

**The Experiences of British Indian Women
in Secret Romantic Relationships:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
the University of East London for the degree of
Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology**

December 2017

Abstract

There is an immense amount of research, most of it quantitative, on the topics of romantic relationships, romantic secrecy, bicultural difficulties, acculturation, and issues for individuals who are in the first or second generation of immigration. However there is a paucity of published research on the personal experiences of bicultural, specifically British Indian, people in secret romantic relationships.

This research attempts to address the gap by exploring these experiences to gain deep insights into issues for second-generation British Indian women who are in romantic relationships that they choose to keep secret from their first-generation parents. The hope is to help expand the knowledge base of counselling psychologists in this area, and to increase awareness both of the mental health of bicultural women and of the issues they might face.

For this study, the qualitative approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to interview, and analyse the transcripts of, a homogenous sample of six British Indian women. They were born in the United Kingdom and raised by parents who had emigrated from other countries. They were aged 20 to 22 and, at the time of the interviews, were all in long-term relationships kept secret from their parents, except for one participant who had ended her secret romantic relationship.

The following three superordinate themes and their subordinate themes emerged from the data:

Biculturalism

- A double life
- The culture clash
- The negotiation of personal values

Dependent Decisions

- The particular choice of a partner
- Holding on to one's virginity
- Retaining the image of a good Indian girl

Freedom

- Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date
- The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship
- The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship

The research findings indicate that the experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships are complex, and suggest limitations on the women's autonomy as they make decisions that are dependent on other people's happiness. Their psychological distress is a product of psychosocial and bicultural issues, inter-generational conflicts, intense pressure, and stressors that have an effect on their well-being and how they manage their relationships.

The research suggests that bicultural clients may be attracted to therapy to aid them through any bicultural stress or potential familial conflicts they may experience. Counselling psychologists are well placed to work with this particular client group due to their understanding of the psychological issues surrounding the group, allowing practitioners to tailor their therapeutic interventions appropriately. Moreover the research findings could be used to encourage British Indian women to be more open about their feelings regarding their hardships by raising their awareness.

Future research might include a follow-up study on how this sample of British Indian women experience their secret romantic relationship during the next few years. Furthermore a study following the experiences of British Indian men in secret romantic relationships could shed new light on this relatively hidden world. Additionally further research, in the light of this study, on the culture-clash that first-generation parents experience with their second-generation children may also be revealing.

The research outcomes illustrate the importance of providing the support that bicultural women need, as their difficulties are not always articulated openly, making them less evident to healthcare professionals. It is hoped that this contribution to research in counselling psychology offers fresh understandings and might prompt an increased awareness of issues facing clients from this culture.

Acknowledgments

I would foremost like to thank my family for their love, patience and encouragement. My father is a man of wisdom and I value his reassurance undertaking this thesis. Without my mother taking care of me, I would not have found the time for completion. Even though my brothers are distant, they are forever by my side, reminding me never to give up. And of course my sister, my angel, my confidant, the light in my life, your jubilation kept me persevering and I shall be forever grateful.

I thank my supervisors, Dr Mike Chase, Professor Rachel Tribe and Dr Haneyeh Belyani, for their advice and guidance in carrying out this challenging piece of work. I learnt how to be a competent, independent and determined researcher from you all, and I will carry this with me throughout the rest of my professional life. The lecturers on this course are my inspiration; you kept me motivated and helped me to fulfil my ambitions, and I cannot thank you enough.

I am thankful to my friends and colleagues for their understanding and compassion. I especially want to thank Sarah, without whom I would have lost all hope. You kept me believing through your support, and I will forever be indebted to you for your kind-heartedness. I also would like to thank Tabitha for her suggestions; I very much appreciate your efforts and your passion is encouraging to me.

Finally I would like to thank my husband, my life companion, my love. You have been there for me through all of your sacrifices while always keeping your serenity; you are my strength. Thank you for accepting how important this journey is for me; I know it wasn't easy for you, but I truly appreciate your holding my hand throughout this and always. This project would not even have existed if it weren't for you having had such a great impact on my life. I dedicate my thesis to you.

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List of Abbreviations

BI	British Indian
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
RR	Romantic Relationship
SRR	Secret Romantic Relationship
UK	United Kingdom
U.S.	United States

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter introduces the phenomenon of British Indian women who are engaged in secret romantic relationships, and outlines the aim, rationale and origins of this study of the phenomenon. The research will build on the evidence-based and scientific context of the counselling psychology profession. For the scientist-practitioner (see more in subchapter 1.6), definitions of significant terms are important for providing clarity to this particular study, so are covered at the start of this chapter. An overview of current literature in the field, dealt with in more depth in Chapter 2, is given here to indicate the significance of the topic and the way in which this study distinctively contributes to the research and practice of counselling psychology. The chapter ends with the statement of research questions.

1.1 Research Aim

The aim of this research is to explore the topic of secret romantic relationships (SRRs) among second-generation women of British Indian (BI) identities, and to carry out that exploration from a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective. This research seeks to investigate and understand what it is like for second-generation BI women who choose to be in a SRR. A double-hermeneutic is evoked where the women who were interviewed make sense of their world while I make sense of them making sense of their world. In this thesis SRR will refer to a heterosexual relationship that is kept secret from at least the BI woman's parents.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this research, as outlined above, was to explore BI women's lived experiences of being in a SRR. To pursue this aim, I developed a research plan with two sets of objectives. The first was to recruit a sample of BI women, and to collect data by conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with them in which I asked them about their lived experiences of this phenomenon. In setting my aims, I wanted to understand how BI women subjectively expressed, experienced and interpreted engaging in SRRs. Therefore my second set of objectives included selecting an analytic approach (I decided to carry out this research using Interpretative Phenomenological

Analysis (IPA), for reasons explained later in this thesis), setting primary and secondary research questions to derive significant and quality data, reflecting on my own experience, and through this forming sufficient self-awareness for fair and productive data analysis, and finally using this analysis to identify emerging themes. The hope was for this qualitative study to encourage an awareness of how SRRs were experienced by bicultural BI women, bringing new insights and fresh perspectives that are valuable to counselling psychology and other relevant disciplines.

1.3 Definition of British Indian

For the purposes of this study, a British person is a citizen of the UK while an Indian person refers to an inhabitant of India or a person of Indian descent (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). BIs are citizens of the UK whose ancestral roots lie in India. This includes people born in the UK who are of Indian descent, and people who are born in India who have migrated to the UK. Between 2001 and 2010, the number of Indian-born people in the UK increased in size by 43% (National Statistics, 2010). According to the 2011 UK Census, over 1.4 million Britons had Indian ethnicity, representing 2.3% of the UK's population. There is no evidence of any significant reduction in these numbers since 2011, indicating that BIs are the largest ethnic minority population in the UK (National Statistics, 2010). This study includes only BI people for whom both parents are of Indian descent, not those with parents who were born in or currently inhabit India but are not of Indian descent, nor BI people who have one Indian parent and one parent of British or other identity.

1.4 Definition of Romantic Relationship

There are many different meanings of 'romance' and 'love', as these are terms generally considered subjective to each person who experiences the conditions they describe. Romance is defined by Oxford Dictionaries (2016) as conducive to the expression of love, a person who experiences romance being one who readily demonstrates feelings of love and relates to love or to sexual relationships; however, this can be seen as a general meaning. In contrast, the definition of 'relationship' appears in Oxford Dictionaries (2016) as the way in which two or more people are connected; it can be emotional, sexual, or formed of the way in which those people behave towards each other. A romantic relationship (RR) could be defined by a combination of these two definitions, and for the purposes of this study is a heterosexual relationship involving two people. It

can be the most meaningful element of a person's life, providing a source of deep fulfilment (Psychology Today, 2016).

1.5 Definition of Secret Romantic Relationship

The nature of a SRR involves at least one member of the pair deliberately concealing from one or more people the fact that they are in a current RR (Foster & Campbell, 2005). Within this research, the term SRR is applied when concealment from the participants' parents is deliberate. Romantic partners can maintain romantic secrecy by indicating that they are romantically unattached when in the presence of others.

Romantic secrecy also exists when individuals acknowledge that they are romantically involved, but they conceal their partners' identities or the emotional depths of their RR (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993).

1.6 Research Motivation

During my training as a counselling psychologist, I did not encounter many clients of Indian descent presenting for therapy, and out of the many clients I did work with, only two of them discussed being in a SRR. Neither of these clients were BI, but I did know of many BIs who were choosing to keep their RRs a secret. I often wondered why I had not encountered more Indian people in therapy, especially those who may be struggling with bicultural expectations that may in part contribute to the decision to keep a RR a secret. Part of my interest came from the fact that I also had been involved in a SRR; while reflecting on my own experience of this, I realised that I was accustomed to keeping not only my relationship but also other mental health issues a secret. This may have been due to the lack of understanding my parents showed me towards RRs, with the result that I was never encouraged to be open about my true feelings. What was the point of discussing this in therapy when my parents' mindset would not change?

These issues consequently urged me to discover whether any research had been carried out in this area. A detailed review of current research follows in Chapter 2, but in summary I found that research existed that explored the difficulties of being bicultural, whereby a person merged the cultural attitudes and customs of two ethnic groups (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016), and research had also been carried out on the different effects of SRRs generally, but I could not find any research combining these two areas. Therefore, I was heartened to carry out research that might address this gap in order to provide new insights into the experiences of BI women in SRRs. The hope is that this

might start to raise awareness among other counselling psychologists of the complexities of this area. It could highlight the possible factors that may arise for women going through similar experiences, and increase understanding of the important issue within the BI community of the struggles that some women face.

This study centres on second-generation BI women whose parents migrated to the United Kingdom before they were born. The term ‘first-generation’ refers to the first of a generation to become a citizen in a new country while the term ‘second-generation’ refers to the children of parents who came to live in a particular country (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). My aim was to understand, explore and interpret the subjective expression by a group of second-generation BI women of the phenomenon of being in a SRR, choosing face-to-face interviews as one of the best ways to do so. My intention was to achieve a detailed understanding of their particular experiences and how these experiences impact their lives.

As a trainee counselling psychologist I consider myself to be a scientist-practitioner, gaining knowledge in this role through research as well as experience. I resonate with Strawbridge and Woolfe’s (2004) definition of scientist-practitioner from a counselling psychology perspective, as they note that it is the reflection and ‘monitoring of practice in process’ (p. 6) that guide therapy interventions and acknowledge the ‘significance of stories in human experience’ (p. 10). They maintain that empathic listening and reflecting are essential to good therapeutic practice, and define the practice of science within a therapeutic context. The following thesis reveals how I aim to listen and reflect in this way upon my participants’ stories to gain a clearer vision and deeper understanding of them.

1.7 Research Inspiration

There are many reasons why individuals may feel the need to conceal their RRs, but for BI women the reasons may involve their Indian cultural customs, which exhort abiding by the community rules of not dating before marital age and not dating someone from a different cultural background (Abraham, 2002), subculture or caste.

The range of this last prohibition is wide-ranging and complex for BI women. Subcultures have been broadly defined as social groups structured around shared interests and practices (Herzog, Mitchell & Soccio, 1999). ‘Subculture’ describes particular social groups in relation to broader social formations such as community,

society and culture (Herzog, Mitchell & Soccio, 1999). In an Indian context, these broader groups could be geographical: the Asian continent is divided into cultural sub-regions that include Central Asia, East Asia, North Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia. The Indian culture is derived from India, which is located in South Asia; in addition, some Indians have historically migrated from India to other parts of Asia. Therefore research on Asians can be deemed to include Indians. Subcultures could also be viewed in religious terms: the four major world religions found within India are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism; some of Hinduism's subcultures include Punjabi, Gujarati and Tamil, and within the caste system in the Hindu society there are four basic classes: Brahman (priest), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaisya (merchant or farmer) and Sudra (labourer) (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). Put together, these cultures, subcultures and castes represent a complex set of identities to navigate for someone wishing to abide by Indian cultural customs while dating.

There are also differences between British and Indian cultural expectations and norms concerning RRs. It may be seen as acceptable for British people to start dating in their teen years, to have sex before marriage, and to live with their partner before getting married (Morgan, Thorne & Zurbrigen, 2010). Even though this may be what some BI women want as well, it is not a usual custom in Indian culture (Netting, 2010), which therefore means that any relationship that they may enter into before marital age may not be accepted by their Indian parents.

A BI woman may choose to keep her relationship a secret to abide by the rules of her Indian culture. Primarily the target of social exclusion through her romantic secrecy may be her parents, as they would most likely abide by the community rules of their Indian culture. If the secret were disclosed, it might offend the woman's social target (Warren & Laslett, 1980) i.e. her parents, hence the reason for the non-disclosure of the RR.

This information surprised other professionals when I expressed an interest in carrying out research on this topic, as they too had not come across any research on this particular phenomenon. They found the topic interesting, particularly the possible psychological effects, and especially how BI women manage SRRs, since the professionals I spoke to had also not come across many clients with this issue. As I did

at least have personal experience of being a BI woman who had engaged in a SRR, this experience provided an important context for my research motivations.

1.8 Personal Experience

I am a second-generation BI woman who up until recently was in a SRR. My parents had an arranged marriage (see more in Chapter Two) and neither of them talked to me about having had RRs before they had married, so I assumed that their relationship was the first RR they had experienced. RRs were never openly discussed in my family; I therefore learned to lie to my parents from a young age about seeing boys as that was the only way I could keep myself and my parents happy.

As I grew older, I drew closer to my BI friends and my siblings who seemed to understand my challenges in this area. Most of my friends were BI, but when I was with the few friends I had from other cultures, I kept the impact of my SRR secret from them, as I thought they might not understand my situation. I knew that my parents would have had a hard time accepting my boyfriend because he was from a different subculture. However when I reached my mid-twenties, I desperately wanted the secret to be over: even though my boyfriend accepted my dilemma, the stress that the secret caused us led to have continual arguments, which negatively impacted our relationship.

I decided to tell my parents about my relationship, but did not expect my parents' harsh reaction when I revealed my SSR. They demanded that I break up with my boyfriend, since he did not have the means to marry me as we were both still studying at the time. This led to further arguments between my boyfriend and me, and even though there were other factors involved, we eventually broke up.

This experience, together with the experiences that others had shared with me, brought me to question whether relationships conducted as SRRs would resolve differently if the people in those relationships felt able to be honest with their parents. My own position, as a second-generation BI woman, prompted a desire to understand the many questions I had asked myself going through this experience: why are some parents of the first-generation so against their children having a boyfriend? What was so wrong about falling in love? Why was it so hard for them to understand the wants and needs of their children? My earlier questioning has motivated me to carry out this investigation, and while these issues may not all be addressed, I hope the study will nevertheless throw

some light on the experiences of BI women in SRRs. I also aim to describe and analyse my research in this thesis with an awareness of my personal motivation and the ways in which it might have helped and hindered the research process; I have included a section on reflexivity in the third chapter on methodology in order to address these issues.

1.9 Research Relevance

There has been substantial research carried out in the surrounding areas of SRRs, bicultural stress, and negative emotions and conflict in RRs. However this thesis is specific to a sample of BI women and uses a qualitative approach, with all the surrounding areas listed being incorporated.

This research will be relevant to counselling psychology, as it will aim to raise awareness of the cultural sensitivity of BI women while they are involved in a SRR. This struggle may have an impact on their mental health and perhaps on their relationship. Consideration of this struggle may increase a counselling psychologist's knowledge of the bicultural way of living for BI women who choose to be in a SRR. Their emotional states will be revealed as they express their conscious experiences of romantic secrecy, allowing counselling psychologists to be attentive to the bicultural situations that BI women may be going through. This research can be seen as the first step in a wider body of research regarding this issue.

The tendency of BIs to keep relationship issues secret might discourage BI women from accessing therapy. Therefore this research will be particularly relevant to counselling psychologists who work with couples, as BI couples may be struggling with negative emotions and conflicts due to the nature of being in a SRR, which could be associated with their bicultural identity. This research will also be relevant to sex therapists, as a lack of intimacy, and sexual problems, may be associated with bicultural obligations and the experiences of being in a SRR.

The in-depth experiences of the women that are interviewed will be explored, which hopefully will in turn provide new and current insights into, and psychological awareness of, a group of BI women's bicultural way of living with a SRR and what effect (if any) this has upon their mental health. The method of analysis will be the IPA of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), producing data on superordinate and subordinate

themes. Discussion will involve exploring the results in prior literature, methodological considerations, and clinical implications.

1.10 Research Questions

The research questions were devised using surrounding literature and with reference to research relevance as explained in subchapter 1.9.

1.10.1 Primary Research Questions

How do the BI women within this study experience their SRR?

How do the BI women within this study perceive and manage the emotions experienced in their SRR (Foster & Campbell, 2005)?

How do the BI women within this study experience any interpersonal conflicts experienced in their SRR (Wegner, Lane & Dimitri, 1994)?

1.10.2 Secondary Research Question

To what extent can experiential accounts of the BI women within this study who are in SRRs be explained by psychological theory?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature search for this study, undertaken to ensure that it is grounded in the most relevant research. Papers rooted in the broader setting of bicultural psychological health and relationships were examined by means of a systematic search of online databases such as PsycINFO, EBSCO Academic Search Complete and Google Scholar, with Google Scholar eliciting the most studies.

Studies considered most relevant were those that related to each of the subheadings below and surrounding topics; therefore keywords and search terms that directly reflected the subheading were used to identify relevant research. For example ‘BI’, ‘British’, ‘Indian’, ‘migration’, ‘Indian migration’, ‘Asian’, ‘first-generation’, ‘second-generation’ and ‘UK’ were keywords entered into the search engines to discover published research in the area of subheading 2.3 below. Studies published from the year 2000 onwards were generally favoured to keep the literature search as up to date as possible. However the research review was not limited to this date range, as selection of the most relevant studies was the most important criterion in devising the literature review.

The literature search was difficult as not many studies were directly related to the topic, which highlights a current gap in knowledge within counselling psychology. For this reason the literature review involves a critique of existing literature and empirical findings not only on the specific topic but also on related terms and fields of research. The chapter ends with the theoretical underpinnings and its justifications of the study, as well as a general overview.

2.1 British Cultural Values

A BI woman may sometimes identify herself as British, and so partly identify with British cultural values. Core British values can be seen as usually involving the rule of law in some way, as illustrated, for example, by the *Telegraph*'s editorial viewpoint in *Telegraph View* (2014). From this stance British society is most often based, in structure and values, on the idea that everyone should abide by the same rules, whatever

their wealth or status. From this position, no one should be treated differently but everyone has a right to personal freedom, free speech and freedom of expression within these parameters (Telegraph View, 2014).

Another way of expressing these characteristics is to see British culture as an individualistic culture (Sun, Horn & Merritt, 2004), at least relative to Indian culture (see subchapter 2.2). People in societies designated by such research as being individualistic have been described as being more self-centred, self-enhanced and less willing to sacrifice for their in-groups than people in societies with different behavioural and cultural norms. They are possibly less loyal and usually not as emotionally attached to in-groups (Sun, Horn & Merritt, 2004). They are sometimes not as concerned with their in-group needs, norms, interests, integrity and consequences. They tend to consider the individual self as the source of life identity, purpose and goals (Hofstede, 1991; Kagitcibasi, 1990). The concept of self in individualistic cultures has been described as an independent entity (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). A BI woman may relate to her British identity in this way by feeling part of an individualistic culture, which may affect how she thinks about her RR.

2.2 Indian Cultural Values

Hofstede (1980) identified Indian society as a collectivist culture. Collectivism can be defined as a social pattern, consisting of individuals who see themselves as a fundamental part of one or more collectives, such as family (Triandis, 1989). Connectedness, mutual deference and social interdependence are encouraged as dominant values in Indian culture, which creates people's collective identity (Tafarodi & Swann, 1996). Part of a BI woman's identity may be being Indian, which could involve relating to her collectivistic culture.

In India, family can play a vital role and is of main concern for most Indians (Mehta & Belk, 1991). This may also be true for Asian and other Indian immigrants living outside India, as researched by Mehta and Belk (1991), who found that possessions were more prestigious to the family than to the individual. In India, people can be seen to seek security and prestige through their family and it is these relationships that create their identity; familial relationships can therefore be of prime concern. There is also a

perceived role of patriarchy by which the value system is transmitted through older male members (Mehta & Belk, 1991).

One helpful model of Indian cultural values sees people in India as trying to balance the independent self and the interdependent self-concept (Banerjee, 2008). The independent self can be seen as autonomous and may be revealed through one's own thoughts and feelings. The interdependent self is perceived as connected through one's relationships to other people; one's behaviour can be governed according to the perception of the wider group's thoughts, feelings and actions (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). However in both cases individuals can seek a coherent sense of who they are (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011).

The value of group embeddedness can also be important, by which members of a group are bound by personalised relationships, while others are seen as strangers and might be distanced (Sinha & Sinha, 1990). Sinha's (1997) research found that the Hindu religion (see subchapter 1.7) could emphasise self-control and containment of impulses. A person's duty might consist of appropriate role behaviour that could include protecting in-group members and favouring them over others and, if necessary, over oneself.

Therefore adherence to the wishes and demands of other in-group members could be expected (Sinha (1997), and these might be in conflict with the wishes and demands of the individual. This suggests that if a BI woman recognises herself as Hindu, she may feel pressured to follow the demands of her wider group, which may include her parents, to maintain her sense of group embeddedness.

2.3 Indian Migration to the United Kingdom

There can be seen to be a long association between India and Britain through the East India Company in the seventeenth century and India being part of the British Empire until its independence in 1947. English is often taught in schools and universities in India, and English is widely spoken in India (Peach, 2006).

Robinson and Carey (2000) carried out a case study of the migration of Indian doctors to the UK and found that they chose to move to create a better version of themselves. Indian doctors could be seen to play an important part in the National Health Service in the post-wars years, with the rate of immigration from India to Britain being highest

during the 1960s. East African Indians further boosted immigration numbers in the early 1970s as they were expelled from Uganda and arrived in the UK (Robinson & Carey, 2000).

Migration from South Asian countries has been seen as led by men (Ansari, 2004). Male migrants moved to areas of declining industry, while women usually migrated to Britain as dependants of others from their culture; women were mostly responsible for domestic life while men were often the breadwinners. The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act transformed temporary immigrants into permanent settlers of Britain (Ansari, 2004). Men mostly responded to the Act by bringing over their wives and families to form permanent homes in the UK, with the result that the dominant flow of migrants after 1962 consisted of dependants rather than being for economic employment purposes (Ansari, 2004). It is important to understand the gender differences in these migration patterns and motivations, as they were central to the establishment of the Indian family units in the UK into which the second-generation interviewees of this study were born.

2.4 Globalisation and Acculturation

Arnett (2002) described globalisation as having an influence on psychological functioning, emphasising identity issues as the main psychological consequence as individuals develop a bicultural identity through acculturation. Bicultural identity usually involves one identity rooted in the culture of origin, with a global identity also being formed while individuals try to adapt to the emerging culture of multiculturalism (Berger & Huntington, 2002). For non-Western societies that acculturate through globalisation, their local identity is most often rooted in the ethnic traditions, norms and practices with which they were raised, while their global identity is mostly influenced by values, beliefs and institutions of Western cultural groups (Berger & Huntington, 2002). This can be especially true for those who are adapting to one of these cultural systems in the course of their education or employment (Berger & Huntington, 2002).

Acculturation has been defined as a process of cultural change that affects attitudes, orientations and behaviours as a result of migration to the host country (Gilbert & Khokhar, 2008; Hosper, Nierkens, Nicolaou & Stronks, 2007). The term could be applied to BIs adapting to their British culture, as this culture might have a dominant position over their Indian culture since they live in the UK (i.e. a British environment)

(Meadows, Vijaygopal & Dibb, 2013). The potential for conflict arises during acculturation due to the need for negotiation in order to achieve outcomes that are adaptive to both cultures (Berry, 2005).

Psychologists often examine the impact of social changes on psychological processes, social behaviours and individual experiences of immigration-based acculturation (Berry, 1990). These sorts of impacts could be experienced by a BI woman's parents if they have immigrated from other countries. Berry (1990) identified four possible categories based on acculturation attitudes: assimilation, which is identifying mostly with the receiving culture; integration, which is identifying with both cultures; separation, which is identifying mostly with the culture of origin; and marginalisation, which involves little identification with either culture. Berry's (1990) model addresses two central issues that individuals going through acculturation may have to manage. These are the extent to which they are motivated to maintain their culture of origin, and the extent to which they are motivated to engage with the receiving culture, usually characterised by the cultural values and practices of the dominant cultural group (Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond, 2008). For bicultural individuals, those in the integration category may validate and practise both their culture of origin and their receiving culture (Van De Vijver & Phalet, 2004). However, when these two cultures have norms that are at odds with each other, the result is biculturalism, which can be stressful as individuals may have to navigate their way through this, potentially provoking anxiety and depression (Rudmin, 2003).

Farver, Narang and Bhadha (2002) examined the influence on families of American-born Indian adolescents and their immigrant parents of the adolescents' acculturation, ethnic identity and psychological functioning. The adolescents and one of their parents answered questionnaires that assessed these elements as well as applying anxiety and self-esteem quantitative measures. The researchers' findings were that, when compared to other studies, parents who had a separated or marginalised acculturation style reported higher family conflict than those who had an integrated or assimilated acculturation style. Adolescents reported higher self-esteem, less anxiety, and less family conflict when there was no acculturation gap between them and their parents. Their findings suggest that parental relationships with children who experience acculturation could have a direct effect on adolescents' ethnic identity, achievement and psychological functioning. This work is directly relevant to my

study, in particular to instances of a BI woman and the relationship she has with her parents, which might, in the light of these studies, depend on the parents' acculturation style.

Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond (2008) reported that the immigrant participants in their study internalised the norms of their receiving culture for psychological adaptation. Their results showed acculturative stress to be a negative predictor of well-being, and found that the psychological impact of these kinds of stressors was especially magnified for their immigrant sample, who were at risk of experiencing clinical symptoms related to depression and anxiety. This was also true for acculturating through globalisation when the norms and practices of the local culture clashed with those of the globalising culture, or when the process of learning about this culture felt demanding (Chen, Benet-Martínez & Bond, 2008). This could suggest that BI women may experience acculturative stress if they view their British culture as clashing with their Indian culture, which could then reduce their well-being. However Chen, Benet-Martínez and Bond's (2008) study had limitations of correlational data, preventing the researchers from making definitive conclusions about direct relationships between bicultural identity and well-being. Nonetheless their work reflects that biculturalism is complex and that there are many different ways of being bicultural (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

2.5 Individualistic Culture versus Collectivistic Culture

It has been claimed that Western cultures, such as those of Western Europe, tend to be individualistic in the sense discussed above, whereas cultures found in Asia are usually collectivistic (Chiu & Hong, 2007; Heine, 2010). Spencer-Oatey (2012) defines culture as an ambiguous set of basic assumptions, values, life orientations, beliefs, policies and behavioural conventions that a group of people shares. This can influence, but does not determine, each member's behaviour and interpretations of other individuals' behaviour (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). If the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures does indeed correlate with differences between Western European and Asian cultures, BI women may experience two sets of cultural conventions as they may identify themselves as both British and Indian. They might relate to both an individualistic and a collectivistic culture.

People's behaviours and beliefs can be molded by the norms and customs that are dominant in their particular social background (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). The values in an individualistic culture and a collectivistic culture can influence how people relate to others, how they interact in their social environment and how they define themselves (Triandis, 1995). Individualistic cultures usually accentuate individual rights and encourage personal choice (Buunk, Park & Dubb, 2008). As Hagger, Rentzelas and Chatzisarantis, (2014) found, individualistic culture often promotes independence and self-expression. Individualists can be guided by their own self-determination and life choices, and look within themselves to make decisions. Therefore personal needs can be viewed as primary to group needs, as social interactions may be fostered through one's own motives rather than a sense of duty (Greenfield, 2013). BI women may relate to this notion as part of their identity, reflecting the values of an individualistic culture. These preferences may influence which decisions they want to make for themselves, guided by their own self-expression.

On the other hand, collectivistic cultures usually emphasise cohesion and in-group harmony (Buunk, Park & Duncan, 2010; Imada & Yussen, 2010). This culture usually upholds interdependence through contextualisation of group membership (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Behaviour of the interdependent individual favours the customs and principles that are set by the in-group (Lykes & Kimmelmeier, 2014). If one does not follow these customs and conduct oneself with regard to group expectations, one can risk criticism by community members (Nath & Craig, 1999). To retain the structural integrity of their in-group, collectivists usually have reverence for elders' authority, putting elders' choices before their own (Nath & Craig, 1999). Consequently people of a collectivistic culture are likely to forsake personal desires that disagree with group welfare (Le & Impett, 2013). This may illustrate a conflict that BI women experience especially when their collectivistic cultural group doesn't agree with a decision that they want to make for themselves.

Individualistic culture most often reflects people who are independent, while collectivistic culture usually reflects people who are interdependent (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The independent self can be autonomous and is usually revealed through one's own thoughts and feelings (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). The interdependent self can be connected to one's relationships with other people: behaviour may be governed by perception of the wider group's thoughts, feelings and actions (Hogg &

Vaughan, 2011). However in both cases individuals can seek a coherent sense of who they are (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011), which is possibly the case for BI women who may find it particularly hard to balance their independent self and interdependent self due to their biculturalism.

2.6 First-Generation Parents and their Second-Generation Children

The majority of older adults of Indian origin in Britain were born in foreign countries, although there is a growing second-generation of South Asians born in the UK (Lindley, Dale & Dex, 2004), shaping the world of BI women being brought up by first-generation parents. Polletta and Jasper (2001) state that outsiders to British society such as first-generation Indians may have first constructed a collective identity, but that it is up to those to whom that identity is now available, such as second-generation Indians, to decide whether to accept and follow it. This can be perceived as challenging for people of the first-generation who want to carry on certain traditions but must keep faith that their children of the second-generation will continue these. However the conflict may present itself when their BI children want to display behaviours that are not in line with their traditions.

Research on the assimilation of migrants and their offspring has revealed processes of generational change (Alba & Nee, 1997). Migrants can be prone to differ in many respects from the majority group in the country in which they reside. New migrants might be socialised with the values and expectations of their country of origin (Heath, 2014), in certain cases may not speak the language of the new country, and usually retain citizenship of their country of origin (Heath, 2014). However their children will usually have been brought up by the educational system of the country of destination, will most likely be fluent in the new language, have acquired citizenship, and have made other widespread ventures into life in the destination country (Heath, 2014).

First-generation migrants who come to live in Britain can be more oriented towards their country of origin, which has led to their being more likely to compare themselves to their non-migrant peers' experiences in their country of origin than to their peers in Britain (Heath, 2014). However the second-generation minorities may compare themselves with their peers in Britain and might assume they will be treated in similar ways (Heath, 2014). In light of Heath's (2014) research, it is possible that BI women's parents who migrated from outside the UK are more likely to want to carry on with

certain traditions and ways of living to reflect their non-migrant peers' experiences in India, and that this may include how they raise their children. By contrast, BI women's preference might be more likely to focus on being treated as their British peers are treated, creating scope for conflict between the wants and needs of BI women and their parents.

Developmental psychologists are interested in how parents influence their children's development, and one approach terms this influence 'parenting style' (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Baumrind (1971) identified authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles, and found that authoritative parents who are approving, responsive and nurturing with moderate control can greatly facilitate their child's development of social competence compared to those who adopt authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parents are usually characterised as nurturing and responsive but can have low parental control and place few demands on their children, which may not enable the children to develop self-directing abilities to achieve academic success (Diaz, 2009). Authoritarian parents can be perceived as controlling, usually requiring their children to be responsive to their demands. They evaluate the behaviour and attitudes of children using rigid sets of standards, and children are often discouraged from negotiating the family rules. These children tend to have low self-esteem (Baumrind, 1991).

However culture can be important when evaluating parenting behaviour. Colpan, Hastings, Lalace-Seguin and Moulton (2002) explained that parents from collectivistic cultures might engage in behaviours in the style of authoritarian parenting, without promoting beliefs or attitudes that are characteristic of authoritative Western parents. This possibly highlights a conflict second-generation BI women experience with their parents of the first-generation. BI women may experience their parents as authoritarian and might feel that they have to adhere to family rules that are not characteristic of Western families. This may contribute to whether they feel able to share information about their lives that contradicts the values of their parents.

Bornstein (2005) suggested that for a child to become a successful member of his or her society, the child must learn the necessary means to do so from the way in which he or she is reared. A parent's values, beliefs, and ways of socialising can be influenced by the cultural context, which may therefore influence how the parents raise their child

(Tamminen, 2006). Parent–child interaction can be consistent within a particular cultural context, but it may change substantially from one context to another, so that what might be labelled as normal in one culture could be labelled abnormal in another (Triandis, 1991; Rhee, Uleman & Lee, 1996). This may be an issue for BI women who experience two cultures whose morals and values may disagree with one another.

The values and ideals of a culture can be passed to the next generation through child-rearing practices. Therefore cultural context is seen as important to parenting research (Sprott, 1994). The direct and indirect effects of individualism and collectivism can influence parenting behaviour, with the parents intending their children to become more productive and integrated members of their culture (Holden, 1997). In collectivist countries, parents may endorse values such as helpfulness, conformity, adherence to social conventions and interdependence with family and nation (Greenfield & Suzuki, 1998). The findings of authoritarian parenting in collectivist cultural groups indicate that individuals most often suppress their own needs and consider the needs of others in their group (Grusec, Rudy & Martini, 1997).

Fulgini, Tseng and Lam (1999) and Phinney, Ong and Madden (2000) found that first-generation parents placed a greater importance on family obligation compared to their second-generation children, especially with regard to assisting and respecting their parents. As with parental authority, children’s respect for parents may be due to the emotional qualities defining familial relationships. Sung (1995) found that respect is parallel to factors such as ‘family harmony’ and ‘love and affection’, where they described parental respect in collectivistic cultures as ‘deference, courtesy, esteem, and earnest and sincere consideration’ (p. 245). In this way respect can involve an emotional component of developing harmonious and loving relationships. This model of child-parent relations could see BI women as displaying respect for their parents by withholding information that may offend the parents.

2.7 British Indian Biculturalism

Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martínez (2000) describe the term bicultural as applying to ‘people who have internalised two cultures to the extent that both cultures are alive inside of them’ (p. 710). By this definition, bicultural individuals may have a double identity whereby they can adapt their cultural identification in different contexts depending on their social and environmental cues (Devos, 2006; Pauker & Ambady,

2009). BI women may see themselves as bicultural individuals and may experience both their British and Indian culture to be alive inside of them.

Romero, Martinez and Carvajal (2007) suggested that bicultural stress was related to an increased risk of behaviours such as drug use and violence, with the possibility that individuals with bicultural identities had higher stress levels and depressive symptoms than individuals with one culture. The study showed that bicultural stress could impact aspects of people's lives such as their participation in and maintenance of RRs, which may lead to negative emotions and conflicts within their RRs.

Yet research has also found biculturalism to have a positive impact on subjective well-being (Bialystok, 1999; Tran, 1994). Some researchers argue that bicultural individuals do not necessarily experience identity conflict, in fact being involved with two cultures can be beneficial as long as the bicultural individuals do not internalise any potential conflict between the two interconnecting cultures (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Padilla, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

Research on Asian bicultural experiences of self-construal has established that bicultural individuals, to some extent, have independent and interdependent self-construal (Sui, Zhu & Chiu, 2007; Lam, 2006; Yamada & Singelis, 1999). Sui, Zhu and Chiu (2007) suggested that bicultural individuals develop more than one corresponding cultural meaning of self. BI women may develop both these self-constructs by engaging in activities that reflect being independent and interdependent.

Various studies have highlighted the complexities of being bicultural, for example Vivero and Jenkins's (1999) research reports one bicultural individual as stating:

“You start building a home in one place within one culture...but do not complete it. Then you continue to build your home within another culture...At the end, you have different pieces of home in different places. You can never put them together, because they may contradict or conflict with one another...” (p. 7).

Vadher and Barrett's (2009) grounded-theory study explored what it means to be British from the perspective of young BI adults. Many of the BI participants with both or only parents who were Indian said that their home was a constant reminder of their Indian

identity. Vadher and Barrett (2009) identified six boundaries of Britishness: racial, civic, instrumental, historical, lifestyle and multicultural. Participants used these boundaries flexibly depending on the particular context of being British for them.

Vadher and Barrett (2009) discovered that BI participants of their study switched between their two cultures when in the presence of certain friendships. For instance when they socialised with White British friends, the participants felt that they were British because of their interactions, such as drinking in a pub. On the other hand, being with friends of the same bicultural background allowed for them to feel a connection due to their shared similarities and mutual understanding of each other's family life and expectations, as they experienced the same issues.

Vadher and Barrett's (2009) chosen method of grounded theory can be seen as abductive (Deely, 1990; Rosenthal, 2004) and similar to the pragmatic approach because reasoning on experience can be relied upon to entertain all conceivable theoretical explanations for the data. One can then proceed to check these explanations empirically through further experience to pursue the most plausible theoretical explanation. However the epistemology underlying constructivist research may suit more popular conceptions of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) whereby the researcher may discover the truth within the research topic through a reality that might exist independently of any consciousness (Crotty, 1998). While Vadher and Barrett's (2009) research is important and the findings are valuable, it does not explore the personal experiences of participants to gain deeper insight into bicultural issues.

Modood et al. (1997) researched second-generation BIs using survey methods and indicated that they were more likely than first-generation BIs to identify themselves as British because they were born in Britain. Other studies found that cultural practices of BIs varied according to context (Ballard, 1994; Baumann, 1996; Ghuman, 2003), and that biculturalism could be experienced favourably when BI individuals were able to embrace both their British and Indian identities.

There is a wide breadth of research assessing bicultural identities of immigrants and evaluating their psychological adjustment and sociocultural adaptation (Schwartz, Montgomery & Briones, 2006; Van De Vijver & Phalet, 2004), but less is known about

bicultural identity issues of non-immigrants, especially those of a second-generation that socialise with other cultures.

2.8 Romantic Relationships

Scientific research has become interested in the subject of love in general, particularly within social psychology (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2002; Myers & Shurts, 2002; Neto, 2005). Some of this work focuses on the multidimensional complexity of the phenomenon of love. Early formulations, such as those proposed by Hatfield and Walster (1978) distinguished passionate love from companionate love. Passionate love may involve a short and intense relationship whereas companionate love may involve a close and enduring one (Hatfield & Walster, 1978).

An emergent feature of adolescent development is sexual and romantic interests. Adolescents may start to experience sexual gratification cravings and envision emotional union with a partner (Fisher, 2006). Same gender friendship groups can be a familiar and comfortable context in which young adolescents, particularly if heterosexual, can feel secure enough to discuss romance, sexuality, attraction and passion (Connolly & McIssac, 2009; Seiffge-Krenke, 2003). These groups may begin to intermingle into mixed-gender groups where adolescents can have the opportunity to meet potential partners and may experience RRs (Connolly & McIssac, 2009; Seiffge-Krenke, 2003).

With time, RRs can achieve a unique connection between two people which is usually characterised by affiliation and intimacy (Shulman & Scharf, 2000). However relationships can start and end frequently as partners may need to understand how to approach and resolve disagreements (Tuval-Mashiach, Walsh, Harel & Shulman, 2008). Grasping these capabilities can lead to longer-term relationships with increased stability and durability (Carver, Joyner & Udry, 2003; Shulman, Davila & Shachar-Shapira, 2011). To further solidify a RR could require the ability of individuals to negotiate self and partner needs, and the relationship can in turn become one of the most important sources of support in an individual's life (Adams, Laursen & Wilder, 2001; Connolly & McIssac, 2009). This might help explain why, for a BI woman, maintaining her relationship could be imperative to her, even if it is kept secret from her parents.

A relational status that is often observed among young people is cohabitation. In the U.S. 50% to over 60% of couples live together before marriage (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Stanley, Whitton & Markman, 2004), which may reflect an individualistic cultural standard. Stanley, Rhoades and Fincham's (2011) research reported 60% of their participants who were in couples explaining cohabitation as a way of testing their RR, by submitting it to the predicted instabilities of living together. However Axinn and Barber (1997) suggested that cohabitation might prevent rather than precede commitment to a relationship, which could lead to development of an unhealthy pattern. The vast majority of adults usually view marriage as a significant life goal (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). Some female college students in Glenn and Marquardt's (2001) study said they would like to meet their future husband during college. These studies suggest that marriage is a general goal for most as they emerge into adulthood, and that they plan and expect to get married (Carroll et al., 2007). Further research shows that young people possibly consider the educational and financial achievements of a potential partner (Manning, Giordano, Longmore & Hocevar, 2011) and how financial success might be linked to increasing romantic involvement (Sneed, Hamagami, McArdle, Cohen & Chen, 2007). These studies show a possible general consensus for young adults when choosing a romantic partner and forming a vision for the future. This general consensus may also impact how a BI woman sees her future with her romantic partner, but her biculturalism may also affect this vision.

Brunell et al. (2010) investigated the extent to which dispositional authenticity is associated with dating couples' relationship behaviours, outcomes and their personal well-being. Dispositional authenticity can be defined as the unconstrained process of a person's core self and their daily readiness (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003). This was investigated via quantitative analysis and results revealed that authenticity was significantly related to engaging in healthy relationship behaviours that in turn predicted positive relationship outcomes and greater personal well-being. These behaviours included intimacy and accommodation, which are known for higher relational quality (Brunell, Pilkington & Webster, 2007; Meeks, Hendrick & Hendrick, 1998; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster & Agnew, 1999). This may suggest that how a BI woman experiences intimacy and accommodation in her RR may impact her well-being, as well as how she feels about her relationship outcomes. Authenticity of the relationship may also be affected, since BI women could be engaging in SRRs

Brunell et al.'s (2010) study had a small sample size of 62 heterosexual couples, with the requirement of being in a relationship for at least 3 months; their mean age was 19.47 years old. This may have precluded long-term relationships, but how these are defined is subjective and may not be comparable to the present study, which is specific to participant experiences. Participants in Brunell et al.'s (2010) study completed questionnaires in three separate phases that took place approximately two weeks apart. This may have affected research results, as the way in which some of the participants felt about their partners could have changed over this time. The study was restricted to an undergraduate dating sample, which is not necessarily representative of all relationships, including highly committed relationships.

Previous research suggests that individuals who consider their RRs to be socially marginalised, including for reasons of disapproval by their social networks or society at large experience worse outcomes, such as future breakup and decreased commitment, compared to those who view their relationships as having greater social acceptance (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2007). Moreover Blair and Holmberg (2008) found that having a greater social network support for one's relationship may be linked to better physical and mental well-being.

Furthermore Lehmiller (2012) examined whether individuals who perceived disapproval of their RR also experienced worse personal health, and found that these individuals reported more symptoms of poor physical health, as well as lower self-esteem. However, this was quantitative research though with numerical measures and the sample was predominantly White young adults. It may also be difficult to make any causal inferences from the correlation data, for example individuals who feel bad about their relationship may infer that others also disapprove of it.

Holmberg and MacKenzie (2002) found that higher relationship well-being existed if the individuals' relationships were developing in the way they thought relationships typically should, and if both partners agreed on how relationships should develop. These sorts of shared expectations could be termed 'relationship scripts' identified by Baldwin (1992) as a subset of relationship schemas: cognitive structures containing information concerning key events that happen in RRs, as well as the order in which they occur (Holmberg & MacKenzie, 2002; Ginsburg, 1988). This model of

relationships, if applied to BI women, could predict potential conflict when the women do not share similar relationship scripts with their partners, especially in SRRs.

Researchers using quantitative measures have also found higher relationship well-being in couples who have similar beliefs about close relationships (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992; Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000). However, Cate and Lloyd (1992) point out that there is 'no longer a set progression of stages from first meeting to marriage' (p. 29) since the 'sexual revolution' (Holmberg & MacKenzie, 2002, p. 780). Nevertheless each individual has personal views and ideals about relationships, so variability between relationships can inevitably occur because the participants may believe that their relationship will develop in a unique way (Van Lange, Rusbult, Semin-Goossens, Goerts, & Stalpers, 1999).

Holmberg and MacKenzie (2002) recruited 30 dating couples, with a mean length in the relationship of 17.4 months and a mean age of 19.4 years, from a university in Canada, using quantitative script measures to investigate relationship scripts as significant predictors of relationship well-being. The results suggest that correspondence between an individual's own script and his or her normative relationship script tended to predict higher relationship well-being. Couples who viewed their relationships as developing in a way that conformed to their typical expectations experienced their relationships more positively than the other couples. This may contribute to an overall sense of comfort and ease in the relationship because they could feel confident of their next step in the relationship (Ashforth & Fried, 1988; Holmberg & MacKenzie, 2002). Nonetheless, correlational data does not necessarily determine Holmberg and MacKenzie's (2002) results, because of potential variables such as partner agreement.

Hogg and Vaughan (2011) define a social support network as people who know and care about an individual and who can provide backup during a time of stress. Surrounding oneself with others who care can help one cope with life's trials and tribulations (Hogg & Vaughan, 2011). Additionally, Phelan (1989) suggests that social connectedness may be important for a person's well-being, because it can provide a collective process whereby members can make sense of a specific group identity. Social connectedness has been associated with positive outcomes such as people feeling a sense of belonging, as they are cared for and feel empowered (Eisenberg & Resnick, 2006). This could probably be difficult for a BI woman to experience if her relationship

is kept secret from her social support network. On the other hand if her social support network is aware of her RR she may be able to turn to them if she experiences relational stress.

Furthermore Baxter and Widenmann (1993) suggest that when social networks such as friends and relatives know about a couple's relationship, the couple are more likely to become closer and more intimate with each other. However 'network members cannot react to a relationship unless they have knowledge of its existence and character' (p. 322). Baxter and Widenmann's (1993) study involved 101 participants from a university in California who were mostly female and had an average age of 19.9 years, with the average length of RRs being 20.8 months. Their quantitative measures using questionnaires indicate that couples may feel obligated to reveal information about their developing RR to their social networks as well as an obligation to their partner to make the relationship known to others. Couples may also want to reveal relationship information to others to build a positive relationship with them but they fear this could achieve the opposite outcome if, for any reason, they are disliked or rejected (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993). This is most likely to apply to BI women thinking about revealing their RR to their parents, which therefore may influence their choice of keeping the RR a secret from them.

2.9 Individualistic Love versus Collectivistic Love

When building a RR, individuals usually want to be with people who share the same traditions and beliefs as they do (Imahori & Cupach, 2005). This perhaps suggests that BI women may choose to be in relationships with men of a similar culture if they want to follow traditions and beliefs of their culture. This may manifest in various ways since BI women are bicultural, experiencing both individualistic and collectivistic culture.

Individuals may experience love in various ways and in different degrees across cultures (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2003; Rodríguez, Montgomery & Peláez, 2003). Powerful examples of the influence of culture in RRs are the rules and permissions regarding when, with whom and how one may fall in love (Hatfield & Rapson, 1996; Neto et al., 2000). Culture can affect how love feels, what one thinks about when one is in love, and appropriate behaviours in relationships (Landis & O'Shea, 2000). Therefore love can be seen as a socially constructed experience in regards to one's culture.

Levine, Sato, Hashimoto and Verma (1995) assessed that 49% of people in India that took part in their research would marry without being in love whereas only 4% of people in the U.S. would do so. These cross-cultural findings could be explained by the collectivism-individualism dimension (Hofstede, 2001; Triandis, 2001), but Sprecher et al.'s (1994) research suggests that the relationships between measures of collectivism-individualism and of love experiences are inconsistent. Nevertheless this may lead one to wonder whether a BI woman, being part of both cultures, would marry without love.

In collectivistic cultures, marriage is frequently viewed as a sacred custom with long-established norms (Marshall, 2008). Those who defy this ritual sometimes experience cultural sanctions (Netting, 2010). However in individualistic cultures it is usually left to the individual's discretion to choose one's own marital partner (Myers, Madathil & Tingle, 2005). This process in collectivistic cultures typically involves family members' involvement to ensure that the partner is a suitable fit within the family network (Myers, Madathil & Tingle, 2005). As some BI women are in SRRs, Myers, Madathil and Tingle's (2005) research suggests that their individualistic culture influences them to choose their own romantic partner instead of involving their parents in this decision.

The development of globalisation has progressively distorted the lines between cultures around the world (Wang, Lawler & Kan, 2010). Studies suggest that young adults who experience RRs are redefining their beliefs about love, romance and attitudes towards marriage (e.g. Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick & Larsen, 2001). However, several collectivistic cultures do not encourage romanticism for marital partner selection (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto & Verma, 1995). In such cultures, romantic beliefs are viewed separately and may be denigrated by elders if they threaten to interfere with cultural duties (Medora, Larson, Hortacsu & Dave, 2002). Children in collectivistic cultures are often taught to respect their parents, uphold family honour and follow tradition (Beilmann, Mayer, Kasearu & Realo, 2014). As they grow up they are usually encouraged to put aside their personal desire for romance and intimacy, and embrace a more pragmatic approach to relationships (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008).

People with an individualistic background on the other hand often view a RR as an elite bond between two individuals that are attracted to each other and love one another, serving their own personal needs (Moore & Leung, 2001; MacDonald & Jessica, 2006). Desirable qualities in a partner may arise from subjective preferences (Morgan, Thorne

& Zurbrigen, 2010). Individualists usually start to explore different RRs in adolescence through dating. This is often customary and also generally encouraged by parents and family members in individualistic cultures (Morgan, Thorne & Zurbrigen, 2010). Hence individualists may initiate choosing a mate themselves by considering compatibility and shared interests.

In contrast, in collectivistic cultures young adults are often expected to marry in order to satisfy cultural and familial commitments (Zhang & Kilne, 2009; Netting, 2010). Family members may customarily be involved in spouse selection (MacDonald, Marshall, Gere, Shimotomai & Lies, 2012) in which they can screen prospective marital candidates and discover a suitable partner who will be a good fit with the family (Batabyal, 2001). It has been noted that in India parental involvement in spouse selection is often high (Netting, 2010), and a practical approach to marriage is encouraged. Choice of spouse should usually be compatible with cultural and familial standards (Levine, Sato, Hashimoto & Verma, 1995). This illustrates a conflict between mate selection and marriage in an individualistic culture, and that in a collectivistic culture.

In contemporary India, however, it has been found that children are starting to voice their desire for a spouse who is individually compatible with them (Hatfield & Rapson, 2006). If this is the case, they may also seek a spouse who is culturally suitable as well as one who can meet their personal needs for connection and intimacy (Hatfield & Rapson, 2006). Nevertheless traditional criteria are still seen to be more important than choosing a personally compatible partner in collectivistic culture (Dhar, 2013). The caste system in India, for example, is still commonly applied, dictating that individuals need to be of the same caste in order to marry (Dhar, 2013). The combination of these findings suggests that people of collectivistic cultures are starting to adapt their individualistic needs in a way that seems to embrace their collectivistic group needs. Perhaps BI women live in a similar way, but may still feel the need to keep their relationship a secret from their first-generation parents.

Premarital sex is usually forbidden in Hinduism, the religion of some Indian backgrounds, and marriage can be seen as the scaffold for preserving the family structure; correspondingly, casual dating is most often considered taboo (Manohar, 2008). Indians may not be given the opportunity to develop a personal connection with

another person in this way; instead, prospective partners might be evaluated pragmatically by characteristics such as their economic and religious background (Bejanyan, Marshall & Ferenczi, 2014). On this note, Twamley's (2013) research found that Indians were disapproving of premarital love that included physical intimacy, but that 'pure love' that abided by cultural values was deemed important, especially within a marital context. BI women may be involved in casual dating, experiencing premarital love (Twamley, 2013), but this may be seen as taboo by their parents (Manohar, 2008).

Bejanyan, Marshall and Ferenczi (2014) examined young adults in America (predominantly an individualistic culture) and India (predominantly a collectivistic culture) and found that Indians in their study reported greater collectivism than Americans, and in turn held stronger romantic beliefs. The way in which this manifests in a bicultural woman could enlighten research surrounding romantic interests and beliefs. Even though Bejanyan, Marshall and Ferenczi's (2014) study shed light on some underlying cultural differences in relationship attitudes and preferences, it had limitations. The research measured romantic beliefs with quantitative measures rather than examining participants' actual experience of romantic love within relationships. They also focused on single participants whose views may change if they were in a couple.

In Indian culture, love may not be viewed as a necessity for a successful RR. Zaidi and Shuraydi (2002) found that South Asians who took part in their study experienced the highest proportion of arranged marriages because it these were seen as traditional; romantic love was seen as interference in this tradition. This may highlight a conflict for BI women who are in RRs and could be experiencing romantic love, but find that people who are part of their Indian culture view this as unnecessary.

The tradition of arranged marriage is seen as deeply imbedded in Indian religion (Fruzzetti, 1994). Indo-Aryans whose religion evolved into Hinduism believed that individuals had to marry and reproduce to preserve their patriarchal family line (Raychaudhuri, 2000). An honourable father would usually choose a husband for his prepubertal daughter, guaranteeing her premarital virginity (Fruzzetti, 1994). Sex was only allowed to occur after marriage when the bride was sent to live with her husband and his parents (Fruzzetti, 1994; Raychaudhuri, 2000; Uberoi, 1994).

Over the centuries, these customs were imbedded into Hindu sacred teachings and were seen as crucial to family stability and honour (Netting, 2010). A love marriage that is based on sexual attraction can occur in India but is often judged to be sinful, disrespectful of parents and dangerous to society (Netting, 2010). Passionate love is still counter-narrative in Indian culture but is sometimes expressed in song, painting and poetry (Orsini, 2006). This illustrates a possible complexity in Indian culture whereby passionate love is promoted (Orsini, 2006) but a love marriage that encompasses it is also seen as sinful (Netting, 2010). BI women in a SRR could be seen as believing in passionate love, which could lead to a love marriage, but the way in which their parents may feel about this could be questionable.

Netting's research (2010) found that middle-class families in the twentieth century in India adapted the tradition of arranged marriage to the realities of socioeconomic changes by delaying marrying their children until schooling was finished. Sons were usually encouraged to have a stable job while unmarried daughters were guarded closely and RRs were suppressed (Netting, 2010).

Indians born in the twentieth century in India may have migrated to the UK with these customs internalised and therefore might have raised their second-generation children expecting a similar outcome (Netting, 2010). Whereas their ancestors heard mythical love stories and their parents encountered romance in novels and films, some Indian youth today may experience love marriage as tangible for themselves (Netting, 2010). Indian cinema often reflects the happiest outcomes for partners with similar cultural and social backgrounds (Uberoi, 2006). This could lead to BI women viewing the possibility of a love marriage, but sensing that perhaps this may be more successful if their partner is of a similar sociocultural background (Netting, 2010; Uberoi, 2006). Some parents, however, who link love marriage with premarital sex, with mingling of high castes and lower castes, and with desertion of family obligations, may experience their children as denying their very being (Netting, 2010). Indian youths might counter that Indian moralities are compatible with individual choice and their understanding of human rights (Netting, 2010).

Netting (2010) interviewed 15 male and 15 female unmarried professionals, 22 to 29 years, in Gujarat, India, and found that educated youths had moved past the tradition of arranged marriage by generating hybrid goals and systems of choosing a spouse. They

hoped to gain the partners they sought by voicing this within their families. Her method of constructivist grounded theory and narrative analysis meant that her interview questions were adapted for later participants accordingly. This may have yielded inconsistent data with missing information. 26 of her 30 participants had been in RRs, suggesting a 'semi-underground system' of love marriage in India within the new generation. Three relationships had been forced apart by disapproving parents and three were struggling with parental objections, the participants admitting that they would probably separate. None of the participants believed that they could be with their chosen partner if their parents continued to disapprove. Elopement was not an option and participants stressed that children and parents needed each other (Netting, 2010). Netting's (2010) research possibly shows that Indian youth would not marry a chosen partner without the parents' support, which could also be true of how BI women think. Their SRRs could be symbolic of respect for their parents' wishes, and refraining from causing them to be disapproving, although an uncomfortable situation may present if these BI women were to want to reveal their SRRs at any point or if they experienced their SRRs negatively.

2.10 British Indian Women in Romantic Relationships

Some studies suggest that how people experience love depends on their gender (Fehr & Broughton, 2001; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002). Women in general may be more likely to experience love with a man when he is dominant (Lucas et al., 2004) and might think about love in terms of emotional commitment and security (Buss, 2000). The BI participants in this study are all women and may possibly experience love with their partners in a similar way.

It has been suggested that Indian parents can behave differently towards their sons compared with their daughters, as daughters may be particularly inhibited from showing assertive behaviour and autonomy due to some collectivistic traditions (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009). Fuligni, Tseng and Lam's (1999) quantitative study found that bicultural adolescent girls spent more time fulfilling their obligations than boys. Their study was designed to examine attitudes toward family obligations among 800 American teenagers from Filipino, Chinese, Mexican, American and European backgrounds. This research is confined to expectations of responsibilities within the home so it is possible that parental expectations between sons and daughters may differ outside of the home in areas such as educational and occupational achievements, which

bring support and honour to their families. However Fuligni, Tseng and Lam (1999) stated that their study did not provide evidence that ethnic variations in attitudes produced group differences that were meaningful in their sample of adolescent development. Their findings suggest that even within a society that emphasises adolescent autonomy and independence, as European societies do, youths from families with collectivistic traditions retain to some extent their parents' familial values. In this sense BI daughters in particular, perhaps more than BI sons, may experience a conflict in wanting to be autonomous and make independent decisions but also trying to retain their family traditions.

Neto (2007) compared the love styles of British and Indian college students, though it was not stated whether they were second-generation or bicultural. Nonetheless, Neto (2007) found that the individualistic sample of British students regarded passionate love more highly than the collectivistic sample of Indian students, who regarded companionate love more highly. It is interesting then to ask which love styles BI women might have, when their identities encompass both British and Indian.

Neto's (2007) research seems to have been written from a Western vantage point, which may have biased the findings. The study was also drawn from undergraduate college students, which is not necessarily representative of the larger world. In addition, the degree of individualism and collectivism was not directly measured but inferred from previous research. Neto (2007) used a quantitative method of questionnaires, which highlights the 'what' of the phenomenon of individualistic cultures compared to collectivistic ones. What it does not capture, however, are the complexities involved.

2.11 Secret Romantic Relationships

The concept of secrecy has been studied by social psychologists and other researchers (Kelly, 2002), but only a small amount of research has been carried out on SRRs. This evokes curiosity in the light of Kelly's (2002) observation that, among secrets, 'people most frequently report...keeping secret their desires for (or involvement in) a romantic relationship' (p. 15).

It can be extremely difficult to sustain long-term deception because it may be harmful to an individual's mental health (Lane & Wegner, 1995), and revealing secrets often encourages psychological well-being (Kelly, 2002). Larson & Chastain (1990) found

that concealing things about the self may lead to negative health effects. This suggests that secrecy in romance and RRs could have the same effects. Studies of secret relationships have found indirect evidence for the damaging influence of romantic secrecy (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006).

Baxter and Widenmann (1993) discovered that individuals were able to keep their RRs or aspects of their RRs secret from others. This may frequently be from one's parents, and less frequently from one's friends, but concern about social disapproval appears to be the strongest motivator for romantic secrecy (Baxter & Widenmann, 1993). This could apply to the BI women of this study, who have decided to keep their RR secret from their parents.

Moreover, Datzman and Gardner (2000) established frustration for the requirements of SRRs for members in interracial RRs. Their method involved 19 in-depth qualitative interviews of black-white RRs in which the partners experienced public harassment when their SRR was revealed. These participants were living in the Midwest of America. The specific method of analysis was not mentioned, but their results suggest that being in a SRR gives rise to frustration and harassment from others if it is ever revealed. Keeping SRRs secret could have positive effects, as partners could experience severe discrimination if others who disapproved were to know about the relationship. Perhaps keeping the SRR is better than being unconcealed and experiencing discrimination, which may adversely affect personal health (Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999). BI women may also think in a similar vein by which being in a SRR might be better than being in a RR that could experience discrimination.

Following a similar line of argument, Lehmiller (2009) suggested that some individuals' only option is to be in a SRR to avoid the disapproval of others. Even though the circumstances of romantic secrecy may not ideal, it could still allow them to have some of their romantic needs fulfilled (Lehmiller, 2009). In this way there may be benefits to SRRs that outweigh the costs. Lehmiller (2009) also states that SRRs will most likely always exist, as certain social and cultural norms do not permit all RRs to blossom openly.

Foster and Campbell (2005) said that their research did not find anything good about SRRs that were long-term. The beginning of romantic secrecy in a RR may increase the allure of the relationship, but the long-term effect of this was frustrating rather than fun,

and detrimental to the relationship's quality for participants who took part in their study. Foster and Campbell (2005) also said that other research on SRRs was limited and suggested that this was because romantic secrecy was not concerning to many individuals. However romantic secrecy does exist, as demonstrated by the BI women taking part in the present study, and Foster and Campbell (2005) supply other examples such as secret workplace romances. Friends and family can find themselves trapped in an entanglement of divided loyalties and deceit (Foster & Campbell, 2005), which BI women could also experience.

Foster and Campbell (2005) devised three studies involving questionnaires with undergraduate students from the University of North Carolina. Conclusions from the first study were that romantic secrecy predicted lower levels of initial relationship quality and decreased relationship quality over a two-week period. The next two studies concluded that the allure of romantic secrecy rapidly reduces during the beginning of SRRs. This was because to maintain the SRR couples needed to engage in burdensome behaviours such as meeting in secret locations. The researchers found that most of their participants were involved in SRRs because they did not want their friends and family finding out, not because it looked like fun. According to Foster and Campbell (2005) BI women, like participants from other backgrounds, could experience their SRRs as burdensome and may only be in SRRs because they do not want their parents to know about their relationship.

Members of SRRs are likely to see others sharing their RRs with their friends, but they may have to inhibit the desire to share their own experiences (Foster & Campbell, 2005). This may affect BI women, who might see their British friends sharing their RRs with their parents while they choose to keep their RR secret from parents. In addition to raising in their study the issues summarised above, Foster and Campbell (2005) discuss what could be severe romantic secrecy, involving members of SRRs needing to lie about their romantic activities and relationship status for weeks, months or years. Observing such a situation in BI women's relationships might reveal that the length of SRRs could correlate with the level of severity of romantic secrecy, but this could also be seen subjectively according to the severity with which they experience their romantic secrecy. Stigmatised relationships may be involved, whereby individuals of SRRs may experience additional frustration due to romantic secrecy being enforced by a greater social problem (Foster & Campbell, 2005).

A more recent study by Foster, Foster and Campbell (2010) supported Foster and Campbell's (2005) work. An internet-based sample of 564 individuals showed that romantic secrecy is a burden to new and old RRs. They predicted that romantic secrecy is alluring to initial relationship development but burdensome in later romantic stages. This may be because early RRs are likely to have increased levels of passionate love (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999; Grote & Frieze, 1998), which has been associated with greater levels of thought intrusion related to one's partner (Hatfield, 1988). Romantic secrecy was predicted to be more burdensome during later stages of a RR because this is when partners usually become more public (Baxter & Erbert, 1999; Surra & Hughes, 1997). However Foster, Foster and Campbell's (2010) research, in results gathered from participants in RRs who had completed an internet-based survey about their RRs, found that romantic secrecy was burdensome to RRs at any stage, as romantic secrecy correlated positively with burden and negatively with satisfaction, perceived physical attractiveness, and love.

Baxter and Erbert (1999) found that revealing a SRR to outside members is significant to the turning points of a RR. Foster, Foster and Campbell (2010) noted that romantic secrecy would disrupt these turning points. Even though their research extended understanding of romantic secrecy to look at the relationship's duration, their quantitative method of questionnaires did not elicit how or why romantic secrecy was burdensome to RRs. Foster, Foster and Campbell (2010) concluded that romantic secrecy should be researched further within the kinds of RRs that are likely to be kept secret. They noted that romantic secrecy exists in a variety of contexts, which most likely modify the connection between romantic secrecy and RR outcomes. Most importantly, romantic secrecy has been associated with applied contexts (Foster, Foster & Campbell, 2010). According to their results, Foster, Foster and Campbell (2010) suggest that RRs should significantly reduce or eradicate romantic secrecy if possible and individuals who feel unable to do this could need help to cope with its challenges. Their research showed that romantic secrecy as an individual theoretical construct is still very much underdeveloped. Furthermore Mohr and Daly (2008) suggest that research of a longitudinal nature on romantic secrecy might be more viable focused on RRs that traditionally experience and require increased romantic secrecy. These studies support the aim of the present research on the experiences of BI women in SRRs to address the limited development of the knowledge of romantic secrecy and the contexts in which this is likely to occur.

Lehmiller's (2009) quantitative study explored the potential consequences of SRRs on a partner's commitment level and personal health. Results showed that greater secrecy was associated with reduced commitment, lower self-esteem and more health symptoms. Lehmiller's (2009) study also found that romantic secrecy limited psychological closeness to between relationship partners and posed a threat to personal health arising from the secrecy creating negative effects such as fear. This study indicates that romantic secrecy, which may be experienced by some BI women, could have harmful consequences for their relationship and their health. However while this study produced generalisable results because it involved a large and diverse participant sample, definitive statements about causality cannot be made. Moreover the sample was not large enough to separate into subsamples of relationship type.

On the other hand, research conducted by Wegner, Lane and Dimitri (1994) illustrated romantic secrecy as being beneficial for RRs. Their first study showed that participants remembered their past secret romances more frequently compared to previous RRs and crushes. The participants in the second study stated having obsessive preoccupation with past SRRs. Wegner, Lane and Dimitri's (1994) third study involved an experiment in which heterosexual pairs were instructed to play secretly with each other's feet underneath a table. The participants in the pairs that were assigned to do this reported a stronger romantic attraction than the participants who did not need to keep it secret. The results of Wegner, Lane and Dimitri's (1994) study suggests that romantic secrecy increases romantic attraction through a cycle of thought suppression followed by thought intrusion. To prevent the secret from being revealed one may suppress relevant thoughts connected to the secret (Lane & Wegner, 1994), but maintaining a secret in this way may increase later intrusiveness of those thoughts (Wegner & Zanakos, 1994). This creates a vicious cycle of suppression and intrusion, which results in obsessive preoccupation. BI women in SRRs may also experience thought suppression and thought intrusion relevant to their romantic secrecy, which could increase the allure of their SRR. However these results are based on past SRRs, and on current SRRs based in a laboratory setting. The study only addressed one social-cognitive effect of romantic secrecy. It does not pertain to how partners think about their SRRs nor to any other cognitive constraints from being in a SRR.

Lehmiller's (2009) study challenged Wegner, Lane and Dimitri's (1994) notion that romantic secrecy may be exciting and beneficial for SRRs, by finding that this may not

seem to be the case for ongoing SRRs. Her work provided support for Foster and Campbell's (2005) research where romantic secrecy appears to be more aversive than anything else. However relationship duration was not a significant moderator of secrecy effects in Lehmiller's (2009) study because secrecy behaviours may increase or decrease over time for each SRR. She identified a research gap where more work is needed on the longitudinal course of SRRs to determine whether high levels of romantic secrecy or increases of romantic secrecy over time are linked to worse outcomes. The results of her research, however, suggested that SRRs may benefit from decreasing or ending the secrecy, as doing so may help to alleviate the cognitive constraints that seemingly underlie reduced commitment. It may also diminish the fear and nervousness that seem to affect partners' physical and psychological well-being (Lehmiller, 2009). This is not to say that all SRRs would necessarily benefit from being revealed, as it depends on the idiosyncratic circumstances surrounding the partners' involvement (Lehmiller, 2009).

Couples of SRRs may have limited cognitive interdependence (Agnew & Etcheverry, 2006; Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult & Langston, 1998). Cognitive interdependence is a collectivistic mental representation of the self and one's romantic partner (Lehmiller, 2009). This is a common process in most RRs, which may advocate a variety of RR behaviours (Agnew & Etcheverry, 2006). However Lehmiller (2009) suggests that those in SRRs are likely to think and act in an individualistic manner. Her reasoning was that cognitive separation between oneself and one's partner helps to prevent an accidental revelation of the SRR; and secrecy-related constraints, such as limited ability to see each other, means cognitive interdependence has less chance to develop. Therefore SRRs might limit the partners' ability to become interconnected and cognitively central to each other's lives. If this is so, BI women may not be cognitively interconnected with their partners due to their relationships being kept secret.

Furthermore couples in SRRs may have fewer opportunities to meet, and if they do, it could be in undesirable or inconvenient settings (Lehmiller, 2009). These restrictions could mean that couples of SRRs may be less likely to enjoy shared activities such as attending social events together, as well as benefitting from shared engagement in novel and exciting acts which may enhance their relationship (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna & Heyman, 2000). An exploration of how this might feel for BI women in SRRs could

enhance research on romantic secrecy. It could be that a SRR may reduce relationship satisfaction and even lower commitment (Lehmiller, 2009).

Lehmiller (2009) also said that partners in SRRs may have to pretend to be friends instead of lovers in front of others, and regulate behaviours such as kissing or holding hands. This may be the case for BI women in SRRs in particular contexts where others do not know about their RR. There would therefore seem to be cognitive constraints, physical interaction barriers, and behavioural limitations that might potentially outweigh the attraction of romantic secrecy.

2.12 Theoretical Perspectives on British Indian Women in Secret Romantic Relationships

There are many ways to view the phenomenon of BI women in SRRs. The following section outlines a number of theoretical perspectives from which this phenomenon can be understood and that could be applied to the sample of BI women taking part in this study.

2.12.1 Bicultural Identity Integration Theory

Researchers propose that the construct of bicultural identity integration could capture the variations that bicultural individuals may experience. They may view their ethnic cultural identities as compatible and integrated or perhaps the opposite of this (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martinez, Lee & Leu, 2006). The focus is usually on the subjective perceptions of managing two cultural identities when there are perceptions of conflict. This construct of bicultural identity integration has been found to be positively associated with openness to experience, and negatively associated with experiences of cultural isolation (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005). This theory suggests that BI women may constantly have to manage the potential conflict of their British and Indian identities. This may result in their conducting SRRs, due to their British culture possibly accepting their RR and their Indian culture possibly disallowing it.

2.12.2 Social Identity Theory

According to social identity theory, an individual may identify with a certain group because of emotional ties and perceived value significant to their group membership (Abrams, 1992). The salience of group identity can be reinforced as an individual gains

psychological comfort, self-enhancement, and a sense of pride through communal and communicative activities among members of the group (Abrams, 1992). Reicher (1996) applies social identity theory to collective behaviour by which group members can assume the identity provided by the group; idiosyncratic personal identity changes to shared social identity, through which individuals find themselves together for a specific purpose. From this perspective, BI women may experience a high degree of shared social identity when they engage in certain activities such as attending a cultural event. In order to experience what they may deem to be the positive aspects of their group membership, they may wish, at least outwardly, to conform to common boundaries of behaviour, as stipulated by the group. Such boundaries might include not engaging in RRs in order to conform to possible collectivistic cultural standards. With specific regard to RRs, this in turn could mean that BI women choose to give the impression that they conform to the expectations of the group, by keeping their RRs secret.

2.12.3 Social Network Theory

BI women may not experience support from their parents for their RRs due to the fact that they are kept secret from the parents. Therefore any conflicts the women may have, and what they may want for themselves, are most likely not discussed. According to social network theory, this could have an important impact on relationship harmony and success (Felmlee, 2001), which may cause a negative effect on an individual's mental health. Consequently, this may lead to possible unresolved conflicts and unsatisfying SRRs, as romantic secrecy may not allow BI women to gain support for their relationship from people in their social network, who are unaware of it.

2.12.4 Aversive Theory

The aversive theory of romantic secrecy suggests that the secrecy of the relationship may be disrupting to the couple's relationship and burdensome to a couple's mental health (Foster & Campbell, 2005; Foster, Foster & Campbell, 2010). The secrecy of the RR could mean that a couple may have to meet in secret locations or at times that are unsuitable for them. Foster and Campbell (2005) and Foster, Foster and Campbell (2010) supported this theory through their research as discussed in subchapter 2.11. From the vantage point of this theory, an aspect to consider for BI women in SRRs is the personal impact of the SRR.

2.12.5 Alluring Theory

Wegner, Lane and Dimitri (1994) proposed the alluring theory of romantic secrecy by which the secrecy increases the allure of RRs, as discussed in subchapter 2.11. This theory suggests that members of SRRs may have to suppress their thoughts regarding their RRs so as not to accidentally reveal their SRR. This method of thought suppression may facilitate thought intrusion of the RR, which may need to be suppressed again (Wegner, 1992; Lane & Wegner, 1995). This cycle of thought intrusion and thought suppression could heighten positive feelings for a romantic partner, as one partner could be constantly thinking about the other. This may suggest that romantic secrecy is exciting for BI women, as it could lead them to think positively but excessively about their partners, which may outweigh any negative effects of romantic secrecy.

2.13 The Present Study

An overview of the literature addresses the importance of exploring second-generation BIs using qualitative analysis. This is also true of SRRs, on which much research has been carried out using quantitative analysis. While some previous qualitative literature involves interviews, the importance of subjective experience was not emphasised. Looking at the results of Neto's (2007) study, for example, it could be illuminating to ask, if Indian students regard companionate love more highly than their British counterparts, what the possible reasons could be for this and how this manifests when it comes to relationships. A qualitative study looking at the "hows" and "whys" of this phenomenon in BI women is of great importance to counselling psychology because it could provide the scientist-practitioner with a glimpse into what this experience might be like.

Goodman, Patel and Leon (2010) acknowledged previous research on the lower reported incidence of mental health difficulties in BI children when compared to their White British counterparts. Their quantitative study focused on 13,868 White and 361 Indian children from England, studied using surveys. This imbalance may have skewed the results. Nevertheless, they found that there was a significantly lower prevalence of mental disorders in Indians compared to Whites living in Britain, and that there was an Indian advantage to externalising disorders, revealed through diagnostic interview measures and detailed psychometric analyses. According to Goodman, Patel and Leon's (2010) findings, the Indian mental health advantage is likely to exist and could be

specific to externalising problems, such as sharing difficulties with their collectivistic families. This was explained by the suggestion that Indian children were more likely to live in two-parent families and less likely to have academic difficulties (Goodman, Patel & Leon, 2010). However the premise of the present research is that there are significant things that BI women do not share with their families.

Even though Goodman, Patel and Leon's (2010) research could suggest that BI women are less likely to have a mental health difficulty, it may also mean that the difficulty is there but is not something that will present in therapy. For this reason, it is important to conduct research on this topic. A lower rate of prevalence within mental health services could mean that the prevalence is lower or it could mean that BI women are less likely to report psychological distress. The qualitative study presented in this thesis adds the "why" to some questions, as the sample indicates that there could be a number of BI women in SRRs. This phenomenological research looking into their experiences could provide valuable and detailed data on whether there may be an impact on the mental health of this group.

IPA of subjective experience will bring innovative and current insights to the world of counselling psychology for bicultural women in SRRs, which is a distinctive topic. The literature search summarised above did not find any study addressing the psychological effects on BI young adult women of choosing to be in SRRs, thereby highlighting this research gap. Their reasoning, experiences, understandings, thinking, emotions and decisions will be explored in the research written up below, to address the gap, reflecting the foundations of qualitative research through which individual experiences create new knowledge about particular phenomena.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter presents and justifies the method chosen for this research, the background of epistemology that leads to my own epistemological position, and the rationale for choosing IPA while evaluating other qualitative methods. An account of sampling and recruitment, the process of data collection and analysis, and a discussion of qualitative rigour, reflexivity and ethical considerations are also included in this chapter, as well as challenges encountered during the process of research.

3.1 Aim of the Research

To explore the experiences of BI women in SRRs.

3.2 Epistemology

For Guba and Lincoln (1994), ontology is philosophical theorising about the nature of reality and what we believe to be real. Epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge and how we can gain knowledge about reality, while methodology is the way we attain the knowledge about reality that we believe is possible. A paradigm can be defined as the belief system that guides an investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The aim of the phenomenology paradigm in research is usually to clarify situations lived through by people in everyday life (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). Phenomenology is seen to occupy a relativist ontological position where participants' own experiences and interpretations most often describe the phenomenon; they can therefore be viewed more as phenomenal than as direct reality (Eatough & Smith, 2008). I take the stance that there is not a direct reality; instead people have phenomena that can be described by their experiences. Thus an individual cannot not be separated from the world, as all that can be understood is seen from the vantage point of an individual's experience of the world. This paradigm could be seen to be in line with the current research's aim, as participants' own experiences and interpretations are explored to describe the phenomenon of being in a SRR. From my perspective, the role that I take in the construction of knowledge is through the process of gathering and analysing participant data, from which I interpret their experiences of their phenomenon of being a BI woman

in a SRR. This impacts the choices I make in my research in terms of gathering superordinate and subordinate themes. With respect to phenomenology, themes have been devised in terms of participants' experiences, together with my interpretations, to best describe their phenomena of being in a SRR.

Husserl's (1963) model of transcendental phenomenology assumes to depict an individual's experience through a process of phenomenological reduction. He suggested that individuals have a certain perception of their world and their objects that they take for granted. This needs to be bracketed to enable concentration on one's perception of that world:

'Putting it in brackets shuts out from the phenomenological field the world as it exists for the subject in simple absoluteness; its place, however, is taken by the world as given in consciousness (perceived, remembered, judged, thought, valued, etc.)' (Husserl, 1927: 3).

From Husserl's (1963) perspective it was thus compulsory for researchers to isolate their assumptions about the world so that their experiences were detached from their participants'. A researcher might aim to achieve this through quantitative research, in which coming into contact with participants might be limited. However Husserl's (1927) transcendental reduction has also influenced phenomenological psychology, in which the focus is mainly on experience and describing its fundamental features. Being an insider researcher, I could not completely isolate my assumptions about the world while collecting and analysing data from my participants, since for example some of my experiences might have matched theirs. I wanted to focus on participant experiences, and so total isolation could not have been possible because of the intricacy of qualitative analysis.

Conversely Heidegger (1962) asserted that researchers use their own experiences to interpret participants' experiences, which they see as an inherent aspect of being in the world, and so researchers can never remain completely detached. This position involves developing the tradition of interpretative and hermeneutical methodology into phenomenological methodology. He proposed that individuals are born into a world full of objects, relationships and language, and that additionally one's being in the world is perspectival, temporal and related to something, which is always the case. Heidegger's

(1962) contextualised phenomenology involves his idea of emphasising the lifeworld of one's existence. I agree more with Heidegger's (1962) view, which allows me to interpret participant data while acknowledging that I cannot ignore my own perceptions. I accept my world and my relationships in it at the same time as I accept my participants' world and their relationships in it. Therefore I strive to bracket my world while acknowledging that I may not succeed in keeping it completely separate. My world can never be the same as my participants' world, because of their individual experiences, but my world is the only frame of reference I have in trying to understand their world.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/2004) developed Heidegger's (1962) work by suggesting that the body is indistinguishably caught up in one's sense of self, one's lifeworld and one's relations with others. He proposed that the embodied nature of one's relationship to one's world could lead to the prevalence of the individual's positioned perspective on the world. Therefore Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggested that one's sense of self could be holistic and that individuals can be their bodies: 'The body no longer conceived as an object in the world, but as our means of communication with it' (p. 106). This can be key to IPA analysis as the lived embodied experiences of the participant's world can usually never be completely apprehended but must not be discounted. Merleau-Ponty's (1962) viewpoint is interesting in terms of subjectivity and embodiment, as the way in which I see my participants depends on my own embodiment: when I collect and analyse participant data, I might be starting from a position of difference. Even though I can empathise with my participants, I most likely cannot entirely share their experience because it comes from their own embodied position in the world. However our embodied positions may still be communicated non-verbally through our body language, and I in the course of this research, aimed to account for this during data collection and analysis, through observation and interpretation.

Gadamer (1990/1960) also followed on from Heidegger's (1962) work, emphasising that a text should be allowed to speak for itself, and that one's own preconceptions can obstruct this process. However a researcher may unavoidably have his or her own preconceptions, which could even emerge after textual interpretation. A way around this is for the researcher to be open during data collection and data analysis. Gadamer (1990/1960) suggests that interpretation focuses on the meaning of a text which could be powerfully influenced by the moment at which the researcher makes the

interpretation. In my case, this might especially have been true when I began to analyse the participant data. I could have been making interpretations during data collection, as my assumptions may not have been completely isolated, but interpretation of the transcript could have been the most important time for forming meaning. One way for me to be open was through my reflective journal (Appendix 8); another was for me to be transparent in my research and with my participants about the fact that I had also been in a SRR. This was carried out after the interviews took place, to keep the data collection focused on the participants and their stories. I may not have been able to avoid my preconceptions, but I was able to recognise them, which is most likely to be apparent in my interpretations of the transcripts.

Phenomenology argues that language conveys the richness of experience, which, if language is seen as a way of objectivizing experience, could be seen as a similar approach to the positivist view that some reality can be accurately captured through objectivity (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Hansen (2004) however suggested that language is only a simple system of symbols, and taking this view of language, it may be naive to assume that it could adequately capture the richness of subjective human experience. In addition, if constructions of reality are unique to individuals, it could be argued that it is difficult to generalise phenomenological research findings. However the aim of this research is not to generalise but to provide awareness of the experiences of BI women in SRRs. This aim is supported by the position of Smith (2004), who notes the very fine detail through which an individual can bring the researcher closer to significant aspects of a shared humanity. In this research the BI participants allowed me to try to understand the detail of being in a SRR from their perspective, supporting an idiographic approach to research. Interpretation of participant experiences was in part related to their language, but I agree with Hansen (2004) that verbal language alone is not enough to capture the abundance of experiences. Each participant's experiences nevertheless brought me nearer to being able to provide a greater awareness of the complexities of being a BI woman involved in a SRR (Smith, 2004) through my use of thorough data analysis.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) describe the 'hermeneutic circle' whereby understanding of meaning evolves from an examination of the participant's account in light of one's own experience and back again. For this research, taking such a stance was especially challenging as I was an insider researcher, so my own experiences were

always present during data collection and analysis. I did my best to overcome this through repeated analysis of each participant's data, in order to focus on the participant's experiences while taking into account my own experiences, and through making good use of my reflective journal (Appendix 8).

My phenomenological-hermeneutic epistemological position (Sharkey, 2001) is therefore well suited to this research, in that I believe each individual is embedded in a world of objects, relationships, language, culture and concerns, which is experienced personally by them but connected to their relationships to the world. As participants expressed their lived experiences of romantic secrecy during the research, I was concerned with co-constructing their phenomena using the qualitative method of IPA (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), because I was also embedded within my own world of objects, relationships, language culture and concerns. I needed to be mindful of my own experiences during this process so that my main focus was on making sense of my participants' world.

3.3 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

IPA attends to individuals' lived existential body, and how they communicate the meaning of their feelings to others (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2013). IPA was chosen for this research because it mainly aims to explore how participants make sense of their world in detail (Smith, 2004), and tries to understand the content and complexity of the meaning of participants' experiences (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). As stated by Overgaard (2004), it could be at the level of interpretation that the natural attitude of participants is understood, rather than at the level of description. IPA also emphasises how important an individual account is (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty, & Hendry, 2011).

The first philosophical root of IPA is phenomenology, which eschews the idea of an objective reality, as experience is understood through the participant. Hermeneutics is the second root, which emphasises understanding one's experience from one's own point of view (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). The last root is idiography, which is concerned with the particular, in the sense of detail and understanding how particular experiential phenomena are understood from the perspective of particular people, in a particular context (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This makes IPA the most suitable method to

address the research questions stated in subchapter 1.10 from which the experiences of BI women within this research were explored.

IPA emphasises that analysis is a dynamic process, so in the case of this research I was taking an insider's perspective (Conrad, 1987) to each participant's world by a double-hermeneutic (Smith, 2008). As the participant made sense of her world, I made sense of the participant making sense of her world, reflecting IPA's intellectual connection to hermeneutics and theories of interpretation (Packer & Addison, 1989; Smith, 2007). Ricoeur (1970) differentiates between the hermeneutics of empathy and the hermeneutics of suspicion involved in the double-hermeneutic. The approach of empathy reconstructs original experience, while suspicion uses theoretical perspectives to illuminate the phenomenon. I believe that I needed to be empathetic as well as suspicious with my participants, both while they communicated their stories and when I analysed their phenomenon of being a BI woman in a SRR. As I am already an insider researcher, I aimed to meet the required dynamism of this process while remaining reflective rather than crossing over into the personal. This was challenging as I empathised a lot with my participants, especially when they described experiences that I was familiar with. However after repeated practice of my data analysis and writing in my reflective journal, I was able to be suspicious while attending to theoretical perspectives of the participants' phenomena.

IPA usually combines an empathic hermeneutics with a questioning hermeneutics, which is consistent with its phenomenological root of trying to understand what it is like from the participant's point of view. IPA also acknowledges symbolic interactionism (Denzin, 1995) in that it concerns itself with how meanings are constructed by individuals within their personal and social world.

Furthermore IPA involves bracketing, which is a methodological device for phenomenology by which a researcher's beliefs about the investigation topic are most often put aside (Carpenter, 2007). It has been argued that bracketing can be a good way of establishing the validity of data collection and analysis (Ahern, 1999). In line with this, it is usually important for IPA researchers to acknowledge their beliefs, experiences and values so that they are better able to accurately describe and interpret participants' life experiences of the phenomena. However within the phenomenological-hermeneutic epistemological approach, Koch (1995) recognised that these personal

components of the researcher's world view cannot be completely eradicated, and that it is up to the researcher how bracketing is carried out throughout the investigation. I agree with Koch's (1995) assertion but I still strived to bracket as much as possible during, data collection and especially during data analysis, by keeping a reflective journal (Appendix 8). This provided evidence of my commitment to being as credible and rigorous as possible in regards to bracketing my assumptions during the research process. Attending research groups with peers also assisted with my bracketing, as I was able to voice my own values and share my experiences in the light of participant data. This constant reflection enabled my data collection and data analysis to have validity (Ahern, 1999).

3.4 Qualitative Methods

Grounded theory, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis were considered but rejected for this thesis, as will now be explained.

3.4.1 Grounded Theory

One purpose of grounded theory can be to create a theoretical analysis of a person's narrative that is relevant to the area of the researcher's study. Ideas that are generated may then be verified later through quantitative analysis (Smith, 2003), although Glaser and Strauss (1967) have argued that grounded theory can be justified as a competent qualitative method which can stand on its own.

Grounded theory's methods may consist of a systematic inductive, comparative and interactive approach to inquiry, with several key strategies for conducting an inquiry (Charmaz, 2006). Data collection and analysis can be integrated and streamlined by making systematic comparisons throughout the inquiry and so interacting with the data and emergent analysis. This particular research method may require comparisons and checks that could enable the researcher to shape emerging theoretical ideas about the data while keeping these ideas grounded in data. Data can be compared and remain open to all possible theoretical understandings, and tentative interpretations can be developed through coding and nascent categories. Further data can then be gathered to check and refine the categories (Wilig & Stainton-Rogers, 2013).

Grounded theory methods can in this way be abductive (Deely, 1990; Rosenthal, 2004) and may be similar to the pragmatic approach (Martin & Gynnild, 2012), as reasoning

on experience may be relied on to entertain all conceivable theoretical explanations for the data. The researcher may then proceed to check these explanations empirically through further experience to pursue the most plausible theoretical explanation. However the epistemology underlying constructivist research may suit more popular conceptions of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by which the researcher can discover the truth within the research topic from a reality that may exist independently of any consciousness (Crotty, 1998).

Nonetheless, this did not necessarily fit with my epistemological position and my concern for exploring the personal experiences of the participants, which are connected to their relationships with the world. Grounded theory may have been an appropriate method for this research as it can be used to explain participants' phenomena, but I wanted to understand participants' life experiences, for which IPA could be used. Grounded theory might also not recognise how the researcher can be significantly embedded in data construction and interpretation (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). As a result the role of the researcher in grounded theory could remain ambiguous, whereas in IPA, the role of the researcher may be highlighted with regards to hermeneutics (Howitt & Cramer, 2011) and to evoking the double-hermeneutic (Smith, 2008). Taking my role into account was especially important as an insider researcher, and IPA made more allowance for this reflexivity during data collection and analysis than grounded theory did. The philosophy of IPA gives attention to the subjective realities of participants and their interpretations, which is what I was most interested in while carrying out this research.

3.4.2 Discourse Analysis

Edwards and Potter (1992) provided the label 'discursive psychology' as a version of discourse analysis that was introduced into social psychology. The term discourse can be defined as a system of meaning that can be related to a person's interactional and wider sociocultural context as that person speaks. Building on this definition, one purpose of discourse analysis is to examine the use of language rather than its underlying psychological phenomena such as attitudes or emotions (Avdi & Georgaca, 2007).

Discourse analysis derives from the social constructionist approach that studies the construction and function of a person's language. This may also include people's

language as a form of social action, when through it they set out to achieve their interpersonal goals in different interactional contexts. In this way discourse analysis is most often concerned with examining how certain issues are constructed and varied through people's use of language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987).

Examining the effects of discourses may also be involved in discourse analysis, for example examining how people experience themselves and relate to one another. These particular discourses may then be repeated or challenge how people understand the world in terms of their culture. Consequently these discourses can then challenge people's wider culture and specific kinds of social order (Parker, 1992).

Although this research centred on the participants' SRRs and their cultural expectations, its purpose was to explore the psychological underpinnings of the experiences rather than investigating the use of language. It can be seen that discourse analysis could prioritise textual analysis and disregard other forms of discourse such as subjectivity or mental state (Willig, 2001). IPA by contrast usually takes these other areas into account, especially during data collection. Body language, silences, stuttering etc. are interesting to me as they help me further understand participants' experiences. There may also be reluctance in discourse analysis to look at the surface-level meaning of a text rather than only analysing the deeper meaning (Hakim, 2016). I believe the surface level and underlying meaning of a specific text are each as important as the other, and IPA can absorb both during data analysis. IPA can involve different layers of analysis surrounding the descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments of the transcript (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), making the approach preferable in this study over discourse analysis.

3.4.3 Narrative Analysis

Narrative psychology can examine the content, structure and purpose of the stories that people tell as they converse with each other and with themselves during social interaction. People may live in a world that is full of different stories, and through these stories, people can interpret the actions of others and themselves. In this way a person's world may be shaped through their own and other people's narratives (Camic, Rhodes & Yardley, 2003).

A person's narrative can provide a cultural plot to a sequence of events, which they may draw on to shape their own interpretation of events, and this could be what gives a person's narrative account its structure. For example, cultural stories of the creation of human life may have a narrative plot that could be determined by the sequence of its events. This approach to understanding can also be applied to everyday events, such as a person's morning routine, for which the narrative may bring a sense of particular order and specific meaning to the story. In a narrative approach to understanding, it is usually the plot that is the main concern of the narrative, as it may connect each episode together to create a comprehensible account with particular meaning to a person (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Narrative analysis can descend from the constructivist approach (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997) and most often aims to examine a person's full narrative account by observing its structure and connecting it to the broader context. This can be largely dependent on the initial theoretical formulation of the researcher to help make sense of the person's particular story (Smith, 2003).

Narrative analysis might analyse a person's life in chronological order, leading the person through events to his or her current mental state, while IPA can explore how a person experiences life (Fitzpatrick, 2017). Narrative analysis may require an objective level of analysis, but IPA can be open to the subjective nature of analysis making it sensitive to when individuals might have an exclusive perspective on their own life. Narrative analysis can measure patterns in a person's life and their accumulative experiences (Fitzpatrick, 2017). However I wanted to work within the subjectivity of the BI women taking part in this study in order to interpret how they experienced, perceived and organised their SRR, for which IPA seemed a more useful framework.

3.5 Sample of Participants

Participants were selected on a basis that granted access to the particular phenomenon of BI women in SRRs, reflecting the idiographic nature of IPA. The purposive sample of participants for whom the research questions were significant (Smith, 2008) was also as small and homogenous as possible. This sample was chosen to emphasise the idiographic nature of IPA while revealing any emerging patterns, using data analysis, in a rich and detailed context. Participants were within the age range of 18–23, which was appropriate as this is below the usual marital age of Indian women (East-West Center,

2011) and therefore the most likely time when their RRs would be kept secret. I specifically chose BI women over 18 years old, but the age range of 20-22 was what I came across during recruitment. All participants were university students of the same ethnicity, and they were all born in the UK but raised only by parents of Indian descent. The participants had at the time, or had had, a SRR that yielded a detailed examination of their individual experiences of this particular phenomenon (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

3.5.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria included adult women of a BI culture in a SRR, specifically women who were born in the UK, both of whose parents were of Indian descent, and who were at the time, or had been, in a RR that was kept secret from their parents.

Exclusion criteria included men, women who did not identify themselves as BI with both parents of Indian descent, and individuals under the age of 18. I purposely excluded adolescents and made sure recruitment only encountered BI women over 18 years old, to maintain the ethical standards of this research. I thought that focusing on adults in SRRs would facilitate the recruitment process and make it easier for female adult BIs to find a time and place to be interviewed. Personal experience had taught me the restrictions that adolescent BI girls can be placed under, so even though there might be adolescent BI girls in SRRs, I found BI adult women in SRRs to be more accessible for data collection. I did not encounter any adolescents in SRRs when forming my sample of participants.

I decided to exclude male participants from this study as my original interest for this topic was born from personal experience and I wanted to make the sample as homogenous as possible. Moreover being a BI woman with experience of a past SRR inspired me to want to research BI women in present SRRs to capture their current emotional experiences of going through such an endeavor. Women can be treated differently to men in Indian culture, leading women to be less assertive and less autonomous (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009), which also urged me to focus on women for my study. I hoped that their coming forward and being honest about their SRRs might facilitate their well-being.

The culture of being BI was an inclusion criterion both because of it related to my research motivations and my personal experiences, as I am also BI, and because it assisted with the homogeneity of the sample. BIs may try to balance their interdependent and independent selves in certain actions and activities (Sui, Zhu and Chiu, 2007). I wanted this study to highlight potential complexities of these particular bicultural experiences, which may include SRRs.

3.6 Recruitment

Brocki and Wearden (2006) researched IPA’s commitment to the idiographic method and found that the number of participants ranged from one to thirty, with numbers towards the lower end being the norm. They found that clearer articulation started to emerge for smaller sample sizes in IPA research. Following this observation, six participants were recruited for my study, which fits within the recommended sample range for professional doctorates of 4–10 interviews suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), using purposive snowball sampling. Recruitment methods included advertisement through leaflets (Appendix 4) displayed via email to students in different universities. However, my sample was yielded by the snowball effect, as each participant recommended other BI women in SRRs who were interested in taking part. My sister recommended the first participant. This method, while effective, also indicated that my participants might have had a similar outlook on life, as some of them knew each other. Participants ethnically identified themselves as BI and owned their gender as women. They were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. They each had or had had a heterosexual relationship that was kept secret from their parents. The majority of the sample had boyfriends who were of a different ethnicity to them. All of the participants were also Hindu, which was unintentional, but this helpfully increased the homogeneity of the sample.

3.6.1 Participants

Table 1

Table of Participants

	Age	Lives at	Family	Length of SRR	Subculture	Subculture of boyfriend
Bhumi	22	Home	Father,	1 year	Hindu	Hindu

			Mother, Younger brother, Grandmother		Gujarati	Tamil
Priya	20	Home	Father, Mother	7 months	Hindu Gujarati	Hindu Tamil
Manisha	21	Home	Father, Mother, Younger sister	2 years	Hindu Gujarati	Hindu Gujarati (different caste)
Kiran	20	University Halls	Father, Mother, Younger sister, Younger brother	10.5 months	Hindu Gujarati	Hindu Gujarati (different caste)
Nina	21	Home	Father, Mother, Older brother	3.5 years	Hindu Punjabi	Hindu Gujarati
Shilpa	20	University Halls	Mother, Older sister, Younger brother	2 years	Hindu Gujarati	Hindu Gujarati

Table 1 describes the details of the sample of participants within this research. All participants were in a current SRR, except for Priya, who broke up with her boyfriend just before the interview took place. This added an interesting aspect to my study as she discussed her experiences in the past tense. Even though Priya was no longer in her relationship her data could still be analysed as a phenomenon of being in a SRR.

3.6.2 Sample Implications

As part of the process of conducting this research, I made a number of decisions, from which method of recruitment to use to which gender of participants to include. My

position as an insider researcher definitely influenced my choices and I will discuss the implications of this in this section.

Purposive snowball sampling started with my knowing of a BI woman in a SRR willing to take part in my study and also willing to be interviewed twice, which provided me with a suitable pilot study to learn from. This was due to the woman, here named Bhumi, being good friends with my sister. Had this not been the case, my sample may have been chosen using opportunity sampling, for which advertising to the population may have been imperative, but as it was, this was not needed.

The snowball effect suited this study well as it provided me with a homogenous sample of participants that I could relate to, which was important due to my insider's perspective. It is possible that my being an insider to my research attracted BI women in a similar situation, as they might have felt I could truly empathise with them. The homogeneity of the sample was increased by all the women being Hindu, which may have been due to the snowball effect of the participants knowing the previous participants. According to social network theory (Felmlee, 2001), they may have chosen these friends to help them cope with the stress of being in a SRR, and they therefore also have known the friends were likely to be willing to take part in my study due to these shared experiences.

Inclusion of BI men was considered for my thesis, but my sample would not have been as homogenous and recruitment may have taken longer. There was also something unique about sampling women instead of men, as some studies suggest that how people experience love depends on their gender (Fehr & Broughton, 2001; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002). Men may have been affected differently by being in a SRR and this research would have taken a different direction. Nevertheless my sample reflected my study aims. Other samples of participants were considered for future research, as discussed in Chapter 5.

My shared experience, both of being in a past SRR and of having a similar culture to that of the sample of participants, definitely influenced the construction of each interview, especially when a participant would talk about a certain experience that I also had familiarity with. I absolutely attended more to these particular narratives than when a participant talked about an unfamiliar experience, which may have impacted the

interview, as certain experiences were discussed more than others; however my interest in each interview during data analysis remained the same. This was also the case for participants when they thought I was familiar with their experiences, as they would not expand on the topic unless I encouraged them to. As a result of this I needed to be mindful of a participant's dialogue and ask more open questions about their individual involvement of being a BI woman in a SRR.

3.7 Interview Schedule

The interview schedule (Appendix 6) was put together to explore the research questions set out in subchapter 1.10.

A pilot interview was carried out with my initial participant, Bhumi, with general questions I had thought about and developed from the research questions about her SRR (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This helped me get used to the interview process, which was a new experience, and to learn the best way to carry out the data collection for IPA so that the participants and I were comfortable with the process, and sufficient data was yielded for analysis. From this pilot, questions such as “And does that make a difference, the fact that you can't see him?” proved potentially leading or confusing for the participant, so they were removed. To ensure that a broad range of issues was covered during the interview, I asked focused questions about her situation. I then familiarised myself with the data produced from the pilot interview, which helped to create new and innovative questions to extract data with more depth, for example the question “Please tell me why you are in a SRR” was chosen to generate more detailed answers with a focus on the research questions. During the process of the pilot interview, there were points when I found it difficult to evoke the double-hermeneutic, such as when Bhumi talked about having to whisper while on the phone to her boyfriend. As this was something I had also experienced and could relate to, I assumed that Bhumi's experience would be the same as mine, but during the analysis I found that this was not the case. This helped me stay mindfully focused on participants' experiences, while acknowledging my own experiences, during the rest of the interviews. An interview schedule (Appendix 6) that was flexible and comprised of open-ended questions to guide the interviews was then completed. Bhumi's pilot interview was not included in the final analysis but a second interview, which was carried out with her, was included.

The interviews began with a general question regarding the participant's relationship, such as how the couple met, to open up a conversation. This helped to ensure that the participant provided valuable answers (Eatough & Smith, 2006) while also setting a tone of ease at the start of the interview. The questions then became more specific to the secretive nature of the relationship, such as how the participant coped with the secrecy. As I maintained my curiosity and openness about the phenomena, the participants' were allowed to express themselves freely. Idiosyncratic knowledge of the data allowed me to phrase certain questions more specifically. As an example, while talking about certain Indian cultural events, the participants sometimes initially gave no description of the event during discussion on the topic, due to my being of Indian culture and their assuming I already knew what they were referring to, so I used specific prompt questions to elicit descriptions from the participants in order to provide enriched data. During Kiran's interview, for example, I asked, "Okay and can you tell me what Garba is?" when she mentioned that it was during this cultural event that she met her boyfriend. This allowed for the data to be understood by readers of different cultures.

3.8 Data Collection

All of the participants were provided with an information leaflet (Appendix 4) in order for them to decide if they wanted to take part. The research aim was reiterated in a text message, along with the requirements of participation, and details on confidentiality and their right to withdraw. Once they were happy to proceed, a consent form was emailed to them (Appendix 5) and a time was arranged to meet for their interview.

Each interview was one-to-one and lasted half an hour. The interviews were carried out in a private, comfortable, familiar and convenient environment for each of the participants. Locations included a library, a university room, and the house of a friend of one of the participants. Each of these areas had enough privacy for the interview to take place in confidence between the participant and myself. My supervisor and family members knew of my whereabouts to ensure my safety during data collection.

The main aim of data collection through interviews in phenomenological research is to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of everyday experiences (Munhall, 2007). It has been shown that the manner in which questions are asked during the interview affects the way participants tell their stories, which may limit potential new data being revealed and may also reduce the richness of the data (Chan, Fung & Chien, 2013).

Consequently the interviews for this study were semi-structured, and involved open-ended questions which were developed in light of the research topic (Appendix 6) (Morse & Richards, 2002). The interviews were guided by the interview schedule instead of being dictated by it, so that I was able to follow the cues of the participants (Ray, 1994) and probe areas of interest that arose from the participants' interests, concerns and beliefs (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

I decided to use semi-structured interviews because the interview schedule provided me with a clear set of instructions on which areas were to be covered to elicit reliable and comparable qualitative data. I was also able to devise the interview schedule ahead of the interviews to allow me to be prepared for carrying out the interview. According to Bernard (1988) semi-structured interviews are best used when you only interview each participant once, which was for the most part the case in my study. The inclusion of open-ended questions, although these may have strayed from the interview schedule, nevertheless provided the opportunity for establishing new ways of viewing and understanding the phenomena of BI women in SRRs. It also allowed the participants freedom to describe their experiences and express their views in their own terms.

I actively listened (Willig, 2008) to each participant's experiences and carefully monitored participants' comfort levels, for example by noticing stuttering, diverted topic area or averted eye contact, and adapting to these signals so that the participants did not feel forced to talk about any parts of their relationships that they did not wish to discuss. The participants' body language was often mirrored, which I hoped would provide a way to bond and to build understanding with them (Psychologia, 2017). So for example I usually mirrored the participant's facial expressions such as smiling or laughter, and spoke at a similar pace, to begin to initiate mutual trust and connection.

The interviews were recorded on a dictaphone with the permission of the participants. This allowed for me to transcribe the interviews. Each participant was offered debriefing information (Appendix 7) that included several options for people they could contact if they had any concerns, questions, or if they needed additional support.

3.9 Data Analysis

As previously discussed, the data was analysed using Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) IPA. I listened to the data while reading and rereading each transcript to ensure

accurate transcription as well as to allow me to immerse myself in the data to aid in-depth analysis. Audible non-verbal aspects of the interview were included in the transcripts, such as pauses, sighs and laughter, to reflect the interview as closely as possible (Willig, 2008).

I made notes of initial thoughts in pencil (Appendix 9) on the first transcript and then used different coloured ink for descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments in each transcript (Appendix 10). Descriptive comments were focused on describing the content of what the participant said, linguistic comments focused on exploring the participant's specific use of language and conceptual comments focused on engaging with the data at a more interrogative and conceptual level (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). As an insider researcher I had to be mindful of the danger of analysing participant experiences in terms of my own experiences to the extent that the voices of my participants could not be heard, and I did attend to certain comments more than others because of assumed knowledge. I minimised this by reflecting on my presumptions in my reflective journal (Appendix 8), and also by acknowledging that it may not be possible to eliminate my knowledge and personal experiences entirely from my data analysis.

The whole transcript was worked on with descriptive comments, and I then went back and examined the whole transcript with a linguistic focus. The entire transcript was then annotated with conceptual comments. This allowed the data to grow substantially and I was then able to make note of major themes, working initially from what was said in Bhumi's transcript, that reflected my understanding of her social world. My being an insider researcher was especially important during the process of deciding what the major themes of my analysis were. I chose themes that I thought contributed to new knowledge, especially ones I had not come across before, in order to try to make a contribution to the world of counselling psychology research. The double-hermeneutic was often evoked here when I respected the data brought specifically by my participants, which evolved into superordinate and subordinate themes. Smith (2008) suggests that there is no prescriptive methodology to IPA, and my adaptation as described was the preferred and personal way of analysing the data.

The themes were titled in black ink (Appendix 10), and then themes that grouped together to form superordinate themes were identified (Appendix 12). This was done by examining the major themes and looking for connections between them (Appendix 11).

Similar themes were listed together and given an inclusive title. The superordinate and subordinate themes were put into a systematic table, which was ordered in terms of a theme's overall importance in accordance with the research questions and what Bhumi had said in the pilot interview. The organisation of themes started with the most important, subordinate theme (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Data analysis of each participant interview was completed before moving onto the next. In accordance with the idiographic-nomothetic nature of IPA, I considered where the themes were similar across all of the participants and where they were exclusive to a particular participant. This depicted the variation across the cases. The process of choosing the themes was a lengthy one in accordance with the literature review and research questions, but a final table was eventually created that showed the concluding thematic structure of the data analysis (Table 2, page 67).

3.10 Qualitative Rigour

Qualitative rigour can be critical to good quality research. Willig (2008) points out that research methods are less useful as recipes for research than as ways of approaching questions, and that the value of our research could depend on the skill with which we manage to match our methods to our questions in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. Since qualitative research in particular has few standardised methods, the quality of research depends less on the research methods used than on how those methods have been demonstrated for rigour. Reflexivity may also be an imperative part of ensuring rigour, so it is discussed at relevant points throughout this thesis.

Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon (2003) identify four possible criteria for assessing qualitative rigour: research as contributory, as defensible in design, as rigorous in conduct, and as credible in claim. I chose these criteria for my study because the research on which their framework was developed involved a widespread review of literature on qualitative research methods with good standards (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis & Dillon, 2003). I felt that these fit well with the qualitative method of IPA characterised by my epistemological position of a phenomenological hermeneutic, which aims to respect the phenomenon of each participant's story during data collection and analysis. My qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences of SRRs from their perspectives and histories.

3.10.1 Research as Contributory

The research is based on a topic in a new area of study; it is perhaps the first of this kind within the field of counselling psychology. Previous research, as illustrated in the literature review, has summarised key issues in bicultural stances and in secret relationships, but not in these two topics combined. I have tried to conceptualise the findings in a way that offers new insights in counselling psychology, and alternative ways for psychologists to think about BI women in SRRs and the struggles that they may face. My research is intended to contribute to the awareness of bicultural sensitivity of BI women who may be experiencing SRRs, their possible endeavours, and how these might impact their well-being. This research may contribute to a counselling psychologist's knowledge of how BI women maintain their SRRs and live with romantic secrecy. My research aims to be contributory more widely, by advancing broader knowledge and understanding of biculturalism and how counselling psychologists can develop their practice when working with this particular client group. I hope that my study will make a difference to the counselling psychology profession by uniquely combining bicultural experiences and SRRs in one piece of qualitative research.

3.10.2 Defensible in Design

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of a group of BI women in SRRs. In order to achieve the study aim, it was important to identify an approach with an idiographic focus. The research strategy of IPA could be seen as appropriate and designed in a way that met the aim of the research to explore how BI women made sense of their SRRs, while I made sense of them making sense of their experiences. My epistemological position meant that as the researcher, I viewed myself as a key part of the process of discovery, and that meaning was co-created between the participant and myself. I aimed to be aware of participants' consciousness when I tried to interpret their sense of embodiment, existence, thoughts, surroundings and feelings. On reflecting on the different research methods, I identified that IPA was the most appropriate method because of its roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography. The method also addressed the research questions of how the participants perceived and managed their experiences of being bicultural and in SRRs. IPA provided an evaluation of my participant accounts during detailed data analysis, capturing rich and complex data that could be presented in a readable format.

I prepared for thorough data collection and data analysis by attending trainee events designed for teaching students about IPA. I also took part in peer IPA groups where we discussed our findings with each other and talked about interpretations. Meetings with my supervisors also facilitated me in the process of making my design defensible: we would go through each interview I had carried out with my participants, and discuss how I could make improvements for the next one in order to facilitate more meticulous data analysis. This included trying to manage participant stories to encourage participants to talk about their biculturalism as well as their SRR, rather than focusing on one more than the other, so that my research questions could be fully addressed.

3.10.3 Rigorous in Conduct

Due in part to appropriate design of the IPA, this piece of research appears to have been effective in accomplishing what it set out to achieve. The participants were treated with respect and were chosen in a manner that was consistent with the ideals laid out by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). The sample was selected based on potential participants' self-classification of their nationality, gender, and whether or not they were in a SRR. Data collection took place in a quiet area that was suitable for participants and where the interview could remain confidential and I could be transparent. In line with the usual requirements of IPA, the sample was homogenous and the audio recordings of the interviews gave access to accurate transcription. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews to evoke honest data that was elicited encouragingly from the participants. I took notice of embodiment by mirroring body language to initiate trust and understanding with each of my participants. The dictaphone recordings allowed for the data to be listened to several times while I was compiling each transcript. In this way I became engrossed in my data in order to convey good data analysis. The use of the transcripts was illustrated by the method of translucent data analysis by which I immersed myself in the data through descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments, and then set out to achieve themes that were similar across all the cases. Working through different types of comments grew the data significantly, leading to an exhaustive analysis. Data analysis was repeated several times to achieve the required dynamism of the double-hermeneutic, and I tried to bracket my assumptions as much as possible. This may differ from other studies which are quantitative or qualitative in design but may not have been so rigorous in conduct regarding biculturalism and SRRs.

3.10.4 Credible in Claim

My research aims to offer well-founded and plausible interpretations about BI women in SRRs through evidence of my data collection and analysis. Each transcript was read through with my supervisor, when we discussed and clarified what the participants meant during their interviews. Good supervision meant that I could take ownership of my interpretations after some deliberation with someone more experienced, which was appropriate as ultimately it was I who had carried out this research. This may differ from other studies in which more than one researcher takes claim of the study. There are clear and conceptual links between the analytic commentary of quotes and the themes as presented in the next chapter. Each theme is discussed with significant quotes from the original data, followed by the interpretations that are clearly linked to the research questions. This structure has been followed to guide readers through the participant stories using a clearly constructed thematic account. This is intended to help the research be credible in claim, as it begins to offer plausible arguments about the participants' stories in relation to the research aim. The conclusions are supported by the quotes and the interpretations provided, and have coherent logic in terms of exploring particular experiences.

3.11 Reflexivity

The importance of reflexivity derives from the realisation that an authentic examination of the values, beliefs and interests of the researcher may affect his or her investigation (Primeau, 2003). Identifying these areas will help to minimise influence through the process of bracketing (Ahern, 1999).

My research interest originated from personal experiences of being a BI woman in a past SRR. The nature of the secrecy negatively impacted on my RR, conducted without the support of my parents. Carrying out research in this area might assist in opening up the possibility of BI women coming forward to discuss their experiences in therapy, and it gives participants a chance to talk about the stresses of being in a SRR. This includes how they managed and coped with their SRRs given different possible support mechanisms.

IPA allows the description of the experiences of the participant sample to be as effective as possible, and to try to make sense of participants' experiences (Howitt & Cramer, 2011). Using semi-structured interviews, I attempted to interpret the experiential

accounts of the participant sample. However, my own conceptions and ideas contributed to my understanding of the participants' individual worlds. Because of this, I could never completely know the participants' inner and personal world, no matter how much I empathised with them. Moreover instead of acting with straightforward empathy to the participants, I was adding to their interpretation and questioning that interpretation in various ways.

My conceptions and personal experience may also have impacted on data collection, as countertransference (Waska, 2008) can occur while interviewing participants. This can be positive or negative, so it was necessary to be transparent and to reflect upon my own background. I am a BI woman in my late twenties and until recently I was in a SRR that began when I was a teenager. I was faced with the struggles of coping with hiding my RR from my parents, while maintaining my relationships with both my boyfriend and my parents. I also found it difficult to cope with my British culture as well as my Indian culture since expectations of each were quite different to me. My siblings and my friends helped me through these difficulties and with the secrecy of my relationship, as they were aware of these cultural expectations even if they were not necessarily going through the conflicts themselves. In this way the data collection process was likely to have been assisted by the participants feeling more comfortable sharing their personal experiences with me, as they may have assumed that I was aware of or may have also had similar experiences.

Reflexivity was especially important throughout this research because of my personal relationship with the thesis topic, so a reflective journal was maintained (Appendix 8) where I noted down my own thoughts, feelings and perceptions regarding the participants and their data (Willig, 2008). This journal was inaccessible to anyone but myself and it allowed me to re-examine my insider position when issues were raised that might have affected research validity. This process was a cathartic experience for me as it was a good outlet for any of my negative experiences or negative memories that may have been triggered during data collection and analysis. My reflective journal also assisted with bracketing and making decisions during this phenomenological investigation of BI women in SRRs (Glenn, Mitchinson & Poole, 2004).

Due to my personal experiences I inadvertently was expecting similar experiences from my participants, but I was not looking for particular themes from my analysis as these

were drawn specifically from participant experiences rather than my own. The participants did not know about my own experience of being in a past SRR before or during their interviews, so the impact of this remained minimal during data collection.

3.12 Ethics

Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Psychology at the University of East London prior to participant recruitment and data collection (Appendix 1 & 2).

3.12.1 Informed Consent

All of the participants received full information about the research, its aim, and what was required from their participation, through an invitation letter (Appendix 3), an information leaflet (Appendix 4) and text messages. This was a convenient form of communication as every participant had a mobile phone. Signed informed consent (Appendix 5) from all of the participants was obtained before their interviews took place. The rights to confidentiality and to withdraw were verbally highlighted before and after each interview. This was not much of a challenge since the participants, who were all in university, were all and already aware of the protocols of carrying out this type of research.

3.12.2 Debriefing Information

Participants were provided with a debrief letter after their interviews, which included contact details of my research supervisor and contact details of additional support organisations (Appendix 7). This was important because of the possible sensitive nature of SRRs and any emotions that may have arisen for the participants, who talked about potentially distressing experiences. For these reasons the support organisations mentioned were well thought through, especially with regards to cultural importance. The well-being of the participants was taken seriously and treated with great importance throughout data collection. I constantly assessed the comfort level of my participants through observation of their body language throughout their interviews and went at a pace that suited them.

3.12.3 Confidentiality

There was a level of personal connection between the first participant and me, as my sister had recommended her. However I did not personally know Bhumi nor was she made aware of me before I began carrying out the research. Pseudonyms were used for

all participants in order to ensure that people they knew, such as my sister, could not be identified. It was a challenge not to discuss Bhumi's interview with my sister, but she respected my professionalism in this matter, and it was Bhumi's choice whether she wanted to tell my sister - her friend - about the interview; doing so would not have violated her confidentiality on her part in my study. The importance of participant confidentiality was highlighted before data collection (Appendix 3 & 4), when informed consent took place (Appendix 5), and verbally after the interview, and all participants confirmed that they accepted and understood this. Informed consent forms which had the participants' real names on were only accessed by my supervisor and myself, so as not to breach participants' confidentiality. In light of this, participants were reassured that if we were ever to meet again, their participation in my study would not be mentioned and their relationships would only be discussed if they initiated this. Being of similar, if not the same, culture and community as my participants meant that I could have known their family or friends, which may have impacted what they chose to share with me. However the confidentiality process was devised to help them to trust that I would not reveal any information about them or their stories to anyone, enabling the participants to be as transparent as possible.

3.12.4 Pilot Interview

As this was my first time conducting a qualitative study, I decided to carry out a pilot interview with Bhumi, which unfortunately yielded leading questions. This was why Bhumi's pilot interview was not included for data analysis, as I wanted my data collection to be credible enough for genuine data analysis. Bhumi was given a second interview because I did not want to lose potential participant data that was valuable to my study. Therefore Bhumi was asked questions that the other participants were not. However, this data was only used to refine the final interview schedule as well as to get myself accustomed to the interview process. Consequently, Bhumi may have felt more comfortable being interviewed a second time for actual data collection compared to the other five participants. Bhumi may also have had an idea of what she might be asked in her second interview and could have prepared her answers or given me what she thought I was looking for. However my questions in my pilot interview were significantly different from my final interview schedule in the areas focused on, and leading questions were minimised after the pilot. As a result Bhumi yielded new information in her second interview which I found to be more beneficial for my research aims. Furthermore, I found that I became more comfortable with the interview

process as I interviewed each woman, regardless of who she was. When I analysed each interview in the same way, I did not find Bhumi's data to be more or less detailed than the rest of the participants' data, since they were all asked similar, if not the same, questions.

3.12.5 Potential Distress/Discomfort

I drew on my experience as a trainee counselling psychologist, and my role as a support worker for vulnerable children, to detect signs of any distress or discomfort that the participants showed during the interview process. I was aware that this might have been a possibility from experience of my own emotional distress of being in a SRR as a BI woman. This awareness may have impacted the participants' willingness to be as open as possible during their interviews. However discomfort was only shown by some of the participants, and that occurred when discussing their sexual relationship with their boyfriends. In these cases the interview questions were reiterated in a way dictated by their sensitive nature, as the participant's demeanour was monitored throughout the interview. Some of the data was therefore not as detailed surrounding this particular theme. However following IPA's theoretical commitment to the participant as a cognitive, linguistic, affective and physical being, and to the researcher looking at the complicated chain of connections between the participant's talk and his or her thinking and emotional state, I acknowledged that participants may struggle to express their true thoughts and feelings and that there may be many reasons for this. Therefore I also interpreted my participants' mental and emotional state as revealed by what they said (Smith, 2008), in order to aid understanding of the participants' distress or discomfort.

Chapter Four

Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of my data analysis, exploring the superordinate themes and their corresponding subordinate themes. My qualitative analysis is supported by relevant verbatim quotes from the participants, in order to present the research appropriately for the research questions and the nature of my data. The double-hermeneutic is evoked where my identified themes represent one possible construction of the findings based on my subjective interpretation. My findings are based on explicit communication (what is said) and implicit content (how it is said).

IPA of the interviews with the six BI women yielded three superordinate themes with their corresponding subordinate themes as show in the table below:

Table 2

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Biculturalism		
“...I do feel like I have a double life...”: A double life	“I’m not completely Indian...”: The culture clash	“...my parents have a really traditional perspective...”: The negotiation of personal values
Dependent Decisions		
“...it had prospects...”: The particular choice of a partner	“...I know what my limits are with a guy...”: Holding on to one’s virginity	“...I have to make sacrifices...”: Retaining the image of a good Indian girl
Freedom		
“I would see him at least every single day...”: Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date	“I think a lot has changed...talking about it now”: The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship	“When I’m ready to settle down, I will tell them...”: The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship

4.1 Superordinate Theme – Biculturalism

The participants seem to be defined but also limited by their bicultural identities. This may be true for all individuals, as one cannot experience the world from outside one's experiences, so being BI could be a help, a hindrance, or both at the same time. The participants identify themselves as BI women, but they seem to express the view that the label of their identity might control their actions and influence their values. They feel as though they are made to live out two lives: one in which their boyfriend is secret from their parents, and one in which others know about their boyfriend. Some participants explain how this decision may be a byproduct of the culture clash arising from being both individualistic and collectivistic. They therefore try to negotiate between their two cultures to incorporate their own and their parents' wishes. Three subordinate themes arose from this superordinate theme:

1. A double life
2. The culture clash
3. The negotiation of personal values

4.1.1 Subordinate Theme: "...I do feel like I have a double life...": A double life

The BI participants describe how living with both cultures resembles living two different lives: having a boyfriend in one life but hiding their boyfriend in their other life. Kiran describes how she manages her double life by dividing her time between her family as well as her boyfriend when she comes home from university:

"I wish he did have a close relationship with my parents...cause I wouldn't have to...lead this double life...I have to split my time between spending it at home with them, and going to see him..." (Kiran, L706)

Kiran would like her relationship to be part of both aspects of her life so that she doesn't feel "*split*"; she wants her double life to be converged into one, which primarily involves the medium of her relationship being accepted by her parents. Her "*wish*" goes beyond wanting one life when she longs for her parents to have "*a close relationship*" with her boyfriend. Her words indicate underlying sadness as she acknowledges her "*double life*" and realises that what she wants may not happen. Kiran seems annoyed that her precious "*time*" has to be shared between her two lives and she perhaps views this as a setback. Her one life is at "*home*" while her other life is with "*him*", illustrating

that each of her lives is dependent on her surroundings at the time. Not only does she have to “*split*” her time, she may also feel “*split*” herself.

Nina too mentioned the hardship of having this metaphorical double life:

“...I have a double life...two lives and it’s hard to maintain one let alone two lives...”
(Nina, L725)

Nina’s description suggests that she feels the pressure of having “*two lives*”, and my insider researcher’s interpretation is that her struggle to “*maintain...two lives*” may be related to her being BI, with one life representing her British culture and her other life representing her Indian culture. Perhaps referring to this as “*a double life*” indicates that the two parts must always remain separate, as the values of her British culture and the values of her Indian culture are so different, possibly illustrating an effect of biculturalism. Nina expresses how this makes her feel:

“...it angers me sometimes and it frustrates me, but then it’s just like what can I do? I don’t know how to change it so I just leave it, the situation as it is.” (Nina, L702)

Nina’s emotions of anger and frustration are born from her feeling helpless and from the inability to change her situation, and these feelings could be explained by her experiencing the consequences of being bicultural and having “*a double life*”. Perhaps she does not have the courage to try to combine her “*two lives*” as she has cemented herself in both of her cultures. If this explanation is accurate, being BI could be viewed as a hindrance to Nina’s way of living. Bhumi also reflects on this by saying “*...you’re basically stuck...*” (Bhumi, L479), illustrating how the participants may feel helpless to “*change*” their status of a double life, which could quite often mirror the situation of having two cultures.

This is something that Priya also identifies with:

“...I’m living two lives...one with him...where I can be myself...but with my parents they don’t know anything about...boyfriends and stuff, they won’t know nothing about that...I’d wish that it didn’t have to be, two separate ones, it could just be one...”
(Priya, L610)

Priya differentiates her “*two lives*”: one is with her boyfriend and the other is with her parents who do not know that her boyfriend exists. She also wishes for “*one*” life, as do the other participants, but she knows that her reality is “*two separate ones*”. It may be important to recognise that Priya says she can be herself in her life with her boyfriend, perhaps suggesting that her other life might be fake. Even though she has a relationship with her parents, she hides a significant part of her life from them so that they “*know nothing*”, which leads her to have a double life. Priya’s “*wish*” could point to her struggle with being BI.

The participants are aware of the double life that involves their SRR, but this is hidden from their parents’ knowledge, including their emotions surrounding this. Nina describes how she struggles to conceal her negative emotions when she is with her parents after arguing with her boyfriend:

“...I’d go to the toilet and cry...I can’t in front of my parents...say something which is going on...with him...I would go to my mum and ask for a hug and start crying...she’d ask me...are you stressed from Uni and I’d be like yeah...when I’m not...but I...can’t tell her that, because if I do then, that’s the end of that...” (Nina, L645)

Nina shows how hard it is having to cope with the stresses of her relationship without her parents’ support, which reflects how separate her two lives are from one another. Nina seems to yearn to be open and honest with her mum about the real reason for her tears but believes that it would be “*the end*” of her relationship if she revealed the truth. So, to maintain the concealment of her double life, Nina adds other lies to help explain her sadness to her mother, because of the perceived cost of the alternative. This possibly indicates how frustrated she feels as her double life creates an environment where she is not able to be open and honest. The concealment seems quite isolating, especially when she has to “*go to the toilet and cry*”; Nina’s real self is presented as being prohibited and she is not known by her parents in the way that she would like.

When Shilpa lived at home she noticed the effects of arguing with her boyfriend, which wasn’t quite concealed from her family:

“... I’d just be...in a bad mood...it just changed my behaviour towards my family...I’m glad...that’s sorted out...I can differentiate between...my relationship and my family now...” (Shilpa, L365)

Shilpa talks of being able to “*differentiate*” her double life, which consists of her relationship with her boyfriend and her relationship with her family. This serves as a reminder to herself to try to stop her “*bad mood*” from occurring, because these relationships cannot be seen to overlap. From Shilpa’s viewpoint, her relationships must remain separate so that her emotions can remain separate. Perhaps from the outset Shilpa appeared to succeed in this separation, and her words suggest that it does not have any impact now that she has possibly learnt the art of concealment. However, it is still not possible to conceal things from herself, and perhaps she is not being honest with herself as her words seem quite flippant for a situation that at other points seems to have a significant impact on her. She may be disguising how difficult it was for her to control and hide her emotions in front of her family. This may also be the way she copes with the severity of her double life.

4.1.2 Subordinate Theme: “I’m not completely Indian...”: The culture clash

The participants’ parents originated from other countries while the participants were born and bred in the UK and identify themselves as BI, which may result in culture clash. While the participants are all Indian by heritage, this part of their culture is far more complex than it might initially appear, as they also feel that they have to abide by the subculture they belong to, in this case Gujarati or Punjabi. Moreover, a potential culture clash is present within the participants’ relationships if they are with someone of a different subculture.

Shilpa shares how her culture clash occurs when her parents have different beliefs from her own:

“...when you’re looking for...marriage...they have to be...the same caste...they don’t have to be but...it causes problems for the family...that’s why parents are always like make sure you keep it to same caste...I don’t really believe in it...” (Shilpa, L247)

Shilpa explains that having a husband who is not of the same caste as her may cause “*problems for the family*”, which could mean that this mismatch might be difficult to

live with and possibly involve adopting traditions and values that she and her family are not used to, not aware of or even perhaps disagree with. It also may “*cause problems*” with the wider community, which could be to do with how the relationship looks to others. My insider researcher’s interpretation is that perhaps Shilpa’s British individualistic culture influences her to not “*really believe*” in having to marry someone of the same caste, as this allows her to be more adventurous in which partner she chooses for herself.

This possible explanation that Priya’s struggle with her culture clash stems from her having parents from a collectivistic background might be consistent with her saying:

“...my mum...would want to know what the society thinks... if I get married to a Tamil... I wouldn’t want anyone to talk about my mum and dad...how they haven’t taught me well...in general everyone...doesn’t marry someone that’s not in their culture.” (Priya, L501)

It seems that within the Indian culture of Priya’s parents, the collective opinion is viewed as more important than individual opinion. Priya’s mum “*would want to know what the society thinks*” of Priya’s Tamil boyfriend, perhaps her potential husband. Priya’s choice of relationship could be seen by the Indian community as a reflection on her parents, as is perhaps true for all her choices. Her culture clash concerns her relationship with her parents as well as with the wider community. It also exists between her British culture and her Indian culture, causing her to be conflicted within herself in addition to the clash caused by her choosing a boyfriend of a different subculture. It seems that her parents are somewhat bound by cultural expectations and that they would be judged for Priya’s decisions. This possibly reflects the extent to which Priya must be responsible for how her parents look to their society, which may then hinder what she really wants for herself. As a result of Priya’s choices, her parents may face ridicule, which is not something that Priya wants: “*I wouldn’t want anyone to talk about my mum and dad...how they haven’t taught me well*”; yet she still chooses to be with someone whom her parents may not accept. This perhaps shows the negotiation of a conflict with her individualistic culture: she chooses to be with someone she likes, but avoids the possible judgment of her collectivistic culture by keeping her relationship secret.

Subverting from the norm may be a risky process; however the participants do not show much fear, as they believe that they are doing the right thing in thinking about their own happiness, which they think their parents will eventually accept. This is a complex issue, and a few of the participants, such as Priya, expressed guilt about their decisions to remain in SRRs, but they also indicated that they are not willing to end their relationships solely because their parents would not be happy with them. Bhumi, for example, states this view strongly:

“... I just think that you should marry whoever you want to as long as you’re happy and they treat you right.” (Bhumi, L399)

This may show Bhumi’s and the other participants’ culture clash causing conflict within themselves, and my insider researcher’s interpretation is that their guilt may derive from their Indian collectivistic culture but their unwillingness to end their relationship may come from their British individualistic culture. Bhumi saying, *“...as long as you’re happy...”* suggests that she gives more weight to her individualistic culture as it focuses more on the individual’s happiness. This feels like a justification for the participants having SRRs and explaining themselves in a similar way to Bhumi:

“...I’ve been brought up in a western society...the people I meet on a daily basis are not all Indians...” (Bhumi, L395)

The people in Bhumi’s life *“are not all Indians”*, which is perhaps her way of rationalising her RR by implying that her individualistic culture is just as important by enabling her to make decisions for herself. She states that she has *“been brought up in a western society”*, which may give her enough reason to have a boyfriend. This is similar to the way Nina explains her decisions:

“...I’m British, Asian, person and I get influenced by the western and eastern,” (Nina, L380)

Nina’s word *“influenced”* suggests that she may blame some of her decision-making on the fact that she is bicultural. My interpretation as an insider researcher is that perhaps Nina’s opinion is that being in a SRR is not entirely her fault, and the reason that she has a boyfriend is because of her *“western”* community. This may be how Nina and the

other participants cope with their guilt of hiding a significant aspect of their life from their parents.

4.1.3 Subordinate Theme: “...my parents have a really traditional perspective...”:

The negotiation of personal values

The participants reveal that they struggle with the expectations their parents and others have of them, so they try to negotiate a combination or compromise of their parents’ values with their own. Some participants’ SSRs may serve as a distraction from pressure, for example by delaying the prospect of their getting married earlier than they might wish. This leads them to deceive their parents, boyfriends and themselves as they conceal things they don’t think would be acceptable to others. Consequently they don’t feel they can be true to themselves, their parents or sometimes their boyfriends. This may give rise to despair as well as anger for the participants, along with a feeling of desperation as illustrated by their quotes in this subordinate theme. This theme may seem to overlap with the preceding one, but there, ‘The culture clash’ explored the clash between different cultures, whereas the current subordinate theme – ‘The negotiation of personal values’ - explores how participants negotiate this clash.

The participants share a belief that Indian cultural tradition makes it difficult for them to reveal to their parents that they have a boyfriend. They may negotiate this by choosing to keep their relationship a secret, possibly because of the tradition of marriage in their Indian culture. The participants may feel a strong expectation from their parents to marry rather than have relationships, and to avoid this, they might opt to keep their RRs secret in order not to be pressured to marry their boyfriends. Manisha’s sentiments exemplify this, and the words of Bhumi, Priya and Kiran also chime with these:

“My family are...quite traditional, my mum...if I told her she’d be like OK, fine...you need to get engaged...” (Manisha, L310)

Manisha’s words of “*quite traditional*” suggests that the Indian tradition seems to be embedded in the participants’ parents as well as perhaps in herself, as the label of being “*engaged*” or married is perhaps needed for the validation of being with a man openly, as having a boyfriend being prohibited. Manisha implies that her mother would only approve of her relationship if she were “*engaged*”; however, Manisha may be focusing on the Indian tradition as a decoy. Her SRR may be her way of negotiating her values

with her parents' values, and a protection against her relationship moving faster than she may want it to, since she feels that revealing her relationship to her parents' would result in marriage being expected. Manisha's idea of her mother's reaction seems to suggest that her SRR would be accepted but only if she follows the plan that her mother wants to set out for her. Perhaps Manisha's SRR is a negotiation as a way of controlling her own life rather than her family taking control.

Bhumi feels she has to lie to her parents when going to see her boyfriend. However she also admits that the alternative to lying might be too difficult:

"...it upsets me because...I have to lie to my parents just so...I can be with him...lying to my parents is the only way..." (Bhumi, L566)

Bhumi having to "*lie*" "*upsets*" her, which possibly suggests that no matter how enjoyable it is to be with her boyfriend, she can never be in a comfortable state because of her continuous "*lying*". Bhumi would perhaps feel she would have to give up her boyfriend if she were honest with her parents, and feels upset at a situation in which they do not understand her. Part of the deception relates to the participants attempting to avoid the pressure to get married: they all express that they are not ready for this. The deceit can therefore be seen as their cry of desperation, as they want to live their lives the way they wish but feel they have to adjust in order to fit in with their parents' cultural expectations. Bhumi's deceit is the "*only way*" she can negotiate her parents' traditional views, which might be seen as characteristic of the first-generation, and this predicament could be characteristic of Bhumi herself being a second-generation BI. She goes on to say:

"...I have lied to my parents but I still feel like I'm making the right decision." (Bhumi, L788)

Bhumi may feel backed into a corner as she wants to keep her "*parents*" happy but also wants to remain in her relationship which is clearly important to her. Her saying that she is "*making the right decision*" possibly illustrates her being defiant in what she wants and putting this above what her parents may want for her. However her "*right decision*" results in a SRR which may be "*right*" for her but realistically it is likely to have some negative consequences, which perhaps Bhumi tries to mask by her negotiation.

This is similar to Shilpa's thoughts that even though she feels being in a RR is the right decision, she is aware that her parents will think differently:

"...if I tell them they'll think I'm doing the wrong thing..." (Shilpa, L152)

Shilpa seems to keep her relationship secret because revealing it would possibly suggest to her that it is "*the wrong thing*", something she does not believe or may not want to face. What "*they'll think*" may be important to the way Shilpa acts, as it seems clear that her parents' views as well as her own views matter to her. Since her views clash with her parents' views of being in a RR, she may then negotiate this by choosing to keep her RR secret from them.

Nina believes that her parents' view of life and what is necessary to be successful is different from her own view:

"...I feel they're backwards in their thinking...they want to keep it traditional...it's not like I'm going to leave my culture behind; I love my culture, but we've got to come to a...middle point..." (Nina, L378)

When Nina says that her parents are "*backwards in their thinking*", it seems that Nina is suggesting that her parents' views are not just different but also dated. She possibly thinks that her parents should acculturate to life in Britain rather than hold on to "*traditional*" norms from their land of birth. Perhaps this would make it easier for her to live the life she wants, but from her parents' perspectives they appear to believe strongly that their view is correct, as do Nina and the other participants about their own views. She expresses the opposite of what her parents may fear - "*it's not like I'm going to leave my culture behind*" - but she and the other participants must negotiate being BI women by culture within the context that their Indian parents are fighting to maintain values they have long held dear. It sounds as though Nina is trying to strike a delicate balance because she is influenced by both cultures. From what Nina and the other participants say about this, it sounds a very tiring process in which they are never able to relax because it consumes them, at least on some level. Nina wants to make decisions for herself, but her parents don't want her to make those decisions, possibly because they want to protect her from what they think is wrong.

4.2 Superordinate Theme – Dependent Decisions

Some of the participants' decisions depend on ideas of what other people think is best for them. They are in environments where they are never fully heard, which is evidently quite isolating for them. In this respect the participants do not seem to have autonomy, as perhaps their parents, boyfriends or friends make the major decisions regarding their relationships. They talk about living the way they want to, but their decisions all seem to take place within the realms of what others see as acceptable, which is perhaps an illustration of how their Indian culture influences their British culture. The participants seem to need permission or encouragement to take action regarding their relationships: as British women they want to have RRs that are usual within this aspect of their culture, but as Indian women looking for a potential husband from an early age, they see doing so as needing the validation of others. Nonetheless the participants have close friendships that help them cope with the secrecy of their RRs and provide the general support that perhaps they crave from their parents. Their support networks help the participants to experience something that is unfamiliar due to the relational style of their families. This superordinate theme yielded three subordinate themes:

1. The particular choice of a partner
2. Holding on to their virginity
3. Retaining the image of a good Indian girl

4.2.1 Subordinate Theme: “...it had prospects...”: The particular choice of a partner

The participants' interpretations of love, which are influenced by their upbringing and environment, are relevant to their experiences, as the way in which they are treated by their boyfriends is one of the key factors in their choice to continue their SRRs. The futures of their SRRs are at stake if their boyfriends cannot be eventually accepted. For these participants, their boyfriends are possibly seen as future husbands, since their accounts suggest that if they decide to reveal their relationship, their parents will most likely propose that they marry. In this way their relationship is affected by any desire they might have to gain approval from their parents, making their choice of partner somewhat dependent on who they think their parents are more likely to accept. The participants may never be able to appreciate fully being in the present, as they always have to work towards their future.

Bhumi's relationship with her boyfriend is her first RR, which means she may never have previously experienced the care that her boyfriend shows her. An assumption from my insider researcher's position is that perhaps this might illustrate Bhumi's experience with her family: she might not have felt prioritised by them in the past, and so was drawn in by the first person who showed her that attention:

"...the fact that he came and dropped me to the station was something like wow you know no one does that! No one goes out of their way that much." (Bhumi, L150)

This may be in contrast to her family who perhaps she feels, at least at times, do not go "out of their way" to see things from her point of view. Perhaps Bhumi needs to feel valued and loved in this way and her happiness is a glimpse of what life could be like. Bhumi's expressive comment of "wow...no one does that!" suggests that her RR enables her to escape the feeling of not being prioritised. Bhumi's boyfriend's educational background is another reason why she initially chose to be with him:

"...I knew...he will be able to look after himself 'cause of his degree...he had a job...he looked after me...which is something...I...valued" (Bhumi, L169)

Before they were officially together, Bhumi looked at his credentials of becoming a doctor, which perhaps indicated to her that he would have a good job to support them if they were to marry. Her partner matches her values, which are possibly influenced by her parents. Perhaps her choice of partner was influenced by a desire to find someone her parents may eventually accept. In this way there is a sense that, despite how she felt, she effectively made decisions that were dependent on what her parents would ultimately want for her. My interpretation is that Bhumi may have chosen her partner as her future husband, not just as a boyfriend. She perhaps thought of her future before making her choices in her present, as indicated when she says, "I knew...he will be able to look after himself" and "he looked after me". Of course Bhumi does not know this for certain, but his "degree" and "job" gave her enough confidence to enter into a relationship with him.

In a similar context it sounds as though Nina may have made a dependent decision to be with her current boyfriend because he was someone she thought her parents might eventually accept:

“...he’s Hindu...so that ticked the box...he was studying...I was waiting to get into a relationship with someone...I could have a possible future with...” (Nina, L45)

Nina says she was *“waiting to get into a relationship”*, which could suggest she overlooked anyone she may have liked but thought she could not have a future with, if for example they were not *“studying”* or they were not *“Hindu”*. These ideals may have come from her parents, who possibly want her to be with a man of the same religion who can financially support her; Nina’s own wishes may well stem from her parents’ wishes.

Shilpa met her boyfriend at the Hindu Society: *“I used to go to the Hindu society...we met there,”* (Shilpa, L27). It is likely that anyone she met there would have had the same religion as her, and that perhaps narrowed down who she could potentially meet. This influenced her choice of boyfriend because if she had joined another society of a different religion, she would maybe not have chosen anyone from that group to be her boyfriend since they would not have met requirements that had possibly been instilled by her mother. She also mentions that she and her boyfriend are of the same subculture and caste: *“...he’s...a Patel, I’m Patel, that helps...”* (Shilpa, L221). Shilpa says that this *“helps”*, which may refer to a hope that when she chooses to reveal her SRR to her mother, he will be accepted. The participants have certain criteria that their boyfriends must match, but these seem to have been established by their parents, not by them.

Bhumi met her boyfriend while socialising with her friends at her student union:

“...my flatmates knew him...they said...it’s no harm...talk to him... it’s because of them...that I...let my guard down.” (Bhumi, L72)

Bhumi’s friends seem to have given her allowance to start a relationship with her boyfriend: she says *“it’s because of them...”*, which could be interpreted as her saying that her decision to talk to a man she might have been interested in was dependent on what her friends thought. In this way Bhumi finds it easier to rely on her friends than on her parents, who have a different view of RRs but a similar level of control. Bhumi saying *“...I...let my guard down”* may suggest that she needed her friends’ permission to talk to a boy; this decision did not seem to come from her. Bhumi may in this way

seem to lack autonomy by letting her friends make a major decision regarding her relationship.

It is only Nina's friends of a similar culture who truly understand why she has to keep her relationship secret, whereas other friends are "*shocked*", which seems to reflect a situation in which her bicultural experience of various aspects of her world view is not understood by members either of her British culture or her Indian culture. However her Asian friends reflect the normal practice of dating, so she feels relieved and comforted by them:

"...some of them do get quite shocked, but some of them kind of relate to me a lot of them are Asians as well, so they know what happens...how the norm is..." (Nina, L719)

It seems Nina's friends help her through her guilt in keeping her RR a secret from her parents, as they're not against her being in a relationship. Her non-Asian friends are able to support her even though they do not understand why the relationship must be kept secret. Nina is thus able to socialise with her boyfriend together with her friends rather than the relationship being kept wholly secret, which perhaps helps her to justify the relationship. This is also the case for the rest of the participants, as at least some of their friends know about their SRRs, and they see and accept them as merely RRs. Nina says that her Asian friends know "*how the norm is*" which suggests that there is a norm for SRRs among BI women that involve its constraints, rules and reasons why the relationship is to be kept secret. Nina is therefore comfortable telling her friends about her boyfriend, as with all of the other participants.

4.2.2 Subordinate Theme: "...I know what my limits are with a guy...": Holding on to one's virginity

The participants struggled to talk about physical intimacy, except for Shilpa who was open about it and was the only one having sex. My insider researcher's perspective is that their struggle may be linked to their bicultural identities, as their Indian culture does not seem to encourage sex before marriage, or discussions about sex even when one is married. Holding on to their virginity may be a decision that is dependent on their parents' values, which may be mirrored in their own values.

Priya's boyfriend wanted a sexual relationship but she did not:

“...I can’t do it until I’m married...our relationship was going downhill...he felt...this couldn’t be a relationship without it.” (Priya, L211)

Priya’s words of *“I can’t do it until I’m married”* illustrate her values of saving her virginity for marriage. The fact that she refers to sex as *“it”* suggests that she feels embarrassed or even ashamed to discuss this aspect of her relationship. This may relate to Priya’s being BI, on the one hand wanting something that is usually common within British culture - having a boyfriend - but on the other hand wanting to remain a virgin until marriage, as is more likely to be expected within her Indian culture. The lack of understanding from Priya’s boyfriend and their different viewpoints about sex eventually led to their relationship *“going downhill”*, which possibly shows the importance of both partners having similar relationship scripts for the maintenance of their SRRs. Priya’s description of how *“he felt”* could possibly indicate how BI men and women might differ in their idea of a relationship, but not how all BI men think while being in a SRR. Priya goes on to say:

“...I think it’s not right...you should only be intimate with someone that you’re going to spend your whole life with...it’s just out of respect...you don’t want to get married to someone that knows that...you’ve slept with, so many other guys...you just want to be pure.” (Priya, L228)

Priya used the word *“intimate”* when talking about sex, which possibly shows the high level of respect she has for this area of activity, a respect that she may have learnt from her parents who might be seen as mainly responsible for instilling attitudes and cultural values in her. When she says *“it’s just out of respect”*, it seems to suggest that her own choice or feelings about sex are less important than the view that staying a virgin is important for her future husband and perhaps her parents. Although this might also be her own view, the language she uses may mean this this decision is dependent on what other people in her life think. It does not seem clear whether this is also something that is important to her, especially given her continual use of the word *“you”* instead of the word *“I”*, which may reveal a lack of autonomy in making decisions for herself. Being a virgin for Priya, and possibly for her parents and future husband, means that she remains *“pure”*, suggesting that having sex before marriage for her would mean that she might be scarred or tainted. Her statement *“I think it’s not right”* may reflect that holding on to her virginity seems crucial and that sex should only be shared with one

person. A reflective assumption is that even though Priya feels that her boyfriend was not suitable to be her husband, her views about sex may have changed had she been with someone whom she thought she would marry.

Manisha has the same views as Priya, but her relationship is less impacted because her boyfriend also wants to wait until after marriage for sex:

“...we haven’t been there yet...we both believe in sex after marriage, so it’s good like that, so we’re on the same level.” (Manisha, L633)

Perhaps their choice to save sex for marriage makes their relationship more exciting, with something special to look forward to after revealing their secret. Manisha’s use of the word “we” demonstrates that she feels they both have a similar understanding about the future of their relationship, a future that in this case is strongly informed by their Indian subculture and background. This is further reflected in Manisha’s statement:

“...obviously we’ve been brought up like that” (Manisha, L641), which shows that their beliefs have been passed down by their parents who seem to follow the traditional values of their culture of origin. Manisha’s choice of “obviously” could have been intended to convey that her belief would not be any different, as it is dependent on what her parents believe. If this is the case, it could perhaps indicate her inability to have beliefs that are just for herself. This possibly reflects that her decision to remain a virgin may have been dependent on her parents’ values.

Kiran also wanted to stay a virgin until marriage, and perhaps not having sex makes her SRR reflective of a relationship that is somewhat accepted by her Indian culture:

“... it’s not, we never, we don’t want to, that’s not what it’s about... I don’t think either of us are ready for it...” (Kiran, L676)

Kiran’s stuttered sentence perhaps reveals her feeling uncomfortable when discussing this topic, and she may find it hard to explain their reasons for not sleeping together since doing so can be seen as normal practice in a young adult RR. Kiran seems determined to convey that sex in her SRR is “not what it’s about”, suggesting that even if her relationship were not secret, she would still not be having sex. This may reflect certain parts of Kiran’s life being more influenced by her Indian culture, which might

view sex as sinful before marriage. Kiran may not share this belief explicitly but she still somehow views sex before marriage as wrong, and this decision may be dependent on her cultural views.

Nina says that she is intimate with her boyfriend but it has not developed into sexual intercourse: “...it’s not very often and it’s not all the way” (Nina, L801). Nonetheless she needs to pretend she is at work in order to have sexual contact with her boyfriend at his house. However having a physically intimate life, which can only happen once per month due to this constraint, leaves them feeling frustrated. This has a negative effect upon Nina, as she feels forced to carry out sexual acts:

“...he does get carried away and tries to do stuff that I don’t want to do...sometimes I just give in because I feel sorry...as if I should...it’s the only time I’ve got with him I should be doing, this sort of stuff and, keeping him happy...” (Nina, L839)

Nina being in a SRR doesn’t allow her to feel relaxed, and she makes decisions that are enforced by the secrecy of it. As Nina says “...it’s the only time I’ve got with him”, she feels pressured to be sexual with her boyfriend, which means their relationship cannot develop at the pace that she would like it to. This can anger Nina, as her boyfriend and her parents instead of she are, in a sense, making her decisions for her. Her words of “*I don’t want to*” clearly shows what she is not comfortable with doing in her relationship, but she herself overlooks her own wants by “*keeping him happy*”. She may disregard her feelings in order to keep her boyfriend happy, showing that her decisions are for other people and not for herself. In this way she becomes secondary, indicating how her decisions do not seem to be autonomous. Nina’s saying, “*I feel sorry*” suggests that she is apologising to her boyfriend, and perhaps to her own moral code, that her relationship is a secret, and that being sexual when she does not want to be may be just a consequence of the secrecy. When she says “*I should be doing, this sort of stuff*” it could mean that she is punishing herself for this consequence which she may accept as just a formality of her SRR. In a way, by being in a SRR she is letting herself down but still pleasing everybody else, but in this way she still gets to be with the man she wants to be with.

4.2.3 Subordinate Theme: “...I have to make sacrifices...”: Retaining the image of a good Indian girl

The participants have clearly defined roles within their families in terms of their responsibilities, and some of their decisions are dependent on what their parents expect of them. This puts pressure on them to be seen as Indian girls who follow their parents' rules. The participants have mostly chosen partners whom they might marry, and who might have the same expectations for them as their parents. The participants have a sense of what they want for themselves, but in some respects feel this is not acknowledged or is ignored and/or disregarded by their loved ones. The participants have a glimpse of the life they want but never feel able to fully take hold of that, which results in irritation, resentment and hurt.

Bhumi explains:

“...in the western society that's changed...we've evolved from that but from the...Asian perspective that hasn't...women are still expected to cook and clean and at the same time have an education as well...” (Bhumi, L457)

Bhumi's statement of “*we've evolved from that*” suggests that she believes her parents are less well evolved than her. Bhumi refers to living “*in the Western society*” as a BI woman, trying to some extent to live up to the expectations of a culture with which she does not fully identify because of her parents' “*Asian perspective*”. She feels the pressure of a future in which she has to balance her career and family life. Perhaps this is why Bhumi chooses to be in a SRR: in order to delay the process of becoming a wife, a role in which she is “*...expected to cook and clean...*”. Bhumi may not be able to carve out a way of fulfilling what it means to be a wife for herself and simultaneously remain dependent instead of autonomous, and it sounds as though this means she has to make a sacrifice. She goes on to say:

“...there's not much you can do...if that's what is asked of you then you can't really say no I don't want to do it...” (Bhumi, L475)

When Bhumi says, “*...there's not much you can do...*” she implies that she is stuck in a situation where she cannot make decisions for herself as they have already been made for her. Her words of “*you can't really say no*” suggests that she may have the option of

refusing what is expected of her, but this may have disastrous consequences, so saying 'yes' is her preferred choice even if it makes her unhappy. Bhumi has a concept of the role of being a good Indian girl that it seems she must fulfill, whether in the present or in the future.

Manisha is the youngest in her family, which is one of the reasons she is in a SRR: *"I'm the baby of the family so, (laughs) I don't really want to ruin that for now."* (Manisha, L317)

If Manisha reveals her SRR, she believes her reputation of being *"the baby"* will be ruined just as Nina's and Priya's were when their parents discovered their SRRs. Manisha's words suggest that she is pampered; all of her necessary needs are met and looked after, which Manisha possibly finds enjoyable, explaining her laughter. She wants to hold on to this for as long as possible, and her SRR allows her to do this. This interpretation also comprises Manisha following the rules that her parents set, which involve not having a boyfriend. Letting her family see this wholesome portrayal of herself means that she is able to continue being treated as a good Indian girl, which she sees as having many positive rewards. This may have been different if Manisha had had brothers. She tries to understand her parents' view regarding gender:

"...they think that guys can look after themselves whereas they think that girls...they can't... 'cause they spoil us rotten... (laughs)...my dad spoils me...if I want something I'll ask him...he'll get it..." (Manisha, L394)

Manisha's laughter suggests that she knows that she can look after herself, but her parents have also brought her up in a way in which she remains dependent on them, which is perhaps what her parents expect of her. Maybe this is the way her parents reward Manisha for being their good Indian girl and for complying with their rules. She says that *"my dad spoils me"*, and she can ask about material things, it seems, but not about having a life that is not in line with how her parents think her life should be. It also seems that she avoids her father seeing her in a different way. Perhaps she feels he currently sees her as a woman who can't look after herself or make what he might see as major decisions for herself, such as choosing a partner. She may also maintain this behaviour so that she feels she has everything she needs, which is the challenge of being a BI woman who wants to be true to both cultures.

Nina's role as the good Indian girl within her family was destroyed when her parents discovered her SRR. She says she felt suffocated when they found out, but she may have also felt this way before they found out, which would have reflected the stressors of her BI identity. This may not have happened to her brother, as their expectations were different from those for their daughter:

"...I feel...they have...a difference between how they behave with their son and how they behave with...their daughter...it's...the double standards...he could...live out for Uni and I had to argue to even to apply to university outside of London." (Nina, L330)

This illustrates the stark reality of Nina's experience, which is not just about her having a SRR. The remarks demonstrate that her parents' reaction to her SRR is reflective of wider issues. This sounds like a real struggle for Nina, as it seems as though she has had to fight to assert herself and get what she wants while watching her brother not having to. Nina perhaps resents the "*double standards*" she believes her parents have for their children, and she sees that they ignore Nina's feelings about this. Their behaviour may cause a strain for Nina, as it is not just that her parents have different views from her; it is that they also enforce these views on her. Nina's explaining that she "*had to argue to even to apply to university...*" suggests that her parents are protective of her, although perhaps not so much of her brother; this may be because they see her as helpless and a dependant, whose important decisions are governed by them. However it appears that Nina is metaphorically screaming out that she is able to make her own decisions, especially since she wants to go away to university. Perhaps she isn't being heard but her brother's wishes are, which could be because she is younger and female. Nina perhaps feels powerless as a BI woman who has things she has been exposed to and wants to do in life but cannot due to the control of her Indian culture, one that feels more powerful to her than her British culture. This could be due to her parents being of the first-generation. This must be difficult for her as it appears that she sees herself as more capable than her parents do, but she might accept this hardship because retaining her image may ultimately be more important.

Shilpa's situation is different, as she does not think that her mother would necessarily object to her having a relationship. She also has the blessing of her older sister, which the other participants did not have. Her familial support seems important but she tries to describe why it would be difficult to talk to her mother about this:

“...if I did tell her...and...she got really excited...that I’m seeing someone...if she found out that...we broke up...I can see that being...a bit hard for her...she doesn’t really like seeing me upset...” (Shilpa, L161)

When Shilpa says, *“she doesn’t really like seeing me upset”* it suggests that her familial role of the good Indian girl is to try to prevent her mother getting upset. It seems that there is a lot that goes unsaid between the participants and their families: it’s possible, for example, that Shilpa’s mother would actually get upset because of not being able to control her daughter being in a relationship, and any consequences of this. Shilpa saying *“I can see that being...a bit hard for her”* suggests that she wants to protect her mother from having to deal with her potential heartbreak. This is a possibility in any relationship, and it isn’t possible to be sure from Shilpa’s words whether there are more complex explanations, but it’s possible for example that in her mother’s eyes a relationship before marriage is more susceptible to heartbreak compared to a marriage with its symbolic security.

4.3 Superordinate Theme – Freedom

The participants experience freedom in similar yet different ways that centre on their SRRs. These different experiences include the complexities of freedom, as one may not truly have freedom if this freedom is under specific tight constraints. Bhumi and Shilpa moved away from home, possibly in order to live as they wanted while being aware that, as to a certain extent for most young adults, this time was most likely to come to an end. In Bhumi and Shilpa’s case, in which the alternative to this freedom includes having to conduct RRs in secret, they claim that the ‘free’ part of their life does not exist when they go home or speak to their parents. If this model for their moving away from home is accurate, the participants are not free when they are at home or at university; perhaps their freedom is merely an illusion. It seems that the participants long for the freedom to fully make their own choices. As for so many people constrained by concern for other people’s values, judgements and happiness as well as their own, they could be perceived as caged birds that can do whatever they want in the cage, as long as they remain there, and perhaps don’t actually know what it means to be free or how to be free. The longing is for something they might not fully comprehend but will only become fully apparent if they break free from the cage, but for Bhumi and Shilpa, that could involve revealing their SRR. They are in environments where they are

never fully heard, which can be quite isolating for them. Three subordinate themes arose from this superordinate theme which were:

1. Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date
2. The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship
3. The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship

4.3.1 Subordinate Theme: “I would see him at least every single day...”:

Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date

Most of the participants have the chance to date their boyfriend when they are living away or are not under the watchful eye of their parents. They therefore experience this as freedom to see their boyfriends, but it is short-lived as the relationship is hidden from their parents, to whom some eventually return to live. Nevertheless the participants describe this time positively, as it is a joy to be able to experience romance.

Bhumi met her boyfriend while she was living away from her parents in university dorms and therefore had the freedom to date him. Perhaps her relationship would not have developed as much if she had been living at home, as she would not have had as much chance to see him as she did at university. It could also be possible that Bhumi would not have met her boyfriend while living at home. Her move may relate to a desire to have something she has not had before, finally opening up an aspect of her life that she may have long thought about:

“...I decided to live out cause of the pressure of final year I wanted to be...closer...to university...” (Bhumi, L42)

Bhumi’s use of the word “*closer*” may suggest that outwardly she chose to stay near university to help her study for her course. However my interpretation from an insider researcher’s perspective is that perhaps she was actually looking to carve out some freedom for herself while using this opportunity to live away from home, as “*the pressure of final year*” was an acceptable explanation for her parents to agree. Bhumi’s decision to move out of her parents’ house created the freedom for her to meet someone. Perhaps Bhumi was also free to be the person she wanted to be in the open, rather than feeling that she had to keep a significant aspect of herself bound up in her parents’ expectations.

Most of the participants say that they were not looking for a relationship but it happened nevertheless, as Shilpa says:

“I never really wanted a relationship with a guy at uni...but it was just one of those things that happened...” (Shilpa, L29)

Shilpa’s relationship with her boyfriend seems to be unexpected, and even though she was not looking for a boyfriend, she did meet someone to date in her first year of university when she was living away from her mother. Although there are other possible interpretations, Shilpa’s saying *“I never really wanted...”* could indicate that she may have closed her thoughts off from being free to be in a relationship when she was at home. However being at university suddenly opened up her world, helping her to think about other possibilities, and a chance to live in that world, previously unknown but maybe longed for. When Shilpa says that her relationship was *“one of those things that happened...”* it suggests that she does not have a plausible explanation of how her relationship came about and may not be aware of how her decision to leave home possibly led to her short-lived freedom. If this was not the case she may have continued to adhere to her mother’s wishes at home, but being in a RR seemed acceptable at university, which created the freedom for Shilpa to date:

“...we practically lived together... ’cause we were at Uni...it was nice because we were always together...” (Shilpa, L116)

Shilpa seems to have enjoyed how she *“practically lived”* with her boyfriend but seems to defend this statement by saying *“we were at Uni”*, perhaps suggesting that this is only possible because she is living away from her mother. Her short-lived freedom seems significant as she uses the words *“nice”* and *“always together”* illustrating the positive effects of her freedom to date without the feeling of constant constraints.

This is similar to Manisha’s story in which the freedom to date her boyfriend occurred at university: *“...we saw each other almost every single day, when I was at Uni...”* (Manisha, L253). Her quote suggests that she was only able to see her boyfriend almost every day because she was at university, and she might have seen this to be the case because her parents were not around. This again is an example of the participant’s short-

lived freedom to experience dating, a freedom whose duration is seen as coinciding with the duration of being at university.

Priya experienced short-lived freedom when she dated her boyfriend at the beginning of her relationship as her parents were away in India. She therefore was free to explore what she wanted for herself while she was still within her home environment. This gave her boyfriend the freedom to visit her:

“...he, always used to come to my house and cook me dinner...which was really sweet (smiles)...no one has ever done that for me...” (Priya, L97)

Priya's smile suggests that she is recalling a good memory and a happy time in her life. This glimpse of freedom seems to have been an exciting time for Priya, which she possibly did not know she even deserved. When Priya says, *“he, always used to come to my house”* she is deliberately sharing that she took advantage of her parents being away. Priya knew that her parents would not have approved of this but she may have ignored her thoughts at the time in order to experience this rare chance to date her boyfriend freely, a chance that she might not have again. The *“sweet”* side of her boyfriend and her relationship had the opportunity to flourish within this short-lived freedom, which Priya grabbed as soon as the occasion presented itself. She was desperate to make the short time she had with her boyfriend as good as possible, when perhaps she was able to be her true self without adhering to her parents' unspoken rules. Priya states that *“no one has ever done that for me”*, describing her first RR which she was finally free to experience. It shows how special this time was for her, a time that was reflected in the short-lived nature of her freedom.

Bhumi was a participant who actually acknowledged that her freedom with her boyfriend would be short-lived, illustrating sadness:

“I knew that for me this is going to be difficult when I...leave university because we see each other all the time while we're at university...literally...I know that once I leave I'm not going to...I'm going to miss this so I just literally, treasured everything, every single day.” (Bhumi, L286)

Sadness seems to be reflected in Bhumi's words of "*difficult*", "*miss this*" and "*treasured everything*". They suggest that even when Bhumi was freely dating her boyfriend at university, she could not fully enjoy it because she was always thinking about the future when this freedom would end. Therefore even though the participants experienced freedom, it was always constrained as it could not last. Bhumi "*literally treasured everything*" which seems to be a metaphor for how she viewed her experience of freedom to date. Having a relationship that was not secret from anyone at university seems to be Bhumi's "*treasure*" almost because this does not reflect her reality. She accentuates that seeing "*each other all the time*" can only happen while at university. Her repeated use of the word "*literally*" when describing how she and her boyfriend were together at university possibly highlights that seeing each other meant in person, when they could touch, feel and look at each other. This can be compared to other environments where they cannot see each other and the reality of their SRR takes place. Bhumi seems to have prepared for this but when she says, "*I'm going to miss this*" a feeling of heartache comes across, as even though her relationship will continue, she knows that their freedom to flourish in their relationship will stop as it turns into a SRR.

4.3.2 Subordinate Theme: "I think a lot has changed...talking about it now": The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship

The participants lost their freedom to date their boyfriends in some way by adopting a SRR and through a change of circumstances, for example when Bhumi had to return to live with her parents after graduating from university or when Priya's parents returned from India. Most of the participants' accounts in this subordinate theme are recusant compared to their accounts in the previous subordinate theme, illustrating the adverse effects of being in a RR that is kept secret from their parents.

Bhumi describes her transition of leaving university as an emotional process by which she was not able to receive the closure that she desired:

"...as soon as we finished our exams we just lived at home we didn't have that...one last meal together...moving out...was really difficult because...I spent the whole year there, that was the place that I...met him...I'm never going to get that back again so for me it's just memories." (Bhumi, L349)

It may be apparent that Bhumi longs for how things used to be and feels a loss of the chance for what might have been. This loss represents Bhumi's knowing that her RR would need to change to a SRR and her upset that she will never get the freedom to be with her boyfriend this way again. The "*one last meal together*" may represent the beginning of the end of her freedom, and not having had this ritual possibly added to her despair. Even though Bhumi only spent a year living out at university she describes it as "*I spent the whole year there*", revealing that even though a year is not that long a time, it was the significance of what that year meant to her that mattered. When Bhumi says, "*...moving out...was really difficult*" she is referring to the hardship of leaving a place of freedom where she could be herself and have a RR without costs. Bhumi expresses a huge sense of loss when she says "*I'm never going to get that back again*", perhaps implying that what she wants from her relationship can only be achieved if her parents grant it. Her comment of "*we just lived at home*" may show that while her family are supportive to some extent in living together, her desire to be in a RR appears to be more important than anything her family gives her, which by contrast may be seen just as compensation.

Nina experienced the severe costs of being in a SRR when her parents discovered it, as she was then required to prove her whereabouts at all times. Nina's deceiving her parents meant her suffering serious consequences:

"I wanted to say that I haven't, been...diagnosed with depression at that time, I didn't go to the doctor and talk about it but, I was quite upset quite depressed, wouldn't talk to my classmates wouldn't talk to anyone." (Nina, L95)

Not only did Nina lose the freedom of secretly seeing her boyfriend; she also lost the freedom to be herself. The fact that she "*didn't go to the doctor and talk about it*" suggests that she was never encouraged by anyone to talk about her feelings, or even saw this as an option. Nina's emotions - "*quite upset quite depressed*" - illustrate how the punishment set by her parents manifested within her as well as through her actions - she "*wouldn't talk to anyone*". Perhaps when Nina says, "*I haven't been...diagnosed with depression at that time,*" she is suggesting that she was silently asking for help when her SRR was discovered by her parents. Nina's SRR nevertheless survived throughout her depressive period, but she goes on to say:

“...a lot of our arguments come down to, not being able to see each other a lot...”
(Nina, L616).

Nina was able to recover trust between herself and her parents enough to secretly see her boyfriend, but this was not enough to avoid “arguments”. What Nina describes as “not being able to see each other a lot...” seems to be a cost of her SRR in which she can only see her boyfriend at certain times, which is inconvenient for them but also necessary to keep their relationship alive. However this cost possibly means that their relationship cannot flourish.

Manisha on the other hand experienced the cost of her SRR when she graduated from university, as she no longer had the excuse of going to university where she could see her boyfriend freely. She was confronted with the fact that she had never been truly free as she had a glimpse of something that she could not have long term:

“...it’s harder for me to get out of the house, I can’t be...I’m going to see my friends every single day...my parents will be like, what are you doing, so it’s difficult...”
(Manisha, L291)

Manisha’s account that “my parents will be like, what are you doing” shows that her parents do not perceive her seeing her friends on a daily basis as acceptable. My insider researcher’s interpretation is that she therefore could not use her friends as an excuse to see her boyfriend as much as she used to, which is a cost of her being in a SRR. Manisha avoids her parents’ suspicion by seeing her boyfriend less frequently, but her comment “harder for me to get out of the house” indicates the control that Manisha’s parents have over her. This can be seen as having far wider consequences than just restricting her relationship, as even if she were not in a SRR she still would not be able to see her friends every day even if she wanted to. Her SRR may just be one feature of her life that illustrates her lack of control due to her parents governing her life. Manisha lives under the house rules that her parents set, which may have been created to protect her or to protect them and their way of life. Perhaps continuing her SRR shows her taking control of her wishes and needs in reaction to her parents controlling other parts of her life.

Frustration at couples not being able to see each other being a cost of the participants' SRRs is a common theme, but this seems most often to be ascribed to the participants' boyfriends. For example Priya says:

"...I like to go out with my family...and I never used to be able to contact him while I was with them so, he used to get frustrated at me..." (Priya, L278)

Perhaps Priya's frustration is not as apparent as her boyfriend's because she is aware of and understands the costs of a SRR, whereas her boyfriend may not be so constrained. When Priya says, *"I like to go out with my family..."* it suggests that she constantly had to balance her time with her family and with her boyfriend because she could never spend time with them together. The lack of understanding, or ability to be patient, from her boyfriend led to him being *"frustrated"* at her, which is perhaps an emotion that implies helplessness at not being able to change the costs of being in a SRR. In a similar vein Manisha also says:

"...I think he was...frustrated...the fact that he couldn't see me, it was frustrating." (Manisha, L533)

Priya's and Manisha's comments about the costs of their SRRs possibly highlight a gender difference within the BI culture. They both say that *"he was...frustrated"* which might indicate that BI men may not have the same constraints in a SRR compared to BI women, leading them to feel more frustrated than their girlfriends. Nevertheless it is evident that both parties in the SRR experience frustration at not being able to see each other, and that their inability to change these constraints means that they have to live with the frustration, which could negatively affect their relationship.

4.3.3 Subordinate Theme: "When I'm ready to settle down, I will tell them...": The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship

Most of the participants talk about the right time to reveal their SRRs to their parents, relating this to when the participants are ready to get married. This seems the only way that their SRRs will be accepted and they will be granted their freedom to be with their boyfriends openly. The participants' choice to keep their relationship secret for now may provide them with a sense of autonomy and control. In this way their parents cannot take over and start planning their wedding, and their boyfriends cannot progress

things further either. At least to some extent, keeping the relationship a secret means the woman can maintain it at a pace she is comfortable with.

Bhumi considers that the right time to reveal her SRR, and so gain the freedom to be with her boyfriend, is when she is older:

“...I don’t have a strong case at the moment...the way they see me is I’m still too young, I’m 21...when I’m a bit older like 22 or 23 then I can...say that I’m serious...” (Bhumi, L526)

As a 21-year-old, Bhumi is an adult within British society, but she appears to be “*too young*” in the Indian society for a relationship i.e. a marriage, making it hard for her parents to take her seriously. Bhumi’s “*strong case*” possibly requires her to introduce her boyfriend as a fiancé who can provide and take care of her. Bhumi refers to being “*a bit older*” as “*22 or 23*”, just one or two years older than she is now. A couple of years older may not seem to make much of a difference; however, her intentions of becoming financially stable may be relevant in making her ready for marriage. When Bhumi says “*the way they see me is I’m still too young*,” she may be expressing constantly feeling conflicted because of being seen as an adult and a child at the same time, and having to incorporate both images interchangeably. Bhumi also says:

“... I’m thinking to wait...till I’ve finished my masters and then tell her that way I can turn around and say...I was with him during the whole of my undergrad my postgrad I didn’t, mess up...” (Bhumi, L431)

Bhumi’s plan to tell her parents about her SRR involves her finishing her education. Her words of “*...that way I can turn around and say...*” perhaps suggests that there is a lack of trust, from her mother in particular, about whether she can complete her studies with the distraction of having a boyfriend. Bhumi’s mother seems to believe that she will “*...mess up...*” but Bhumi is waiting for the day when she can prove her mother’s assumption wrong. It is the participant’s choice how much they reveal to their parents about their relationship. Bhumi wants to admit that she was “*with him during the whole*” of her higher education, maybe as a way of challenging her parents’ view of RRs and whether it is possible for her to maintain one while also maintaining other important

parts of her life. A revelation of this sort would seem a good gateway to her freedom of being in a RR without any constraints.

Priya's situation may be less about finding the right time and more about not having found the right man, or at least being with someone she was unsure about:

"...I didn't feel like it was the right time, to tell them, cause I didn't know him for that long." (Priya, L431)

When Priya says *"I didn't feel like it was the right time"* this may be a defence against the relationship moving faster than she wants it to. After all, it is easier for Priya to keep her boyfriend at a distance if the relationship is secret. Her reason for keeping the SRR comes to light when she says *"I didn't know him for that long"* which may contribute to the fact that they were having problems. This was possibly enough to not tell her parents, as they may have viewed this negatively, indicating that the relationship was perhaps not solid enough for it to be a marriage.

The participants suggest that for them to gain the freedom to be with boyfriends that their parents know about, they would need to want to marry their boyfriends, as this seems to be the only way that the relationship can be accepted by their parents and their Indian community. This is reflected in Manisha's statement:

"When I'm ready to settle down, I will tell them, but right now I'm not because...I haven't got a stable job...until I have a stable job, and I'm in that job, I don't want to get married, I don't want to get engaged..." (Manisha, L491)

Manisha's comment of *"...until I have a stable job, and I'm in that job,"* suggests that she wants to be financially independent before getting married to her boyfriend. It is possible that her parents may not place much emphasis on what Manisha wants for herself before making the commitment of marriage, but this show of commitment may be more important to them if Manisha reveals her SRR now. Manisha is defiant when she says, *"I'm ready"*, *"I will"* and *"I don't want to"*, stating that her own feelings and what she wants matter to her, but underlying this she may also know that her parents would put their wishes above her own, giving her a lack of freedom. If this is so,

keeping her relationship secret is advantageous to her as she is able to look for “*a stable job*” without possible pressure from her parents to get married.

Kiran on the other hand has actually discussed revealing her SRR with her boyfriend:

“...*we’ve discussed about telling our parents before but, he’s always like...we’re too young, I would tell my parents...but...they’d be like...you’re too young...*” (Kiran, L217)

Kiran states, “*I would tell my parents...*” which shows that she may be willing to tell her parents regardless of the pressure if her boyfriend and her parents did not think they were “*too young*”, which may essentially mean too young to get married. She refers to her parents’ views and her boyfriend’s views when she says “*we’re too young*” and “*you’re too young*”, which may highlight that the secrecy of her relationship is not completely her own decision. Her words do not suggest that she herself thinks she is “*too young*” to be in a relationship or even to get married, but she knows that others may not trust her ability to maintain a RR. This is further illustrated when she says:

“*If I told them a couple of years down the line, then maybe, I think they’ll understand, but right now definitely not.*” (Kiran, L309)

It seems that Kiran’s parents need to be able to see Kiran as a strong young adult woman for them to even begin to accept that she is in a relationship. This may be because they would want her to get married rather than her seeing her boyfriend without the significant label of marriage. When Kiran says “*right now definitely not*” she is possibly referring to her feeling about her SRR being revealed, but her desire to maintain the freedom to be in a RR instead of getting married. If she told her parents about her SRR now they may not understand because they may see her as still a child who is not ready to get married, which could confuse them. However “*a couple of years down the line*” might change their view of her as a woman. Kiran’s SRR protects her relationship from moving at a pace that may be uncomfortable for her parents and her boyfriend.

Nina’s plan of revealing her SRR to her parents is similar to Bhumi’s and Manisha’s,

but it seems that there is more pressure for her boyfriend to be presented as a good potential husband:

“...when he is, stable in his feet then I would be comfortable about introducing him to my parents, hopefully by this time I’ve completed my degree I’ve started, my work so, there’s nothing next stage of my life would be, being with someone...” (Nina, L896)

Nina’s words of *“stable in his feet”* suggests that she requires her boyfriend to have a good career that involves a steady income and offers stability for marriage before she can be *“comfortable”* to reveal her SRR and enter the *“next stage”* of her life. She says *“hopefully by this time”* suggesting that it is not necessary for her to be stable enough for marriage, as long as her boyfriend is, which may be good enough for her parents to accept their relationship. Therefore the right time for Nina to reveal her SRR has to be reflected in the right conditions, which may involve both people in the relationship. Nina seems to have planned her life in stages, and her SRR becoming a marriage is one of them. It does not seem as though the participants will ever experience the freedom of being in a RR that is not secret from anybody, without their being engaged or married. Whether this affects the participants is questionable as it could be that they cannot grieve what they may never have experienced or have the opportunity to experience.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter will aim to reflect on the findings in response to the research questions, and then to discuss each superordinate theme. The findings will be discussed in relation to the literature review and to existing theory. Implications of findings will be explored and the relevance to counselling psychology. Methodological considerations will also be evaluated as well as qualitative rigour. I discuss my own reflections as part of the process of an IPA, study and explore the clinical implications and limitations of this research. Important considerations and recommendations for this research will be reviewed and further research will be suggested based on the outcomes presented.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study applied IPA to explore the experiences and understanding of SRRs from the perspective of six BI women. Three superordinate themes emerged from the data analysis: Biculturalism, Dependent Decisions and Freedom.

The findings illustrated that second-generation BI women may experience psychological distress from bicultural and psychosocial issues, internal needs and wants and stressors specific to their way of living and being in SRRs. The findings of this study show how counselling psychology can help with their distress, providing a new awareness of working with BI women who find themselves in this situation.

5.2 Biculturalism

These BI women can be seen as trying to make the best of the parameters they feel they have to live within. The findings can be seen to be in line with Hong, Morris, Chiu and Benet-Martínez's (2000) view of bicultural people as "people who have internalised two cultures to the extent that both cultures are alive inside of them" (Hong, Morris, Chiu & Benet-Martínez, 2000 p.710), as all the BI women seemed to have internalised their British and their Indian cultures. However this study also suggests that this can lead to a feeling of entrapment in which the BI women strive to stay within the parameters of their British culture while trying to negotiate their Indian culture.

The RRs that the participants were involved in highlight the potential clash that being part of different cultures seems to lead to, as RRs outside of marriage are largely accepted in British culture but disallowed for many people in Indian culture. This leads participants in RRs into a double life in which one life is somewhat open to their society and their other life is mostly secret. Polletta and Jasper (2001) stated that first-generation Indians have constructed a collective identity, but for certain rituals to continue, second-generation Indians must accept and follow them. However the second-generation minorities may compare themselves with their peers in Britain and could assume to be treated in similar ways (Heath, 2014); this can be seen in the BI participants of this study. Children in collectivistic cultures are often taught to respect their parents, uphold family honour, and follow tradition (Beilmann, Mayer, Kasearu & Realo, 2014). However the BI women in this study may have prioritised their individual desires of wanting to be in a RR above those of the collective, although this leads to their being trapped in a SRR in order to give the outward impression of following the norms of their Indian society.

This highlights a culture clash, which they experience both with their parents and within themselves, when they have to manage tensions between their own second-generation BI identity and their first-generation parents' expectations, and find themselves with two cultural identities that are different to each other. Perhaps to stay within the realms of their Indian culture, the participants chose partners who were at least Indian, which may have provided them with the hope that their parents would eventually accept their relationship. This fits with bicultural identity integration theory, as BI women in the study were found to avoid the cultural isolation (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005) of each of their cultures as they adhere to both by having a boyfriend but also having an Indian boyfriend who may eventually become their husband. This context captures the variations that bicultural individuals experience, by which they view their British and Indian cultures as incompatible, as suggested by Benet-Martinez, Lee and Leu (2006).

Twamley's research (2013) found that Indians were disapproving of premarital love that included physical intimacy; however 'pure love' that abided by cultural values was deemed important, especially within a marital context. BI women in this study were involved in casual dating and experiencing premarital love, but this may have been seen as taboo by their parents (Manohar, 2008). The BI women do not talk about cohabiting with their boyfriends before marriage, but some couples may see this as a way of testing

their RR through the predicted instabilities of living together (Stanley, Rhoades & Fincham, 2011). Their reticence may relate to their knowledge that cohabiting before marriage can be seen as sinful in their Indian culture and therefore by their parents specifically. In a way these BI women could be seen as carrying forward some of their parents' values by considering compromising to marry their boyfriends without living with them first. However they could also possibly share their parents' values, which may be another reason why this topic was not discussed.

In the context of these complexities, BI women may choose not to overlap certain parts of their lives with their parents' lives due to their fear of the consequences, and this was borne out by comments from the study's participants on SRRs. As identified by Farver, Narang and Bhadha (2002), this makes the first-generation and second-generation acculturation gap harder to bridge; indeed BI women may even feel the gap is impossible to bridge.

5.3 Dependent Decisions

As the BI women did not get the support that they wanted from their parents, it seems that their close friendships with other BI women have helped them cope with the stressors of their SRRs and bicultural difficulties. This can be understood by social identity theory, as they assume the identity of second-generation BI women, and hiding aspects of themselves from their first-generation parents becomes the norm (Abrams, 1992).

Their Indian culture is collectivistic (Heine, 2010), with the BI women showing themselves to be interdependent in conforming to their customs by pretending to be single. However their British culture is individualistic, leading them to feel that they can be open about their relationship in certain contexts, such as with their friends (Vadher & Barrett, 2009). Nevertheless this decision seems not to be made individually, as they believe they need authorisation from others to be in their SRRs.

It is this section of the analysis that showed that the BI women in this study did not seem to have autonomy because of the impact their decisions would have on their relationships and their way of life. In this sense, the BI women's decision to be in SRRs may not solely be made by them. In spite of this, friendships allow the participants to experience something new, which includes sex. However, it seems as though these

women stay within their parameters, as maybe part of the reason most of the participants were not having sex was because they believed their parents wouldn't want them to. Even though they wanted the RR, they may not wanted to have sex, a limitation in accordance with their Indian cultural traditions, to which they might want to stay somewhat faithful. The participants may also be negotiating the values they wish to internalise, but also the values they wish to move away from. This can be understood in relation to bicultural identity integration theory (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Benet-Martinez, Lee & Leu, 2006) by which BI women manage their two cultural identities by adapting to both of them in some way.

The participants seem to have conformed to the wishes of and expectations of their cultures, parents, and boyfriends in one way or another. An example of this is when Nina described carrying out sexual acts that she did not want to do, in order to keep her boyfriend happy. At times it was difficult to get a sense of exactly what the participants wanted for themselves, as the wishes of others came through so strongly. They seemed to suppress their own needs and consider the needs of their boyfriends, which they may have learnt to do from their collectivistic cultural group, reflecting Le and Impett's (2013) research findings that people of a collectivistic culture are likely to forsake their personal desires that disagree with group welfare.

The findings provide support for Holmberg and MacKenzie's (2002) study in which RRs had a higher level of well-being if both individuals in the relationship thought the relationship was developing in the way it should, and if both had culturally shared RR scripts. As an example, the unshared RR scripts of Priya wanting to wait to have sex and her boyfriend not wanting to may have contributed to the break-up of her relationship.

The BI women of this study seemed to have certain parts to play in their families which related to their family obligations of being a 'good girl', which they felt was their responsibility, the more so as they felt they were treated differently to males. Keshavarz and Baharudin (2009) found that Indian parents can behave differently towards their sons compared with their daughters, with the result that daughters may be particularly inhibited from showing assertive behaviour and autonomy due to some collectivistic traditions. BI women in the present study were perhaps accountable for bringing honour to their families through educational achievements and following set rules. Therefore

keeping their RR secret may have been crucial to maintaining this honour, as RRs outside of marriage were likely to be prohibited.

5.4 Freedom

It is not surprising that most of the participants met their boyfriends when away from their parents, and while this represents a form of freedom, they are never and can never be completely free due to the continual duties and commitments they have to their relationships. They therefore have the illusion of freedom and claim to make their own decisions for themselves, but are actually governed by others, as for example even when making a decision to be in a RR, they still conform to their parents' wishes by choosing someone of a similar culture.

Most of the BI women stated that the secrecy of their RRs was disruptive and led to arguments causing frustration, disappointment and anger, supporting the aversive theory of romantic secrecy (Foster & Campbell, 2005). The alluring theory of romantic secrecy (Wegner, Lane & Dimitri, 1994) was also supported particularly by the participants Kiran and Shilpa, who mentioned that their interviews made them appreciate their boyfriends a lot more, for helping them through the romantic secrecy. When they did think about their boyfriends excessively, which the interview prompted them to do, the alluring theory was evoked as the negative effects of the secrecy were outweighed. This is a reflection of Wegner's (1992) and Lane and Wegner's (1995) concept of the thought intrusion and thought suppression cycle.

Additionally participants spoke about the impact that keeping their RRs secret had on their relationships with their parents, as they felt upset and frustrated. Datzman and Gardner (2000) established that this is an emotion arising from the requirements of romantic secrecy. The participants were greatly impacted by their decisions to conceal their relationships. Their experiences chime with the assertions of social network theory, which posits that it is the concealment of couple's relationships and other important parts of themselves that are detrimental to their relationships and mental health (Felmlee, 2001).

The BI women may understand the concept of an arranged marriage; however they may have preferred the idea of a love marriage as they were in RRs of their own. These women show that they will only marry their boyfriends with their parents' consent, as

they speak about how the right time to reveal their relationship would be when they are ready for marriage, in order to avert the criticism they may face for not wanting to get married. The BI women adapt to this by eventually getting married but only to the person they choose, who is somewhat parallel to a man their parents may have chosen for them to marry i.e. someone of the same religion, which all their boyfriends were. This provides support for Netting's (2010) research which found that the tradition of arranged marriage was being adapted to the realities of socioeconomic changes and that parents' approval of the person someone would marry was necessary.

The BI women of this study cry for freedom, but they do not and may never get the chance to experience this fully. Their lives are governed by their parents, friends, boyfriends and maybe eventually their husbands, which shows that even though they may sometimes prefer the British way of living, their Indian culture takes precedence over this through the influence of their first-generation parents. This may result in isolation, depressive thoughts, and anxious feelings, as described by Nina, who thought that she may have had depression. This echoes Lane and Wegner's (1995) research that withstanding long-term deception may be harmful to an individual's mental health, and Foster, Foster and Campbell's (2010) research that showed that romantic secrecy was burdensome to RRs at any romantic stage.

It can be concluded that, for the BI women in this study, the only option was to be in a SRR because of disapproval of their parents towards RRs outside of marriage, a conclusion supported by Lehmiller (2009). Even though the circumstances of their romantic secrecy may not have been ideal, it still allowed them to have some of their romantic needs fulfilled (Lehmiller, 2009). Lehmiller (2009) also states that SRRs will most likely always exist, as certain social and cultural norms do not permit all RRs to blossom openly, which this research may also illustrate.

5.5 Methodological Considerations

As all participants were BI women in SRRs they met the criteria for homogeneity, except for Priya who had broken up with her boyfriend before the interview commenced. Nevertheless her experiences were still accountable, as she had been in a very recent SRR. There were also still differences between all the participants in terms of their living situations, home environments, parental relationships, and restrictions on seeing their boyfriends. This was a small research group, and there will inevitably be

considerable variations between individual difficulties expressed by the participants, variations that were explored throughout as some themes proved to have greater impact on some participants' interview transcripts than on others.

Following Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) guidance on IPA, interpretation of data was made by means of thorough analysis of the participants' accounts of their experiences. As this was a qualitative study, BI women were given the chance to voice their personal meanings and understandings of being bicultural and choosing to be in a SRR, which, from my extensive literature searches, appeared not specifically to have been studied before.

This qualitative study showed the need to research second-generation BI communities within their own subcultural groups rather than as part of a South Asian group as a whole. There are some differences between South Asian subcultures, but in relation to the present study there are, in particular, small differences within the category of British Hindu women, in terms of their cultural practices and way of life, that affect them significantly. It is a unique and varied culture that calls for more development in research methods in order to explore and gain further understanding of this group's diverse experiences.

There were limitations to the method used, including the conducting of interviews in which some questions were closed and leading, due to the participants directing me while telling their stories. Most of the questions were as open as possible, and even when participants assumed I knew about the subject matter, further questions prompted clarity in order to elicit their entire statements from them.

The idiographic nature of IPA allows for in-depth, detailed exploration of a small group of participants to reveal rich data (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). This provides a focus on an individual's world but it does not generate generalisability of findings. Nevertheless, IPA can be argued to transfer its findings from one group to another rather than providing generalisable results (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011), and so it could be contended that the findings of this study could be used to provide awareness of many BI women's experiences as well as those of other people in SRRs.

The sample size could have been made larger to add further data for analysis; however

this would not necessarily have meant richer data, as it could have hindered the process of the extensive and comprehensive analysis of each case (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012).

My qualitative research can complement the vast quantity of research on culture, family and relationships that uses quantitative methodologies. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies yield considerable advances in research and enhance existing psychological knowledge. The range of epistemologies offers a variety of ways of thinking about research, so instead of separating the quantitative from the qualitative approach, they can both hold an important place in research in the field of counselling psychology.

5.6 Qualitative Rigour

According to Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon's (2003) criteria, qualitative rigour was achieved in this study. My research is contributory to the field of counselling psychology as it provides awareness for psychologists who work with BI women and with couples in relationships that are secret from their parents. My study also highlights other issues that BI women face, such as that of not being autonomous.

The design of IPA is defensible as the research questions were answered and were suitable to IPA according to the research aim and objective as stated in Chapter One. The double-hermeneutic (Smith, 2008) was evoked during data analysis in that I tried to make sense of my participants making sense of their distinctive experiences.

Data collection was successful, with the participants taking part in their interviews genuinely and cooperatively in a venue that was comfortable for them. The interviews became easier to conduct each time as I became familiar with the process. This is a strength but also a limitation, because data may not have been as rich in the first interview as in the sixth. Data analysis was made accessible through audio recordings, so that transcripts could allow me to be submerged in the data. The three finalised superordinate themes and their subordinate themes are deeply but tentatively explored in Chapter Four, which illustrates how my research was rigorous in conduct.

This research is credible in claim, as data collection and analysis were sort through meticulously and through supervision. What the participants said implicitly and explicitly was interpreted and written about in Chapter Four, where their stories were

presented in a clear form and discussion organised to address the research aim. Even though the sample was homogenous, each participant's story was similar yet different, making it unique to them but enhancing the research in terms of the conclusions reached.

5.7 Clinical Implications and Limitations

There were several risks to carrying out this research, including whether many BI women would come forward to participate in the study given the sensitive nature of SRRs. However recruitment proved not to be much of a problem, but whether the participants were completely honest in their interviews was a possible concern, as they struggled to be open about certain topics such as sex. This had to be worked around during data collection so as not to make the participants feel uncomfortable, but the issue was thought about during data analysis in order to understand their awkwardness.

Even though the participants were offered debriefing information (Appendix 7), they did not seem negatively affected by the interview process. In fact, Bhumi and Kiran said that it made them much more aware of their situation and it brought to light their experiences of being bicultural. Perhaps as a coping mechanism, they had previously closed their thought processes to their difficulties as they felt theirs was a situation over which they had no control. None of the participants withdrew their data or asked to stop their interviews. Even if some of the questions made them feel uncomfortable, they still carried on with their answers, but I cannot know whether or not they censored their answers. Being BI myself may have impacted the participants' attitudes towards what they said and how they said it during their interviews with me.

The sample consisted of BI women who were aged between 20 and 22 years, which represents quite young women and may have implications for their ability to manage cultural clashes and their decision to keep their relationship secret. Their processes might well change as they get older and gain confidence, so the findings might have been different had the sample participants been, for example, in their late twenties or early thirties. Some of the findings possibly relate to the stage of life the participants are at, for example the stage of being students or former students who have just graduated. As individuals become older, their autonomy could automatically increase, as for example when they begin working and earning money for themselves. Variations in autonomy dependent on age may affect my current findings.

The findings from my study indicated that the secrecy of SRRs was related to the wider impact of being a second-generation bicultural woman with first-generation parents. This connection meant that the study could not solely focus on SRRs, as the women's bicultural experiences, expectations and obligations played an important part in their stories, and these were reflected upon. These gave further context to my study provided by the many situations BI women choose to be in as a result of their upbringing and bicultural identities.

As a counselling psychologist in training, an implication of this thesis is how future clients might react to their therapy were this work to be published. It is clear that bicultural experiences are of interest, and that my research might encourage bicultural clients to come forward for therapy since it has given BI women a voice that they may not have had before. This study could lead BI individuals to choose to have therapy to help them through their bicultural stress and possible familial conflicts, including any apparent dependency on others to make their decisions. Keeping their RR a secret as a result of bicultural customs may lead to negative outcomes such as disputes, constant conflict, and internalised emotions, as experienced by the participants of my study; therapy may be helpful in this situation. As a result of this research, counselling psychologists may have a greater understanding of the issues that may be at play for this client group.

Another implication is how BI women, as well as other individuals who have similar experiences, might feel after reading this thesis. It could bring to light their hardships if similar to those that have been discussed in a compassionate manner, as one of the outcomes is to show how BI women are not alone, and however isolated they may feel in their families, they are never completely isolated from the BI friendship circle they have created for themselves. In this manner, my thesis could encourage BI women to be more open about their feelings regarding uncomfortable situations, and to do so with the help of individuals who can now have more awareness of these matters.

My research outcomes may not be accepted by individuals who read this study who do not agree with the findings; however the data have been analysed in terms of my subjective interpretation, and the analysis is therefore coloured by my own experiences. Nonetheless, there has been co-creation of knowledge between my participants and myself. Some of the participants said that they would be interested in reading my

project if published, as they had never come across a piece of research on this topic before. This illustrated that they were intrigued by what I would find while I was carrying out data analysis.

It may be possible that there are BI women in SRRs who have an enjoyable and positive experience that may have impacted the kinds of participants who were drawn to this type of study. They perhaps may not have been as motivated to share their experiences. The participants who took part in this study may have felt negatively about their relationships with their parents and boyfriends, and even about how they felt about themselves, as suggested by the findings. Even though my interpretations indicated that these bicultural women may not have autonomy, they did not seem aware of this themselves. Nevertheless these women were aware of their bicultural stressors while being in SRRs, which was the main focus of my study.

This project is relevant to counselling psychology because it serves to expand the knowledge and skills of counselling psychologists in practice, and of others involved in this profession. The findings of this study show that young adult BI women may experience SRRs because of the transcultural nature of their family and wider society. The study fills a gap in the current professional literature of counselling psychology in examining SRRs that take place within a bicultural context. The project will, it is hoped, help counselling psychologists to work more effectively with individuals, couples and families with a wide range of mental health, relationship and life-adjustment issues to be addressed.

Intervention strategies for helping the particular client population who took part in this study to ameliorate problems associated with SRRs and to live with first-generation parents might include reassurance, as other BI women may be going through similar situations, and might involve their connecting with others while trying to cope. Accepting the situation as it is may also be a helpful intervention, as the findings of this study show that even though BI women wish to change their situation of being in SRRs, there is little they can do unless they decide to reveal the relationship to their parents. However they may still be able to feel empowered to own decisions such as waiting to reveal their SRRs, as well as not giving up hope. Another intervention strategy could involve tolerating the uncertainty of the future of their SRRs and how their parents might react if they were made aware of the relationship, as uncertainty about this might

provoke anxiety for this particular client group. In a similar vein, perhaps noticing that some situations are beyond one's control might be helpful in terms of trying to change parents' beliefs and values in light of what BI women might want for themselves. Addressing one's commitment to being in a SRR could also be an effective intervention to remind participants in the relationship of why they have chosen to remain within the confines of a secret and to live with their romantic secrecy. The findings show that couples might cope with their SRR better if the two partners have similar romantic scripts (Baldwin, 1992), so professionals working with couples in SRRs may benefit from bringing the couple closer to a shared romantic script. A counselling psychologist's knowledge that a BI woman might be involved in a SRR could help with intervention strategies when the counselling psychologist is working with families involving first-generation parents and their second-generation children. Talking about the background histories of first-generation parents, including how their beliefs, values and marriages were formed, might be helpful to BI women in understanding and possibly forgiving their parents for any anger or resentment either side might feel towards the other. Addressing the fears of this particular client group when they talk about wanting to reveal their relationship to their parents may be appropriate, reflecting the client's right time as illustrated by the participants of this study.

5.8 Important Considerations and Recommendations

IPA was considered to be the most appropriate method for addressing the research questions, but there are some indications and contraindications to this approach. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight the individual and therefore the idiographic nature of IPA. Furthermore Malim, Birch and Wadeley (1992) thought of IPA research as addressing the individual as unique and whole, aiming to give a complete and in-depth illustration, which this research does attempt to present. However Malim, Birch and Wadeley (1992) also pointed out that data analysis does not usually produce generalisations. These were not my intention, as idiographic studies are potentially subjective and impressionistic; nevertheless Reid, Flowers and Larkin (2005) said that commonalities across participant accounts and analytic commentary could lead to relevant insights that have wider implications. In this way IPA could influence and contribute to theory in a broader sense.

IPA gives privilege to the individual, which offers a different perspective from other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory, which usually uses a larger sample to

demonstrate theory (Barbour, 2007). A smaller sample size could be seen as a limitation to IPA studies, but Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) stated that this allows for a richer and deeper analysis that might be constrained by a larger sample. In a similar way, one might view a deeper, more interpretative analysis as veering the researcher away from the original meanings of the clients. However Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) encourage researchers to go beyond the immediate apparent content, resulting in IPA going further than standard thematic analysis (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). The effectiveness of an IPA study can be evaluated by the light it sheds in a broader context (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009), which may be difficult to achieve with a homogenous sample as it can be seen as a sample group that is too specific or unique. This study tried to overcome this by having a research account that is rich, transparent and sufficiently related to literature for readers to assess transferability.

Willig (2001) claimed that IPA gives more room for creativity and freedom than other approaches, and this seems particularly important for the unfamiliar group and situation of BI women in SRRs. The views of this group may be difficult to reach, but this research has sought the beliefs and expectations of these women that may be outside the perceptual field of counselling psychology and other healthcare professionals (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

This study exemplifies that there are important cultural values that BI women consider and follow within their life. They are influenced by their British, their Indian, their own and their parents' cultural values, which they take into consideration when making important decisions in their life. Indian cultural values illustrated in this study involve marriage to someone of the same or similar culture, adhering to community rules, and following traditions set by parents or authority figures. On the other hand British cultural values shown in this study involve striving for independence, having a RR, and trying to be autonomous, even though the findings indicate that BI women may not have autonomy. BI cultural values seem to accept SRRs as an appropriate action for balancing both British and Indian values, and as a way to incorporate what BI women want for themselves.

BI women in SRRs who come to therapy may expect help with managing their romantic secrecy and accepting their choices, and perhaps encouragement to eventually reveal their relationships. After reading this study, counselling psychologists and other

relevant professionals might have a better understanding of BI women's cultural practices and issues surrounding this situation. As a result, clients of this group may expect their therapist to have knowledge and awareness of what they are going through when in a SRR. Learning how to cope better with their situations and developing strategies to tolerate the uncertainty of their futures may also be a client expectation from this particular group. Having a safe and regular space for BI women in SRRs to talk about and explore any difficult feelings that arise from their situations may be all that they need from being a client. Having a therapist to support, respect, and guide them to understand their problems while reflecting on their own insights could be beneficial, which in turn helps them to worry less and have a more positive outlook on life.

5.9 Suggestions for Further Research

A follow-up study on how these BI women experienced their SRR over the next few years would be interesting, to see how their relationships develop. Furthermore, their experiences of any transitions as a consequence of their romantic secrecy would provide more awareness of any mental health effects, for example how these BI women experience revealing their SRRs, and how this is or is not accepted.

A study following the experiences of BI men in SRRs may shed new light on this area, as men might be treated differently to women in Indian cultural parenting (Keshavarz & Baharudin, 2009; Fuligni, Tseng & Lam, 1999). Therefore the way they experience their SRRs or how they might experience their girlfriend keeping her relationship secret from her parents, could yield different findings to those of my thesis.

The effects of the culture clash that second-generation BI women experience with their first-generation parents were explored in this study. However the culture clash that first-generation parents experience with their second-generation children may also be of interest following my study. This could give further insights into the behaviours of bicultural individuals and why they feel forced into decisions that they do not necessarily want to make for themselves. This would also contribute to cross-cultural counselling psychology research (Eleftheriadou, 2010), as does my study.

5.10 Personal Reflections and Conclusion

From carrying out my thesis, I have learnt that my personal identity, interests, values and beliefs affected the research process (Willig, 2001), but I also found the challenge to be captivating and extremely fascinating.

It was important for me to carry out a pilot interview to give me the opportunity to, in essence, practise the interview process in order to extract meaningful data from my participants. I was a nervous novice IPA researcher, so the pilot interview helped me to learn how to ask the right questions in an open manner while also building up good rapport that made myself and the participant feel comfortable. The interviews were not perfect, but I became more confident as each one took place. My reflective journal (Appendix 8) also helped with my self-assurance, as I was able to use it to attempt to understand and manage my anxieties.

I was aware of the fact that this research arose from personal experience, and that my BI cultural background affected the data collection and analysis. The participants appeared open about their bicultural experiences and seemed to assume that my thought patterns were similar to theirs. Most of the time this was the case, so precautions were made through the formulation of my questions for the data to be understood by all potential readers as discussed in Chapter Three. It seems as though my culture was also an advantage, as recruitment was made simple, with BI women possibly feeling more willing to share their experiences with me than with someone with no experience of a similar situation. Additionally, the participants all had or were working towards a university education, and were aware of standard research processes, so may have felt at ease regarding the confidentiality of their information.

Another challenge was to navigate my way through my role as a researcher as well as a therapist. There were many instances when participants discussed difficulties relating to a therapeutic issue, and I had to work hard to hold on to my researcher identity to effectively explore their experiences of that issue with them. It was also inevitable that my identity as a therapist was dominant in some moments, but I didn't feel as though this had a destructive impact on the participant or the data. This navigation became easier as data collection continued, and as a result I eventually remained in my researcher role without feeling uncomfortable with my identity.

I also had a need to support second-generation bicultural women in the issues that they face, which is important to reflect on as, during the data analysis, I identified a lot with my participants' stories. It was a struggle to always evoke the double-hermeneutic (Smith, 2008) which consequently became a lengthy process, but this was expected because of my having to constantly review my personal relationship with the topic. Nonetheless, this thesis honours these participants who felt courageous enough to speak out about their defiant and perplexing bicultural difficulties which centred on their experience of SRRs.

There is an increasing amount of research being carried out relating to biculturalism and multiculturalism, which is also being portrayed in the media. I hope that my piece of research is able to strengthen relationships that may happen in secret, as well as empower bicultural women in particular to be resilient and also hopeful when dealing with the consequences of their decisions. My work shows how there may be a difference between the values of first-generation and second-generation BIs, especially in relation to culture and how some people may negotiate these values to be able to create a sense of themselves.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: UEL Ethical Practice Checklist Approval

ETHICAL PRACTICE CHECKLIST (Professional Doctorates)

SUPERVISOR: Mike Chase

ASSESSOR: Mark Fox

STUDENT: Arti Mehan

DATE (sent to assessor): 13/01/2012

Proposed research topic: The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis

Course: Prof Doc Counselling

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Will free and informed consent of participants be obtained? | YES |
| 2. If there is any deception is it justified? | N/A |
| 3. Will information obtained remain confidential? | YES |
| 4. Will participants be made aware of their right to withdraw at any time? | YES |
| 5. Will participants be adequately debriefed? | YES |
| 6. If this study involves observation does it respect participants' privacy? | N/A |
| 7. If the proposal involves participants whose free and informed consent may be in question (e.g. for reasons of age, mental or emotional incapacity), are they treated ethically? | N/A |
| 8. Is procedure that might cause distress to participants ethical? | N/A |
| 9. If there are inducements to take part in the project is this ethical? | N/A |
| 10. If there are any other ethical issues involved, are they a problem? | N/A |

APPROVED

YES X	YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS	NO
-------	-------------------------------	----

MINOR CONDITIONS:

REASONS FOR NON-APPROVAL:

Assessor initials: MF Date: 23.1.12

RESEARCHER RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST (BSc/MSc/MA)
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SUPERVISOR: Mike Chase

ASSESSOR: Mark Fox

STUDENT: Arti Mehan

DATE (sent to assessor): 13/01/2012

Proposed research topic: The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis

Course: Prof Doc Counselling

Would the proposed project expose the researcher to any of the following kinds of hazard?

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1 | Emotional | NO |
| 2. | Physical | NO |
| 3. | Other
(e.g. health & safety issues) | NO |

If you've answered YES to any of the above please estimate the chance of the researcher being harmed as: HIGH / MED / LOW

APPROVED

YES X	YES, PENDING MINOR CONDITIONS	NO
-------	----------------------------------	----

MINOR CONDITIONS:

REASONS FOR NON-APPROVAL:

Assessor initials: MF Date: 23.1.12

Please return the completed checklists by e-mail to the Helpdesk within 1 week.

Appendix 2: UEL Ethics Approval Letter

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dean: Professor Mark N. O. Davies, PhD, CPsychol, CBiol.

UEL
University of
East London
www.uel.ac.uk

School of Psychology Professional Doctorate Programmes

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to confirm that the Professional Doctorate candidate named in the attached ethics approval is conducting research as part of the requirements of the Professional Doctorate programme on which he/she is enrolled.

The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, University of East London, has approved this candidate's research ethics application and he/she is therefore covered by the University's indemnity insurance policy while conducting the research. This policy should normally cover for any untoward event. The University does not offer 'no fault' cover, so in the event of an untoward occurrence leading to a claim against the institution, the claimant would be obliged to bring an action against the University and seek compensation through the courts.

As the candidate is a student of the University of East London, the University will act as the sponsor of his/her research. UEL will also fund expenses arising from the research, such as photocopying and postage.

Yours faithfully,



Dr. Mark Finn

Chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Sub-Committee

Stratford Campus, Water Lane, Stratford, London E15 4LZ
tel: +44 (0)20 8223 4966 fax: +44 (0)20 8223 4937
e-mail: mno.davies@uel.ac.uk web: www.uel.ac.uk/psychology



The University of East London has campuses at London Docklands and Stratford
If you have any special access or communication requirements for your visit, please let us know. MINICOM 020 8223 2853



Appendix 3: Invitation Letter for Participants

INVITATION LETTER

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in my research study. The study is being conducted as part of my Professional Doctorate in Counselling Psychology qualification at the University of East London.

Project Title

The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Project Description

You will take part in in-depth interviews about your experience in your secret romantic relationship. I am particularly interested in how you perceive and manage the emotions experienced in your secret romantic relationship, how you make sense of any interpersonal conflicts experienced as a result of your secret romantic relationship and how you feel about the lack of social support you have from your parents in regards to your romantic relationship.

The interview is unlikely to cause distress, but should you feel upset by the nature of the questions we can stop the interview at any time.

Confidentiality of the Data

Data collected will be stored on a personal password-protected laptop which only the researcher and supervisor will see. You will remain anonymous in my research, only being referred to as participant 1, 2 etc. Once the write-up of my research is complete, copies of the recordings will be erased and copies of the transcripts will be destroyed. If you choose to withdraw from my research during or after your interview, your data will be destroyed at your request; however, this will only be up until the time I start the write-up of my research.

Location

The interview will be carried out on University of East London premises.

Remuneration

There will be a £10 payment for your participation in this study.

Disclaimer

You are not obliged to take part in my research and should not feel coerced. You are free to withdraw at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

Please feel free to ask me any questions. If you are happy to continue you will be asked to sign a consent form prior to your participation. Please retain this invitation letter for reference.

If you have any questions or concerns about how my research has been conducted, please contact my research supervisor, Dr Mike Chase, 2.36 Arthur Edwards Building, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. (Tel: 020 8223 2945. Email: m.chase@uel.ac.uk).

Or

Chair of the School of Psychology Research Ethics Sub-committee: Dr. Mark Finn, School of Psychology, University of East London, Water Lane, London E15 4LZ. (Tel: 020 8223 4493. Email: m.finn@uel.ac.uk)

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Arti Mehan

Date

Appendix 4: Information Leaflet for Participants

What if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw from the research project at any time, during or after the interview. You can decide that you no longer want to participate without any questions being asked and without any disadvantage to you at any point.

Who do you contact for further information?

Should you have any further questions regarding this research project, please direct them to:

Arti Mehan
University of East London
School of Psychology
Stratford Campus
London E15 4LZ

E-mail: U0914523@uel.ac.uk

School of Psychology Ethics Committee

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate please contact:

Dr. Mike Chase
Research Supervisor
University of East London
School of Psychology
2.36 Arthur Edwards Building
Stratford Campus
London E15 4LZ

Tel: 020 8223 2945
E-mail: m.chase@uel.ac.uk

LOGO

LOGO



The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis

Thank you for your interest in this research project. This leaflet aims to provide you with more detail about the purpose and the method of the research.

What is the study about?

The study is examining the experiences of British Indian women who are in secret romantic relationships. This involves what emotions you experience in your romantic relationship, any social conflicts that you may experience and how you experience the lack of social support from your parents.

Who is the researcher?

My name is Arti Mehan and I am a Professional Doctorate Counselling Psychology student at the University of East London, | Stratford.



Why am I doing this study?

Previous research indicates that individuals of the Indian community are unlikely to seek counselling services when they feel they would benefit from it due to their cultural variables. My research intends to inform Counselling Psychologists about the area of romantic secrecy for British Indian women that may positively impact British Indian women to feel more comfortable to seek counselling as their experiences may then be more widely understood and accepted. I hope my research may make the therapy room feel more like a safe place for these women to normalise their feelings of their experiences.

What will the study require from you?

Participating in the study involves taking part in an interview that will last approximately 60 minutes.

I, the researcher, will ask you about your experiences of your secret

romantic relationship and the impact it has upon your life. I will ask you about why you need to keep your romantic relationship secret, what emotions you experience in your romantic relationship, any interpersonal conflicts you may have experienced and how you experience the lack of social support from your parents.

The interview will be recorded and transcribed for analysis by myself at a later date and time. You will not have to talk about anything you don't want to and can refuse to answer any question at any point.

Where will the interviews take place?

Interviews will take place at the University of East London, Stratford

What about confidentiality?

All interviews will be treated with total confidentiality, in accordance with the strict guidelines set out by the British Psychological Society. Complete anonymity is assured.

The audio recordings and transcript will be stored in a data protected file on the researcher's computer under the participant's chosen pseudonym and the participant's real name will not be disclosed at any stage.

Participants will be given a copy of the transcript to read and can remove any part of it they do not wish to be used in the study. Anonymous excerpts from the transcript will be used in the research project write-up and may be used in future publications based on this research.

Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent to participate in a research study

The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis.

I have read the information sheet relating to the above research study and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher(s) involved in the study will have access to identifying data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research study has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the research study which has been fully explained to me. Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Researcher's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

Researcher's Signature

.....

Date:

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON

School of Psychology

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London E15 4LZ

The Principal Investigator(s)

Arti Mehan

U0914523@uel.ac.uk

Appendix 6: Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis.

The following are initial general questions. Participant responses will be probed for further detail of experiences e.g. “How do you feel about that?” “Please give me an example of that...”

1. Please tell me about your secret romantic relationship in general. Where and when did you meet your partner? How do you experience your relationship?
2. How long has it been secret for? Does anyone know about your secret romantic relationship? How long have you been in your secret romantic relationship?
3. Please tell me why you are in a secret romantic relationship. Why does your romantic relationship have to be kept secret from your parents?
4. What, if any, positive emotions do you experience from and in your secret romantic relationship? How do you manage these emotions?
5. What, if any, negative emotions do you experience from and in your secret romantic relationship? How do you manage these emotions?
6. What, if any, kinds of interpersonal conflicts do you experience as a result of your secret romantic relationship? How do you manage these conflicts?
7. How do you experience the lack of social support you have from your parents in regards to your secret romantic relationship?

Appendix 7: Letter of Debrief

DEBRIEFING INFORMATION

Title of research: The experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships: An interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Thank you for your participation in my research on the experiences of British Indian women in secret romantic relationships. The purpose of my research is to compare your narrative to other participants in my research study who have had similar experiences. By doing so it is hoped that increased awareness of secret romantic relationships for British Indian women will occur in the Counselling Psychology profession.

If you have any concerns or questions following your participation in my research then please do not hesitate to get in touch with either myself, or my supervisor.

Our contact details are as follows:

Arti Mehan

University of East London

School of Psychology

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ

Email: U0914523@uel.ac.uk

Dr Mike Chase

University of East London

School of Psychology

2.36 Arthur Edwards Building

Stratford Campus

Water Lane

London

E15 4LZ

Email: m.chase@uel.ac.uk

Additional support

If you feel you need additional support as a result of taking part in this interview or as a result of the topics discussed, we recommend that you consider contacting the following:

Samaritans helpline: 08457909090

The Samaritans organisation is available to anyone who is experiencing the following:

- Relationship and family problems
- Loss, including loss of a job, a friend or a family member through bereavement
- Financial worries
- Job-related stress or overwork
- College or study-related stress

East London Asian Family Counselling: 02077395058

The East London Asian Family Counselling organisation aim to:

- Relieve distress and suffering of Asian women caused by maltreatment by their families or by persons with whom they are or have been living
- To advance education among inhabitants of East London in particular among Asian women
- To promote any other purpose which is charitable according to English Law and in particular those purposes which will benefit the inhabitants of East London.

Sunai: 01727 375486

The Sunai organisation work with:

- Individual adults, couples, families and children
- A whole host of issues, including perinatal / attachment / bonding issues, relationship issues, stress, anxiety, depression or generalised unhappiness

Forest Therapeutic Counselling Agency: 02085024674

The Forest Therapeutic Counselling Agency is:

- An independent group of qualified professional counsellors and psychotherapists, who offer a range of therapies for both individuals and couples
- They are experienced at treating conditions such as: relationship issues, anger management, psycho-sexual issues, anxiety disorder, bereavement, addictive behaviours, alcohol, drugs, gambling, addictions, adolescence, alcohol assertiveness, bullying, childhood trauma and cognitive behavioural therapy

Relate: 03001001234

Relate is working to:

- Promote health, respect and justice in couple and family relationships. As the country's largest provider of relationship support, every year they help over 150,000 people of all ages, backgrounds and sexual orientations. They have over 70 Centres across the country and a network of counsellors working at 600 locations as well as by phone and online.
- Their services include relationship counselling for individuals and couples; family counselling; counselling for children and young people and sex therapy. They also provide friendly and informal workshops for people at important relationship life stages.

Thanks again for your participation!

Appendix 8: Extract from Reflective Journal

can't explain dating scene to mum. is confident will be accepted cause no dad influences not pushing for marriage. any distance relationship but best gf was like living together. liked not being together this gf cause learn to be independent. friends first, sounds scared to be in a relationship at beginning cause not used to being w/ someone? peer pressure to be together. scared at uni was also annoying for them. can tell ppl who understand dating will hurt family if break up will get excited then bring hopes down. will blame her if broke up protect self by keeping secret. fshn. parent thing - combination of anger + sympathy. scared will reproduce education. relationship is distraction - mum believes a bf is unnecessary. her upbringing is different. had guy friends so was worried not to sleep w/ them. don't want to taint the image she has of her perfect daughter. imp for relationship to be long-term to be accepted. can look for husband but not for bf. same caste/culture is bonus. did she purposely allow herself to fall in love w/ partner to make it more acceptable. his side knows. entire indian population. tradition of marrying same culture. admit would be a problem if diff culture. problems in family if diff caste. says she doesn't tell her. depends on family to believe in marrying same caste, some of her friends do. what are ppl gonna say. good son in law material would be scared to tell. it was diff culture. was scare when she noted out easily manage secrecy. don't want to use chance to communicate. get more easier to make secret of time when. can't handle guilt. knows off her behaviours

her's a friend. sister said don't tell just coz feel guilty. don't need to speak to each other as often now - not talking helps w/ guilt. does want to tell her so both can be part of life. ok to be secret cause will marry him. not just messing around. would keep her distance to cope w/ guilt. was swept up in relationship. arguments affected her moods. have some friend circle. don't publicise either relationship. another dilemma cause have some friends so can't afford independence. arguments aren't about secrecy. was scared from friends which was difficult. decided to be friends - not to admit they wanted to be together. his mum is accepted - cause he's a guy. didn't want to speak to his parents but he encouraged him. both want to meet parents but can't. relationship has changed as time gone on but still secret. diff person in relationship than friend. wants to give out good impression. sister good at analysing. appreciates support new much more than before. would choose her over him. wants her blessing - needs it. can openly talk about him, can tell her where she is. he's a good guy so she will approve. would be horrible if broke up. she would fight for him if she didn't agree w/ her reason for not accepting it. are sleeping together - can do it cause are living out. make it hard if living at home. both have same values that don't need to wait till marriage. mum understands sex can be part of a relationship so another reason why it's secret. is not sleeping around - responsible. need right time to tell her. hints says she'll pick up. plant the seeds. get her prepared. mum's trust etc

Appendix 9: Initial Comments in Transcripts – Example from a Participant (Nina)

Participant: That's why he kind of objected but after a while he didn't give a crap um, so I knew him through, him, and initially we used to, it's very old school, we used to like chat online, and I knew what he looked like and what not and um, he liked someone else at that time, ^{technology} ^{foundation first}

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant: I just, like got to know him as a friend, I ended up liking him, and then things didn't work out with the person that he liked, but he liked her for a while as well, and because we were getting so close um, eventually he saw we met up and what not on my birthday and he asked me out within, a week or so after my birthday, this was when I was 18 um, so I was very young and, it was the sort of my first proper relationship and I was quite happy I mean he's a Guji, I'm a Hindu Punjabi, and um, so I knew that doesn't matter to him anyone in terms of the family or anything as long as he's Hindu ^{different cultures, culture clash} ^{same religion importance} it's fine, so that ticked the box, and he was studying because well he wasn't a waste of a person and just it had prospects, the whole thing was I was waiting to get into a relationship with someone who I knew, I could have a possible future with, cause I've liked guys in the past as well but, so that's where it started and, first bombshell was, I actually got found out once, within 4 months of being in a relationship, when I went to India, like a day after we got together for a month I didn't see him that month, came back and we used to see each other on and off, and I would tell like, crazy lies to get out of the house, and my parents found out so, first year of Uni, first semester of Uni, um November time they found out because, I left my laptop, you know when you close your laptop things still stay signed in?

Interviewer: Hmm hmm.

Participant: So I left my hotmail signed in and they saw my emails, Facebook messages, and that night was actually the night I travelled to see him, he used to live in Portsmouth so I used to travel to see him or he used to come down, um he's originally from London but he studies, he studied in Portsmouth, so that night I came back, pretty late for what I normally come back and they were just, they went berserk, they were just like, who is he how do you know him, how can you trust him, um they were slating him basically and saying you know he's a guy he only wants one thing from you, and you're too young you need to focus on your studies, that's why you're getting crap grades um, a whole bunch of things and then they took my phone off me and they sort of, went through my messages, and you know when like guys and girls send each other messages when you're together, there's some innuendos and stuff, nothing had actually happened at that stage, but they assumed, I did the ultimate thing with him, sex ^{deal w/ secrecy}

Interviewer: Hmm.

Participant: And they were just like how could you, started swearing at me, sort of saying I'm a slut, a whore,

Interviewer: You're parents called you a slut?

Participant: (Nods head) It was it was, as in I didn't expect that reaction, I didn't even think that I'd get found out but I obviously did um, but they were really upset because, I was I'm the youngest, I've only got an older brother, and I've always been someone who's, sort of the goodie goodie out of us two, ^{was careless} ^{what she represents in the family}

Appendix 10: Example of Audit Trail from a Participant (Kiran)

Adapted from Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) IPA

Pencil: Initial noting

Green ink: Descriptive comments – describing the content of the transcript

Red ink: Linguistic comments – exploring the use of language of the transcript

Blue ink: Conceptual comments – engaging with the transcript at a conceptual level

Black ink: Identifying emergent themes

maybe his friend liked her first. was secret by him too.
 he didn't have confidence to do it himself
 after every question did she like this? she says um she was someone else before fb message first then conversation
 1 Participant: Um it was actually a frape, one of his friends had hacked in to his Facebook and added
 2 me, and then he apologised for it cause he sent me some crude messages, but we got messages, I
 3 mean we started talking from there, and I spoke to him for about, 5 months, and then we both
 4 admitted that we liked each other, so we thought we'd give it a try.
 he realised what kind of girl she is. both in this together. some understanding like the crude maybe not cause of virginity
 5 Interviewer: Okay so you talked to him for about 5 months, and how, what kind of, how did you
 6 message each other? catfish mostly through fb + phone. built foundation first
 7 Participant: Um, we used to speak on the phone, uh Facebook messaging, mostly that, but I didn't
 8 see him until, after we told each other that we liked each other, like I hadn't noticed him at Garba, I
 9 so I didn't know what he looked like in real life, I'd only seen pictures of him, um and then we met
 10 each other after we started going out, this term, I mean, I wasn't looking for someone
 11 Interviewer: Oh ok so you decided to go out before you met each other.
 12 Participant: Yeah we kinda admitted that, we thought we'd give it a try, and then we, I met him for
 13 the first time after that. feelings secret too. wasn't called a relationship cause relationship will be based on communicating how they were
 14 Interviewer: Hmm and what was that like when you met him?
 15 Participant: Um, I don't know it didn't even matter to me like, I liked him for who he was, and I'd
 16 already seen pictures of him so it wasn't, it wasn't a surprise but, I think I quite liked it (smiles). happy comfortable reinforcing not anxious enjoyed it all
 17 Interviewer: Yeah, aw that's good, it's quite a nice story then so he saw you at Garba and then you
 18 talked to him for about 5 months, what were those 5 months like for you? first romantic fun cause its her first time exper-
 19 Participant: Um, they were actually quite fun, cause I've never had a relationship before that, so, he
 20 used to give me so much of his time and like I really liked being, friends with someone who I had so
 21 much in common with, so I'd never spoken to someone like that before, who'd always give me so
 22 much attention um, yeah so it was actually really nice. Now it's got even better, but yeah those 5
 23 months was a pretty good beginning. solid foundation - important for her relationship made her sure that this is right for her
 24 Interviewer: Yeah, okay so it was just getting to know each other over the phone, and so what was it
 25 like when you first started dating, properly? described as really nice. first experience of
 26 Participant: Um, which was after March, this time last year after March um, it was quite, it was really
 27 nice like all through the summer it was really nice too, we used to meet often, but then, I moved out
 28 for Uni, so in September I moved out, and then, things started to get a bit rocky cause I think it was
 29 I think it was the distance, I'm all the way up north so I can't always keep coming down, so I think,
 30 small petty little arguments just start getting to us now, but it's gone back to normal now, like we
 31 don't really argue anymore, but we'd definitely say it was a lot better when I was still back in
 32 London. represents better times distance not secrecy that affects them long distance - secret relationship causes arguments
 33 Interviewer: Okay, so when you first started dating you were both in London?
 34 Participant: Yeah. For about 3 to 4 months. And then I had to move out for Uni. education Priority imp to her too. still try to make relationship survive
 35 Interviewer: Hmm, okay, so what was that like when you first moved out?
 facebook provides medium positive memories emotions change of circumstances
 social media - technology have same meals + values education - uni
 same understanding enjoyed having a bf distance - long
 via the mobile phone first romantic relationship London - Bradford
 friends first then boyfriend first time experience distance causes arguments
 not looking for relationship 5 months time period secrecy not an issue
 'going out'. together before meeting male attention relationship survival
 natural move to date 'really nice'

Appendix 11: Looking for Connections across Emergent Themes

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest specific ways to inspire researchers to look for patterns between emerging themes as described below.

Abstraction

The researcher clusters similar themes together and develops a new name for the cluster to reach a superordinate theme.

Subsumption

An emergent theme is given a “superordinate status as it helps bring together a series of related themes” (Smith et al., 2009; p.97).

Polarisation

Examining the transcripts for emergent themes that have an oppositional relationship where the focus is on “difference instead of similarity” (Smith et al., 2009; p.97).

Contextualisation

As the transcripts are “shaped by the participant’s narrative” it is “useful to highlight constellations of emergent themes which relate to particular narrative moments, or key life events” (Smith et al., 2009; p.98).

Numeration

The regular occurrence of emergent themes throughout the transcripts.

Function

Examining emergent themes “for their specific function within the transcript” (Smith et al., 2009; p.98).

Appendix 12: A Cluster of Themes from a Participant (Priya)

2nd - freedom - freedom to date non-secret - secret
 less of freedom

Romance - friends first cared for her
 treated as priority homely guy
 unexpected relationship
 second relationship
 could bring out his nice side

choice of bf - similar values
 cared for family
 proved he'd overturned his life
 good job, independent
 felt needed + wanted by him:
 open + honest w/ each other
 attracted to his maturity

Secrecy - negative impact to relationship
 secret from her parents + sisters
 non-secret from his parents

Intimacy - virgin - different values to bf
 no sex before marriage
 remaining pure
 boundaries made clear
 respecting herself + future husband
 own values stem from parents

relationship breakdown - jealousy diff. views
 no trust
 possessiveness

frustration + anger
 secrecy
 no sex
 not understanding
 controlling + demanding

culture clash - coconut metaphor community rules
 perception own choice vs. parents choice
 in community own value vs. parents value

bf - more acceptable
 husband - acceptable family first though
 Indian w/ parents British to everyone else

how it looks change according to environment
 parents upbringing vs. her upbringing

familial relationships - close to parents
 parents on pedestal
 family first - priority to parents
 family on her side
 parents know best

copying w/ secrecy - change voice tone
 friends as an excuse

gender - boy vs. girl in Indian culture
 bf vs. gf acceptable vs. non-acceptable
 bf is disrespectful to parents

post, present, future - memories of non-secret

bad relationship in present

needs right time to tell in future

ready to be engaged first

Arguments - cope by ignore

stemmed from secrecy

diff values + views

diff stages of life

parents came first, loyalty to parents

not understanding her situation

Emotionality - guilt

feeling bad

looks bad for parents

frustration - parents are afraid

anger - unhappiness us their happiness

upset - avoid feelings to cope

annoyed - ~~self~~ relief if could reveal

parental relationship - protective

have to be certain

need for their approval

their criteria

arent available to discuss her's.

role in family - 3rd child, follows sisters steps

also had SRR adult but still child

learned how to survive

acceptable us: not acceptable

Double life - life w/bf

life w/family

cannot combine lives

secrecy is norm - hiding part of self

support network - open + honest w/friends

friends always supportive

friends respected her

friends as parents

friends shared her emotions + views

friends as moral compass

ending of SRR - parents involvement + sisters

needed parents support to end

getting caught = punishment

relieved, stress-free, welcomed it

lost their respect + trust

appreciate input of parents

parents have good intentions

Appendix 13: Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes present in at least 50% of the sample

Table 3

Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes present in at least 50% of the sample

	1.0 Biculturalism		
	1.1 “...I do feel like I have a double life...”: A double life	1.2 “I’m not completely Indian...”: The culture clash	1.3 “...my parents have a really traditional perspective...”: The negotiation of personal values
Bhumi	Yes	Yes	Yes
Priya	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manisha	No	Yes	Yes
Kiran	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nina	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shilpa	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present in at least 50% of the sample	Yes	Yes	Yes
	2.0 Dependent Decisions		
	2.1 “...it had prospects...”: The particular choice of a partner	2.2 “...I know what my limits are with a guy...”: Holding on to one’s virginity	2.3 “...I have to make sacrifices...”: Retaining the image of a good Indian girl
Bhumi	Yes	Yes	Yes
Priya	No	Yes	Yes
Manisha	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kiran	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nina	Yes	Yes	Yes

Shilpa	Yes	Yes	Yes
Present in at least 50% of the sample	Yes	Yes	Yes
	3.0 Freedom		
	3.1 “I would see him at least every single day...”: Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date	3.2 “I think a lot has changed...talking about it now”: The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship	3.3 “When I’m ready to settle down, I will tell them...”: The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship
Bhumi	Yes	Yes	Yes
Priya	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manisha	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kiran	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nina	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shilpa	Yes	No	Yes
Present in at least 50% of the sample	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix 14: Table of Example Quotes Representing Themes

Table 4

Table of Example Quotes Representing Themes

	1.0 Biculturalism		
	1.1 “...I do feel like I have a double life...”: A double life	1.2 “I’m not completely Indian...”: The culture clash	1.3 “...my parents have a really traditional perspective...”: The negotiation of personal values
Bhumi	<p><i>“...it’s just something I feel like I have to do cause it’s just of the values that they have and the values I have its just a massive clash...”</i></p> <p><i>“...there’s not much you can do like if, if that’s what is asked of you then you can’t really say no...”</i></p> <p><i>“So you’re basically stuck.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I don’t agree with it cause I was never brought up in that way...I’ve been brought up in a western society...my education, background and everything...the people I meet on a daily basis are not all Indians...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I don’t know this cause I was never brought up there...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I just think that you should marry whoever you want to as long as you’re happy and they treat you right.”</i></p>	<p><i>“...both of my parents have a really traditional perspective and if I...subvert from the norm then I don’t know how they would take it...”</i></p> <p><i>“...it’s just the traditional thing its always been like I’m from India...”</i></p> <p><i>“...they have that traditional mindset still they haven’t really adopted to the like western standard’s, yet.”</i></p> <p><i>“...it upsets me because...I have to lie</i></p>

			<p><i>to my parents just so...I can be with him...lying to my parents is the only way...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I have lied to my parents but I still feel like I’m making the right decision.”</i></p>
Priya	<p><i>“...you have two lives, you have one with him and one that you have to keep a secret...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I’m living two lives...one with him...where I can be myself with him but with my parents they don’t know anything about, like boyfriends and stuff, they won’t know nothing about that...I’d wish that it didn’t have to be, two separate ones, it could just be one...”</i></p>	<p><i>“...my mum...would want to know what the society thinks... if I get married to a Tamil... I wouldn’t want anyone to talk about my mum and dad...how they haven’t taught me well...in general everyone...doesn’t marry someone that’s not in their culture.”</i></p> <p><i>“...My parents can’t speak English so I speak to them in Gujarati every day...I think they were quite surprised at the fact that, I was more, on the Indian side than the British, in India.”</i></p>	<p><i>“...my parents are quite like, old fashioned, so, they wouldn’t like the fact that I had a boyfriend...”</i></p> <p><i>“...they wouldn’t like the fact that I had a boyfriend and I moved on to another one, they wouldn’t like it, so I guess they, that’s one of the reasons why I wouldn’t want to tell them, about him.”</i></p>
Manisha		<p><i>“...I’m Asian but I don’t act Asian...”</i></p>	<p><i>“My family are...quite</i></p>

		<p>“... she thinks that I don't, you know, I don't believe in all these values and traditions and stuff...”</p>	<p><i>traditional, my mum...if I told her she'd be like ok fine...you need to get engaged...”</i></p> <p>“...it's just their mentality to be honest, because, my mum was born in India...”</p> <p>“... his parents were like, quite strict as well, so I think, it's just, just been passed down from generation to generation...”</p>
Kiran	<p>“...I wish he did have a close relationship with my parents... cause I wouldn't have to...lead this double life...I have to split my time between spending it at home with them, and going to see him...”</p> <p>“...It's basically a double life...”</p>	<p>“...there's a vast difference in girls...who have been brought up in India, to girls who have been brought up here, who believe in love marriage, finding someone for yourself... that's what I believe...”</p> <p>“...I think being, a, a modern British has something to do with it it's like being grown in an environment where, where there's people falling in love...”</p>	<p>“...they're not modern parents...they've spoken to me about...getting an arranged marriage...”</p> <p>“...it's basically my community, it's very old, it's got a very old culture, where if you're not doing anything with your life you've got a job then just get married.”</p>

<p>Nina</p>	<p><i>“...I have a double life...two lives and it’s hard to maintain one let alone two lives...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I regret that I have to keep it a secret but in a way it’s just, it’s something that I wanted to do, I just know they would never understand...”</i></p> <p><i>“...it angers me sometimes and it frustrates me, but then it’s just like what can I do?”</i></p> <p><i>“...I’d go to the toilet and cry...I can’t in front of my parents...say something which is going on...with him...I would go to my mum and ask for a hug and start crying...she’d ask me...are you stressed from Uni and I’d be like yeah...when I’m not...but I...can’t tell</i></p>	<p><i>“...I’m not completely Indian I’m British, Asian, person and I get influenced by the western and eastern, it’s not like I’m going to leave my culture behind I love my culture...”</i></p>	<p><i>“...I feel they’re backwards in their thinking...they want to keep it traditional...it’s not like I’m going to leave my culture behind I love my culture, but we’ve got to come to a...middle point...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I am not in India, people in India have moved on as well, why am I getting treated like, 30 years ago like I’m in, we were in 2009 at that stage it was, why is it that I I’m still living in the 70’s or 60’s...”</i></p> <p><i>“...they need to make sure that, we stick to their norms, and the society’s norms.”</i></p>
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	<i>her that, because if I do then, that's the end of that..."</i>		
Shilpa	<p><i>"...he's...such a big part of my life and I do want her to be included in it..."</i></p> <p><i>"... I wouldn't want to do, anything without like, without with having her like resent it..."</i></p> <p><i>"... I'd just be...in a bad mood...it just changed my behaviour towards my family...I'm glad...that's sorted out...I can differentiate between...my relationship and my family now..."</i></p>	<p><i>"...when you're looking for...marriage...they have to be...the same caste...they don't have to be but...it causes problems for the family...that's why parents are always like make sure you keep it to same caste...I don't really believe in it..."</i></p> <p><i>"...we're not really in India anymore um, we're in a different country we live here..."</i></p>	<p><i>"...the way she's brought up...the kind of traditional, values, could have been when she was in India...it's not, something...she knows fully well about..."</i></p> <p><i>"... my mum's still pretty traditional in that sense..."</i></p> <p><i>"...if I tell them they'll think I'm doing the wrong thing..."</i></p>
	2.0 Dependent Decisions		
	2.1 "...it had prospects...": The particular choice of a partner	2.2 "...I know what my limits are with a guy...": Holding on to one's virginity	2.3 "...I have to make sacrifices...": Retaining the image of a good Indian girl
Bhumi	<i>"...I knew...he will be able to look after himself 'cause of his degree...he had a</i>	<i>"...we always used to be intimate with each other like we'll hold hands and we kissed</i>	<i>"...in the western society that's changed...we've evolved from that but</i>

	<p><i>job...he was...really outgoing... he looked after me...which is something...I...valued”</i></p> <p><i>“... I didn’t drink and he’s Hindu as well so he didn’t drink either...”</i></p> <p><i>“...the fact that he came and dropped me to the station was something like wow you know no one does that! No one goes out of their way that much.”</i></p> <p><i>“... he was smart like I knew that if there was some sort of long term perspective on things...”</i></p> <p><i>“...my flatmates knew him...they said...it’s no harm...talk to him... it’s because of them...that I...let my guard down.”</i></p>	<p><i>and stuff like that but now that rarely happens.”</i></p> <p><i>“...I don’t know like we kissed and stuff and like um he would like hug me and hold me and then he would just hold my hand...”</i></p>	<p><i>from the...Asian perspective that hasn’t...women are still expected to cook and clean and at the same time have an education as well...”</i></p> <p><i>“... there’s not much you can do like if, if that’s what is asked of you then you can’t really say no I don’t want to do it you can’t say no I don’t want to look after my family cause that’s not fair and then if you don’t want a job then you’re basically like all this education that you’re doing for the rest, up until my whole life has been pointless.”</i></p>
<p>Priya</p>		<p><i>“...I can’t do it until I’m married...our relationship was going downhill...he</i></p>	<p><i>“...guys are more open about things with their parents, they like, he smokes</i></p>

		<p><i>felt...this couldn't be a relationship without it."</i></p> <p><i>"...I think it's not right...you should only be intimate with someone that you're going to spend your whole life with...it's just out of respect...you don't want to get married to someone that knows that...you've slept with, so many other guys...you just want to be pure."</i></p> <p><i>"...we obviously slept in the same bed together but he was never, I wouldn't want to, we would never go so far that he would be intimate with me."</i></p>	<p><i>so his parents knows he smokes and he smokes like outside his house so they know, but if a girl was to smoke their parents would obviously like, it's just, different..."</i></p> <p><i>"...his parents knew, and like they were fine with it, cause obviously he's a guy and he can, he obviously has comfort in telling his parents..."</i></p>
Manisha	<p><i>"...I felt like, he's not gonna mess about because I know that, he's not gonna try and mess about with my feelings..."</i></p> <p><i>"...he listened to me!</i></p>	<p><i>"...we haven't been there yet...we both believe in sex after marriage, so it's good like that, so we're on the same level."</i></p> <p><i>"...obviously we've</i></p>	<p><i>"I'm the baby of the family so, (laughs) I don't really want to ruin that for now."</i></p> <p><i>"...they think that guys can look after themselves whereas they think that</i></p>

	<p><i>In that sense, yeah he listened to me.”</i></p> <p><i>“...it was my first sort of you know when it’s the first sort of, first time I actually let someone have, I’ve actually had a go at a relationship for the first time...”</i></p> <p><i>“... you gotta think about, how you’re gonna get along with the family and this and that, and it’s just (sighs) it’s never ending, as long as he’s Gujarati it’s fine (laughs).”</i></p>	<p><i>been brought up like that...once you’ve set your mind at something, you’re gonna stick to that, and he hasn’t tried to change my mind, I haven’t tried to change his mind, so we just believe in the same thing...”</i></p>	<p><i>girls...they can’t... ’cause they spoil us rotten...(laughs)...my dad spoils me...if I want something I’ll ask him...he’ll get it...”</i></p> <p><i>“... girl’s shouldn’t be allowed to do, a lot of stuff, like I’m not allowed to be out for too long, like late...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I think if there was a boy in the family they would be a little bit more lenient, but because there’s 2 girls, they have to be a little bit more strict, they don’t want us getting out of control.”</i></p>
Kiran	<p><i>“...he’s a Karia, and I’m from Dhew, so we’re both Gujarati...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I’ve never had a relationship before that, so, he used to give me so much of his time...”</i></p>	<p><i>“... it’s not, we never, we don’t want to, that’s not what it’s about... I don’t think either of us are ready for it...”</i></p> <p><i>“...even if it wasn’t secret it wouldn’t really affect how fast</i></p>	<p><i>“...they need me around, cause they don’t, they can’t speak English very well, so they’ll need me to make phone calls here and there, you know about charges and phone bills and anything</i></p>

	<p><i>“...I’d never spoken to someone like that before, who’d always give me so much attention...”</i></p>	<p><i>we go...”</i></p> <p><i>“...even if our parents knew it wouldn’t mean that like we would be having sex, and it doesn’t mean that we are, just cause our parents don’t know, we just haven’t gotten to that stage yet.”</i></p> <p><i>“...he’s not the kinda guy who thinks about sex as a big issue, but you know I’ve always said that I don’t want to do it until I get married.”</i></p>	<p><i>that comes up I’ll have to do it like, pay electricity bills...”</i></p> <p><i>“...my dad always wants me to stay near him, just not move out...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I’m the one that looks after their siblings as opposed to my mum and dad, cause they work full time...”</i></p>
Nina	<p><i>“...he’s Hindu...so that ticked the box...he was studying...I was waiting to get into a relationship with someone...I could have a possible future with...”</i></p> <p><i>“...it was the sort of my first proper relationship and I was quite happy...”</i></p> <p><i>“...some of them do get</i></p>	<p><i>“...he does get carried away and tries to do stuff that I don’t want to do...sometimes I just give in because I feel sorry...as if I should...it’s the only time I’ve got with him I should be doing, this sort of stuff and, keeping him happy...”</i></p> <p><i>“...there are times</i></p>	<p><i>“I feel...they have...a difference between how they behave with their son and how they behave with...their daughter...it’s...the double standards...he could...live out for uni and I had to argue to even to apply to university outside of London...”</i></p> <p><i>“...because he was a</i></p>

	<p><i>quite shocked, but some of them kind of relate to me a lot of them are Asians as well, so they know what happens...how the norm is...</i></p>	<p><i>when you don't wanna do it, you don't wanna do anything...I dunno you just wanna hug, instead of being felt up...it's hard to tell him that...</i></p> <p><i>“...it's not very often and it's not all the way, it's just, obviously he has seen me naked and stuff...”</i></p>	<p><i>guy and he lived out for Uni it was easier for him to do stuff and, get away with stuff...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I try to do it so it's not, conflicting with the way they think...”</i></p>
Shilpa	<p><i>“...I used to go to the Hindu society in my first year...we met there...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I'm I think I'm lucky in this case, in the sense that yeah he is like, he's Gujarati and he's Patel...”</i></p> <p><i>“... this is like my first serious relationship with anyone...”</i></p> <p><i>“... we're very compatible...we're like we work well together, and he's a good guy so yeah, and he's...a</i></p>		<p><i>“...if I did tell her...and...she got really excited...that I'm seeing someone...if she found out that...we broke up...I can see that being...a bit hard for her...she doesn't really like seeing me upset...”</i></p> <p><i>“... she's got this high standard for me...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I'm the only one that she really does still mother...”</i></p>

	<p><i>Patel, I'm Patel, that helps... "</i></p> <p><i>"...we've got the same type of like, family tree in India..."</i></p>		<p><i>"... it's different telling, guys, then it is to, to females I guess..."</i></p>
	3.0 Freedom		
	<p>3.1 "I would see him at least every single day...": Experiencing the short-lived freedom to date</p>	<p>3.2 "I think a lot has changed...talking about it now": The costs of being in a secret romantic relationship</p>	<p>3.3 "When I'm ready to settle down, I will tell them...": The right time to reveal the secret romantic relationship</p>
Bhumi	<p><i>"...I decided to live out cause of the pressure of final year I wanted to be...closer...to university..."</i></p> <p><i>"...we saw each other literally every single day and we constantly was communicating with each other like whether it'd be text or face to face or over the phone it was just constant communication..."</i></p> <p><i>"... if we were like walking just casually on the street and I'll</i></p>	<p><i>"...as soon as we finished our exams we just lived at home we didn't have that...one last meal together...moving out...was really difficult because...I spent the whole year there, that was the place that I...met him... I'm never going to get that back again so for me it's just memories..."</i></p> <p><i>"... I miss those little things...I can't just go and see him whenever I want to I</i></p>	<p><i>"...I don't have a strong case at the moment...the way they see me is I'm still too young, I'm 21...when I'm a bit older like 22 or 23 then I can...say that I'm serious..."</i></p> <p><i>"... I'm thinking to wait till I finish, till I've finished my masters and then tell her that way I can turn around and say like I was with him during the whole of my undergrad my postgrad I didn't,</i></p>

	<p><i>hold his hand cause it was just that there was little things that just showed well to us that showed that we were a couple as opposed to just normal friends.”</i></p> <p><i>“I knew that for me this is going to be difficult when I...leave university because we see each other all the time while we’re at university that like literally we used to see each other and I know that once I leave I’m not going to uh I’m going to miss this so I just literally, treasured everything, every single day.”</i></p>	<p><i>can’t just call him and be like oh come you know let’s go I’ll make dinner for you and stuff like that that stuff has all stopped.”</i></p> <p><i>“...my final year of university was a massive part of my life that I’ll never forget but like I know that we’re still together at the end of the day, so that’s something that I’ve stuck on to, like he hasn’t gone or anything.”</i></p> <p><i>“...the communication that we had, the amount of time we saw each other, the little things we did like seeing each other on a daily basis, just made, is something that I’ll never get again, well not for a long time anyway.”</i></p>	<p><i>mess up...”</i></p> <p><i>“...they’ll be glad...he has a good educational background...he does medicine so he wants to be a doctor and it’s all Asian parent’s dream to have...a child...who’s a doctor...”</i></p>
Priya	<p><i>“...he, always used to come to my house and cook me dinner...which</i></p>	<p><i>“...cause they went India for that long I was with him nearly</i></p>	<p><i>“...I obviously wanted to tell them the truth, but um, I</i></p>

	<p><i>was really sweet (smiles)...no one has ever done that for me..."</i></p> <p><i>"...he used to work at a pharmacy in W and I live right there...my parents were in India, so he used to just come round to mine to just talk..."</i></p> <p><i>"...he would try and find ways to make me happy..."</i></p>	<p><i>every day, and um cause my parents were back like they, I always I had other responsibilities with them as well, and he didn't understand that..."</i></p> <p><i>"...my parents came back after my sister's wedding...they obviously didn't know about it, so he couldn't come see me as often..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I like to go out with my family...and I never used to be able to contact him while I was with them so, he used to get frustrated at me..."</i></p>	<p><i>just didn't feel like it was the right time. I need to know a person long enough for me to tell them..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I didn't feel like it was the right time, to tell them, cause I didn't know him for that long."</i></p> <p><i>"...I just feel like it's disrespectful for me to tell them, that I've been out with someone for such a short amount of time, and then I, if I do break up with him I have to tell them that as well..."</i></p> <p><i>"...it's up to me when I want to tell my parents..."</i></p>
Manisha	<p><i>"...we saw each other almost every single day, when I was at Uni..."</i></p> <p><i>"...we used to see each other all the time,"</i></p> <p><i>"... we talk every single</i></p>	<p><i>"... it's harder for me to get out of the house, I can't be...I'm going to see my friends every single day...my parents will be like, what are you doing,</i></p>	<p><i>"When I'm ready to settle down, I will tell them, but right now I'm not because I've just come out of university, I haven't got a stable job so I need to find one, until</i></p>

	<p><i>day, throughout the whole day we talk...”</i></p>	<p><i>so it’s difficult...”</i></p> <p><i>“... sometimes you wish you could see him a bit more, and...sometimes he used to argue...I used to make him understand and say look, I can’t get out...you need to understand...”</i></p> <p><i>“... I think he was more frustrated than angry, the fact that he couldn’t see me, it was frustrating.”</i></p>	<p><i>I have a stable job, and I’m in that job, I don’t want to get married, I don’t want to get engaged...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I want to get in a stable job before I tell her, and I want him to get in to a stable job...”</i></p> <p><i>“... when it comes closer to the time, I’ll introduce him to them, and hopefully they won’t have a problem with him and if they do then I’m just gonna be like I’m not marrying anyone else, so yeah, that always works.”</i></p>
Kiran	<p><i>“...especially in the summer we used to meet up, we used to go to the park to play tennis...”</i></p> <p><i>“...it was really nice like all through the summer it was really nice too, we used to meet often...”</i></p>	<p><i>“...every time he was free, I’d be out...every time I was free he’d be out...that will...start arguments...because ...we don’t get time to talk...as much as we used to...”</i></p> <p><i>“...I think it was the distance, I’m all the</i></p>	<p><i>“...we’ve discussed about telling our parents before but, he’s always like...we’re too young, I would tell my parents...but...they’d be like...you’re too young at the moment...”</i></p> <p><i>“If I told them a</i></p>

		<p><i>way up north, so I can't always keep coming down, so I think, small petty little arguments just start getting to us now..."</i></p> <p><i>"...the distance started getting a bit too much, we'd argue over things like, you know, you're not home anymore so we never get to talk..."</i></p>	<p><i>couple of years down the line, then maybe, I think they'll understand, but right now definitely not."</i></p> <p><i>"...I don't want my parents to you know, start talking about engagements and marriages like, that's a bit freaky..."</i></p>
Nina	<p><i>"...when I went to India, like a day after we got together for a month I didn't see him that month, came back and we used to see each other on and off..."</i></p>	<p><i>"I wasn't allowed to go home alone, everything just stopped completely, and it took me about a year and half to build up some sort of trust again."</i></p> <p><i>"I wanted to say that I haven't, been sort of diagnosed with depression at that time, I didn't go to the doctor and talk about it but, I was quite upset quite depressed, wouldn't talk to my classmates wouldn't talk to</i></p>	<p><i>"...I see myself revealing it to my parents, maybe after my job's started after he's in a more stable job..."</i></p> <p><i>"...I see, it going to the ultimate thing of marriage, which is why I've sort of stuck by it..."</i></p> <p><i>"...when he is, stable in his feet then I would be comfortable about introducing him to my parents, hopefully by this time I've completed my</i></p>

		<p>anyone.”</p> <p>“...what they had done, I had a Blackberry they took it off me...”</p> <p>“...a lot of our arguments come down to, not being able to see each other a lot...”</p> <p>“...it’s frustrating we talk more over the phone, and whatsapp than we do, than the time we get to see each other...”</p>	<p>degree I’ve started, my work so, there’s nothing next stage of my life would be, being with someone...”</p>
Shilpa	<p>“I never really wanted a relationship with a guy at uni...but it was just one of those things that happened...”</p> <p>“... we practically lived together... ’cause we were at Uni...it was nice because we were always together...”</p> <p>“..I could say would I even be in a relationship if I was living at home...”</p>		<p>“...the reason I haven’t really told her now because it isn’t the right time...”</p> <p>“...I was like eighteen nineteen...in her eyes that’s pretty young...I’m still at uni...I’m still like in education...I think that’s why I didn’t tell her...”</p> <p>“... I can see myself</p>

			<p><i>telling her, in the...near future definitely because like, we've been together for like two years now and um, and it's going good so, I think yeah, I will definitely, do it."</i></p>
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