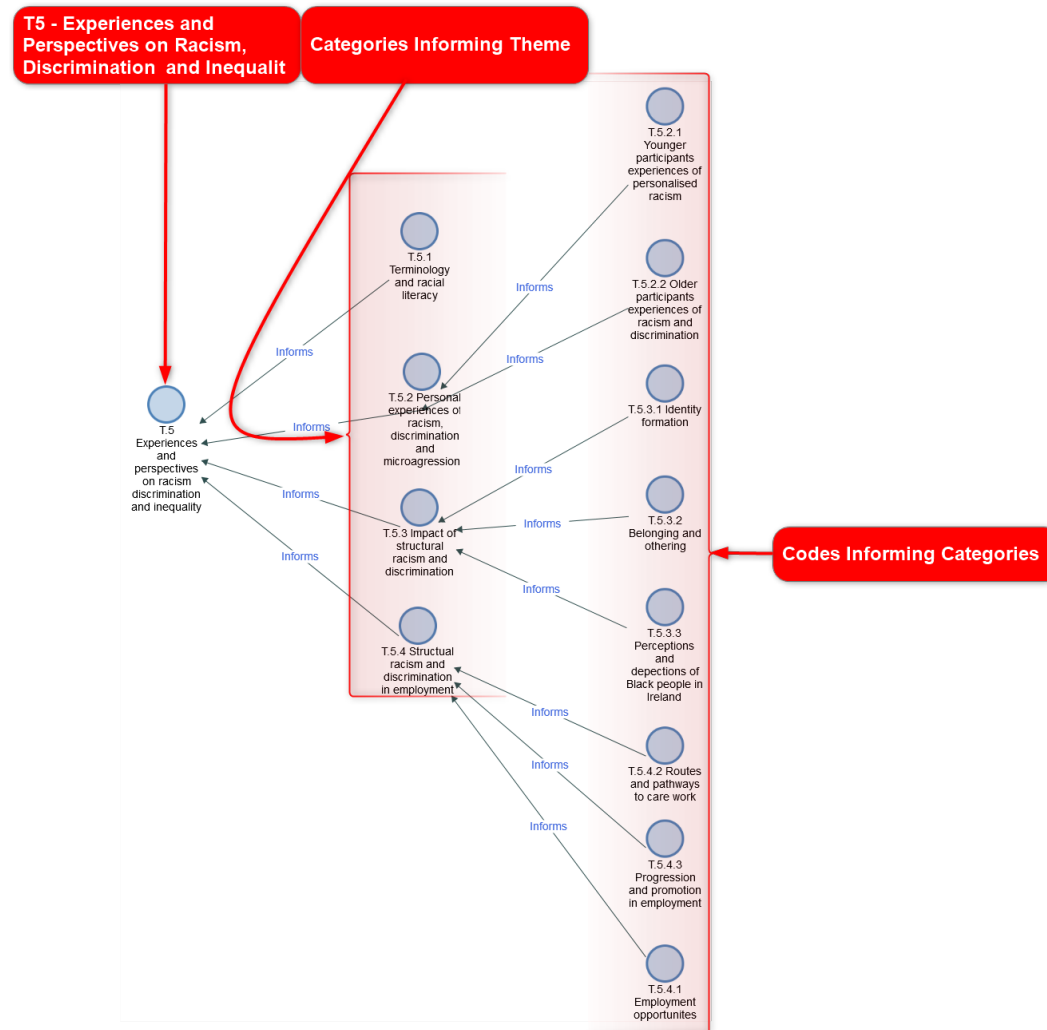
Codebook Phase 6: Example 2

Example of conceptually mapping codes, categories and themes and their relatedness to each other as a process during phase 6 analysis and write up.

Codebook Phase 6: Example 3

Analytical memos were used to conduct a systematic review of the thematic framework developed in phase 5 to analyse, report and ask questions of data. Memos were used to reduce the data from a series of coded themes to a series of documents explaining outcomes of analysis retrieval and reporting on themes. Later, memos themselves were reduced through editing out overlapping and less important content to cohere findings into a cohesive findings chapter.