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'You are stealing our future'

a narrative inquiry into the experiences of Youth Climate Strikers in Bristol, 2020

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'You are stealing our future': a narrative
inquiry into the experiences of Youth Climate
Strikers in Bristol, 2020

By Lauren Hennessy

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in
accordance with the requirements of the Degree of Master of
Education (MSc) in the School of Education

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Abstract

Young people have the highest stake in the future of the planet. As educators and researchers, we must consider our role in envisaging possible futures with the youth of today. It is proposed that the first step in this task is to listen to the experiences of youth climate activists. This study begins that process using a methodology inspired by narrative inquiry. The Youth Strike 4 Climate (YS4C) movement has successfully used a powerful narrative to mobilise youth activists on a global scale against the perceived inaction of world leaders in the face of an existential threat. The meta-narrative, which draws on emotive language and concepts of inter-generational justice, is termed the 'stolen future' narrative for the purposes of this study. It is used as a framework through which to investigate the vital components of the YS4C story and to imagine the lifespace of the study. Subsequently, the lived experiences of five participants from Bristol YS4C are explored through narrative inquiry. In this report the five narratives are re-told and analysed and comparisons are drawn between the meta-narrative and the lived experiences of the individuals. It is found that the stories as told by the participants provide a richer, contextualised understanding of the lived realities of the activists than the meta-narrative offers. The findings reveal conflicting notions of youth role within the movement, as well as gaps in emotional intelligence. The level of nuance evident in the findings demonstrates the need for open participatory methods of research which place the emphasis on real lived experiences and attend to issues of place, sociality and temporality. From these findings, further steps towards the collaborative task of world-building are proposed.

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Thank you to my family and friends for the support and encouragement which expressed itself in a myriad of ways. To my partner Michi, for keeping me afloat. To my dear friend Willy, without whom I may never have made it through.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The dissertation has not been presented to any other University for examination either in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed: Lauren Hennessy

Date: 21 September 2020

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Prelude

It is a wet, rainy Friday in February. The kind of day that I would usually stay inside if possible. I cycle into Bristol city centre with a bamboo pole gripped across my handlebars, cardboard placard taped to the end. As I approach the city centre, I notice vast swathes of people, many with homemade signs like mine. There are streams of them. I park my bike at the waterfront and turn around to watch the people advancing – it's a river now! They flow as one, never ceasing. It's as if the incessant rain has flooded the streets but instead of water rising, it's people!

There is a buzz of excitement. I can hear the loudspeakers from where I'm standing. My colleague arrives to meet me – our school has closed for the day (what a thrill when the message came through late last night!). We make our way excitedly onto College Green, it's absolutely packed and already becoming a quagmire. But we don't care. We find a spot beneath a huge tree and wait eagerly for the one person we are all here to see.

Greta Thunberg. When she finally appears on the stage, she is so tiny that I can barely see her above the sea of umbrellas. She's wearing her trademark yellow cagoule. She keeps the speech short but sharp. 'Let's march' she concludes. As she leaves the stage my colleague and I slip out of the square in an attempt to momentarily escape the crowds. As we round the corner we almost collide with the start of the procession - a line of Youth Strikers holds a huge banner across the road, with Greta at its centre. A samba band follows them and we join in right behind. The swathes of protestors are held back by stewards but as we pass, they are suddenly released and come flooding down to join us. As we proceed, I spot many familiar faces among the crowds. At every window there are people waving. I see many of my students – some on top of bus stops leading the chants. I lose my colleague but it doesn't matter. I'm not alone.

(Youth Strike 4 Climate rally, Bristol, 28.02.20)

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report revealed the extent of the climate and ecological emergency (CEE) to be worse than previously believed with global warming set to reach a catastrophic 3°C of warming according to current trajectories (IPCC, 2018). The scientific consensus has reached almost unanimous agreement that these impacts are caused by humans (Cook, et al., 2016). It has also become widely acknowledged that future risks and uncertainties will have to be managed by the youth of today, hence the stakes are particularly high for them (O'Brien, et al., 2019). In their 2020 book 'The Future We Choose', Figueres and Rivett-Carnac set out a pathway to a regenerative future: it is a world-building project which requires a complete shift in mindset and depends entirely on collaboration. Since 2018, youth around the globe have been calling out the lack of action regarding the CEE and making their voices heard like never before.

The Youth Strike 4 Climate (YS4C) movement marks an unprecedented mass mobilization of young people around the globe, shattering perceptions of youth as disengaged from civil action (Han & Ahn, 2020). March 15th 2019 saw actions in 1,700 cities involving an estimated 1.4 million people (Carrington, 2019). While environmental activism is not a new phenomenon, this wave of direct action signifies a fresh burst of energy for the climate movement (Thomas, et al., 2019). The YS4C movement was initially sparked by the Swedish school pupil, Greta Thunberg, who decided to strike alone every Friday from August 2018. In the same months that Thunberg's school strikes began to gain media attention, Extinction Rebellion (XR) was formed. The two movements share similar aims but operate in distinct ways; XR is multi-generational, uses tactics of mass civil disobedience including mass arrest and operates through autonomous cell-like affinity groups.

Since the YS4C movement began, the mainstream narrative around climate change has shifted. This shift can be demonstrated by the increased frequency of climate related news stories, as well as

changes in the terminology used. Global media outlets made 93,800 mentions of Greta Thunberg between 20 to 26 September 2019 (Munawar, 2019). The Guardian replaced the term 'climate change' with terms like 'climate emergency, crisis and breakdown' (Carrington, 2019). Additionally, the terms 'climate strike' and 'climate emergency' became the 2019 words of the year in the Collins and Oxford dictionaries respectively (BBC newsround, 2019; BBC News, 2019).

1.2 Personal Interest

I consider myself an environmental activist. In February 2019 I became an active member of an XR affinity group as well as a local group coordinator. My own activism has also influenced my work as a Maths teacher, in that I seek to bring in issues of social and environmental justice into the classroom wherever possible. In my current school I founded the Youth Environmental Society following Thunberg's visit to Bristol in February 2020.

1.3 Research Rationale

As Emmanuel Macron, the French president, put it "we cannot allow our youth to strike every Friday without action" (Milman & Smith, 2019). As an educational researcher I share the sentiment, as do many academics; in a joint letter, 22 scientists called for colleagues across all sectors to support the youth climate protestors (Hagedorn, et al., 2019). Thomas et al. (2019) encourage educators to examine their own role "in both taking action on climate change and cultivating the conditions for youth political participation" (p.99). Furthermore, O'Brien et al. (2019) express the need for support from teachers in the form of education which inspires critical reflection. Additionally, I would add that the emotional burden of facing an existential threat is not something that should be borne by the youth alone. Hence, as educators, we have roles to play both in preparing and supporting young citizens for the challenges ahead.

1.4 Research Aims and Intentions

In the words of Bowman (2019), “climate action is more than protest: it is also a world-building project” (p.296). That project will take cooperation and resources: youth may have the necessary vision, but they lack political power and tools. This study is intended as a first step towards the collaborative task of world-building. I propose that to lay the foundations, researchers and educators first need to attend to the present experiences of youth activists. This means looking past the narrative presented by the YS4C movement and listening to the experiences of individual activists. My aim is to contribute by preparing the ground for envisaging possible futures.

Appendix 1.1 shows initial ideas for research questions which will be explored further in chapter 4.

1.5 Research Design

Top-down information flows have tended to dominate in climate change narratives (Tanner, 2010). Bowman (2019) suggests research should take an open, more participatory approach. Hence, the methodological approach chosen is narrative inquiry, in which the experiences of individuals are collected in the form of narrative data. The meaning-making process is a collaborative effort between the researcher and narrator through the telling and retelling of the stories, as well as the reader who in turn adds their own interpretation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

1.5.1 Title and Terms

The focus of the research is the Youth Strike 4 Climate (YS4C) movement and the experiences of the Youth Climate Strikers. ‘You are stealing our future’ is a quote from a speech by Greta Thunberg at U.N. Climate Summit plenary session in Poland in 2018 (DemocracyNow!, 2018). YS4C is used as a collective term to refer to all youth climate activist groups using school striking as a tactic.

Throughout this report, the term ‘activist’ shall be used, although not all Strikers self-define in this way, as will be shown in chapter 5.

The researcher's conceptions of narrative inquiry and experiences will be explained in chapter 2. The choice to include the place and year in the title reflect the importance of place and temporality to this type of inquiry, again this will be explored in chapter 2.

1.5.2 Interest in Narrative

As Monbiot (2017) says, "stories are the means by which we navigate the world" (p.1). Listening to the stories of young activists is the first step in opening up a dialogue as to how we can act as supportive allies. However, my interest in narrative goes beyond the phenomenon which I am investigating in the form of data in this inquiry. It is the narrative that has been used to unite the YS4C movement on a global scale which intrigues me and convinces me of the power of stories. This narrative will be explored in depth in chapter 3.

1.5.3 The Focus on Greta Thunberg

Thunberg will be referred to at multiple points in this study. Her words are taken to embody the YS4C movement, resembling the work of Holmberg and Alvinus (2020). This is a somewhat problematic notion, given that many young activists are carrying out the same type work and receive far less attention, including those on the frontlines of the CEE in the Global South, as has been noted by Thunberg (Nikolic, 2019). However, for the purposes of this small-scale study, there is not the scope to include reference to multiple figures. Additionally, the lack of extant academic research into other prominent youth activists creates a difficulty. Hence it is considered appropriate to emulate other studies which take the words of Thunberg to represent the wider movement.

1.5.4 Planning Research during COVID-19

Since March 2020, events have unfolded rapidly around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the entire design of this research. The lockdown drastically changed the way we live, work, learn and communicate (Killgore, et al., 2020). The unprecedented six-month-long school closures

have rendered the concept of 'school strikes' meaningless, at least temporarily. As a researcher, I found the original research design no longer resonated and the entire inquiry needed to be reimagined (see Appendix 1.2 for my research journey).

1.6 Overview of Chapters

To orient the reader, the next chapter shall present the methodological approach of narrative inquiry. Chapter 3 will then explore the literature regarding the youth climate activism. Chapter 4 will outline the specific methods used in this inquiry and the following chapter will present and discuss the findings. Finally, chapter 6 will offer conclusions, bringing the focus back to the educational research community and indicating avenues for further investigation.

2 Exploring the Methodological Approach: Narrative Inquiry

This chapter will explore the key theoretical features of the chosen methodological approach of narrative inquiry (henceforth, NI). It will end by beginning the process of designing the present inquiry. The specific methodology and research tools will be presented in Chapter 4.

2.1 What is Narrative Inquiry?

NI has emerged from the view that humans live storied lives and the stories we tell about ourselves and others shape our lives, becoming our stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). NI is comprehended as the study of experience as story (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). *Narrative* refers to both the phenomenon under study, as well as the method used to conduct the research (Clandinin, 2006; Coulter & Smith, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It has been suggested that all inquiry is in fact narrative (Hendry, 2010).

For the purposes of this study, NI is conceived of as a specific theoretical approach to exploring the stories people live and tell (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly have been the most influential scholars in the design of this inquiry and many of their works have been used as guidance.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

My personal ontological perspective is aligned with a constructivist paradigm, which asserts that the “social phenomena making up our social world are only real in the sense that they are constructed ideas” (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 25). Furthermore, for the purposes of this study it is appropriate to explicitly state the ontological commitment to a Deweyan view of experience as explored in the next section (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009). Through the constructivist lens, it is the people involved in social interactions, or *social actors*, who attribute meaning to their experiences. The natural epistemological position stemming from the constructivist paradigm is interpretivism, which

“requires an interpretation by the observer of the meaning which the actor gives to his behaviour” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 88). NI is concerned with interpreting rather than explaining, hence it is well-suited to the constructivist paradigm (Coulter & Smith, 2009). As a member of the social world, I myself will bring my own meanings and understandings to the study (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

2.3 Features of Narrative Inquiry

In this approach, the notion of experience is derived from John Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy. Experience is conceived of as the interplay of two main components - interaction and continuity (Hutchinson, 2015). Interaction refers to the idea that people cannot simply be understood as individuals, they are part of a social context. Continuity means “each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). Clandinin and Connelly expanded on this conceptualisation with the addition of what they consider a third essential element – situation, or place. Hutchinson (2015) supports this with the claim that “separating experience from place is an act of silencing the lives and stories that exist within that place” (p. 14). This led to the creation of the metaphoric three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, within which all NI

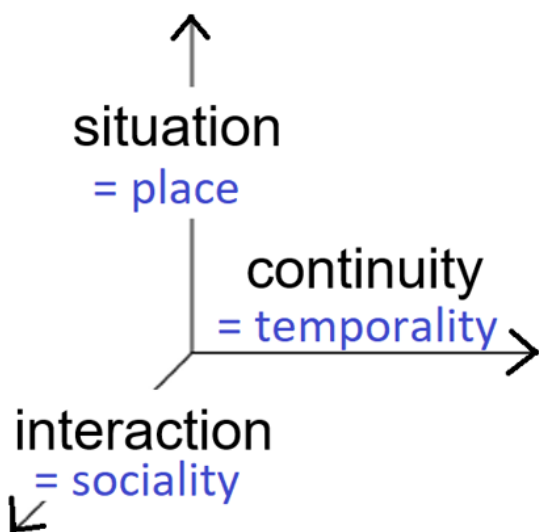


Figure 2.1: metaphoric 3D narrative inquiry space

research takes place (represented diagrammatically by the researcher in Figure 2.1). Hence, every NI should consider all of the following factors: the personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity); place (situation). These three ideas are also referred to as ‘commonplaces’ and are termed sociality, temporality and place respectively (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) – which are the terms adopted for this study.

2.4 Justification of Methodological Approach

Bowman (2019) indicates the necessity of a more participatory approach to research into young people's climate action and claims, "creative methodologies can aid researchers and young climate activists as we imagine, together, worlds of the future." (p. 296). NI is appropriate for my purposes as it strives both to portray experience as well as to question common understandings (Coulter & Smith, 2009). Clandinin (2006) put forward the idea that through NI and by listening to young people's stories, we could create the conditions to "change the stories they live by" (p. 52). As Monbiot (2017) advocates, we need to tell a new story to get out of this mess. I believe research conducted through NI is a first step in that direction.

2.5 Setting Out

As a starting point, I wrote down my own narrative beginnings as suggested by Clandinin and Connelly (2006) (see Prelude and Appendix 2.1). This process of reflection was necessary to position myself in relation to my topic, as shall be explored further in Section 4.5.

To prepare for the inquiry, my next task was to imagine the lifespan. This requires an exploration of the chosen topic and imagined possible participants, as existing in an ever-shifting space (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In order to more fully imagine the lifespan of the study, a literature review was undertaken and will be presented in the next chapter. This was necessarily broad in scope, as in NI it is impossible to predict exactly what will surface. Additionally, as YS4C is a movement still in its infancy, there is a dearth of specialised academic research. It was subsequently decided to use the framing of the YS4C narrative itself to structure the literature review. This acted both as an exploration of the specific narrative construction used in YS4C messaging, as well as a delve into the specific features of the movement itself.

3 Imagining a Lifespace: Literature Review

“You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I'm one of the lucky ones. ...

You are failing us, but the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you and if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you.”

Greta Thunberg, at the UN Climate Action Summit on 23/09/2019, from NBC News (2019).



Figure 3.1: Greta Thunberg, fighting back tears while speaking at the UN Climate Action Summit on 23/09/2019. Photo from Keane (2019).

Introduction

The YS4C movement is made up of many different groups operating under a variety of names and with specific local demands. However, there is a sense of collective identity which gives the movement its mass global scale (Thomas, et al., 2019). I suggest this has been achieved through the use of a powerful common narrative. Greta Thunberg's speech at the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 is a prime example of the power of this narrative; both the content of the speech and the delivery were full of emotion (see Figure 3.1).

An investigation of the YS4C meta-narrative is used as a means to theoretically explore the movement more generally. For the purposes of this study, this meta-narrative shall be referred to as the 'Stolen Future' narrative. This chapter begins by summarising the narrative before examining the individual components. To clarify, this exploration of the 'Stolen Future' story is considered a route into the lifespace of the study, rather than a critique of this specific narrative construction.

Overview of the 'Stolen Future' Narrative

Han and Ahn (2020) used a Narrative Policy Framework to analyse speeches by Greta Thunberg and other prominent Youth Strikers, as well as content from YS4C platforms – Figure 3.2 (on next page) shows the narrative components they identified. The setting in which the story unfolds is a world in the midst of a climate crisis with those in power doing nothing to avert catastrophe. Future generations and the Earth itself are the victims, while the story's villains take on a range of forms,

from past generations to current state leaders and the media. It is up to the Youth Strikers to shift the global dialogue and thereby force the action that will save the day.

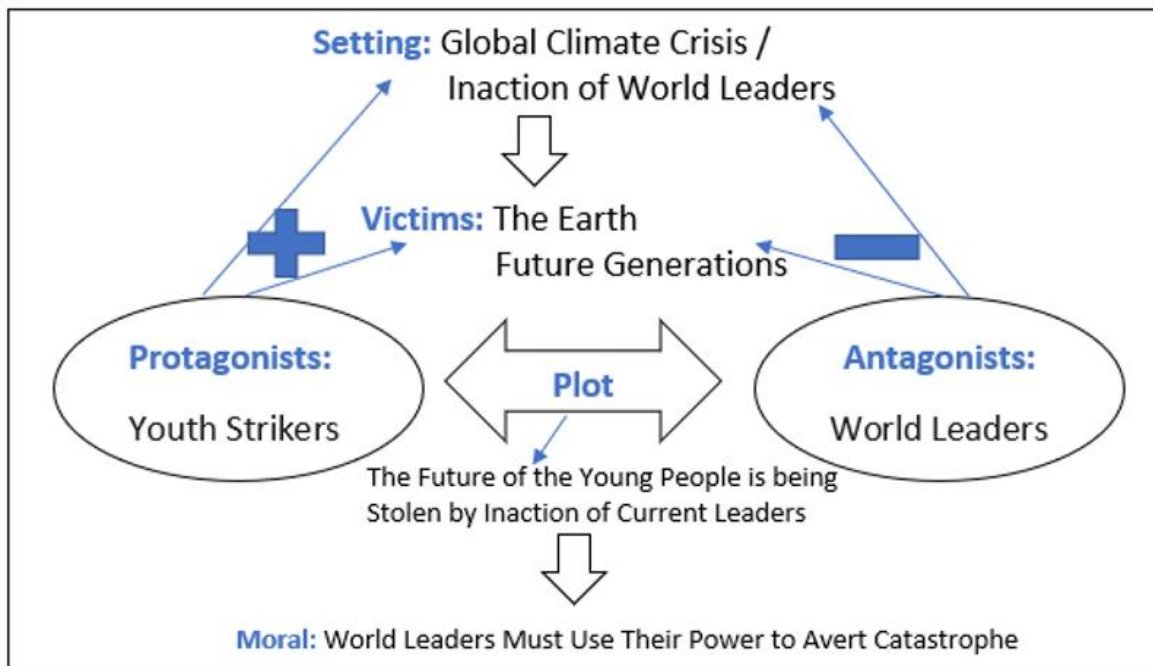


Figure 3.2: Narrative components in youth climate mobilization, adapted from Han & Ahn (2020), blue text is from the original, black text has been added.

Structurally, Han and Ahn’s conceptualisation provides the basis for my own interpretation.

However, alternative views will be presented at each stage. Moreover, there are various elements which I believe were overlooked, such as the following: the perception of youth disengagement as a backdrop to the narrative; the importance of the psychological impacts of the climate crisis in setting the scene; the role of science in the story. Each of these additional components will be presented in this chapter at the appropriate point in the narrative.

3.1 Backdrop: Concern over Youth Disengagement

Many scholars have pointed to widespread concern about the lack of youth participation in civic and political life (Boulianne, et al., 2020; O'Donoghue, 2007; Earl, et al., 2017). Youniss et al. (2002) suggest that youth disengagement in traditional politics is common across the globe and note a

'pattern of apathy' in regards to the lack of youth involvement in formal political systems. Holmberg and Alvinus (2020) propose that a Western view of children as lacking in political agency has meant that "the power of children has therefore been overlooked" (p.81). This perception of youth as disengaged could explain the level of attention which has been generated by the sudden unprecedented mobilisation of youth on a global scale.

Rather than a specific quality of modern youth, problems of social disconnection have also been presented as a general reflection of some modern cultures (Yates & Youniss, 1998). It has been argued that it is the exclusion of youth from decision-making processes that can lead to disengagement - while youth may be given a voice through certain platforms, it does not necessarily come with real power (O'Brien, et al., 2019). This notion is supported by Bowman (2019), who claims that "society tends to perceive young people as subjects of political engagement more than agents of change" (p.299). Bowman goes further to argue that the binary dis/engagement framing itself is the problem as it fails to consider the young person as "a political agent in hybrid, shifting and complex ways" (p.296). In fact, contemporary political participation can be indicated by multifarious acts - such as participatory politics, online activism, boycotts – which often occur outside of formal organisations (Earl, et al., 2017; Elliott & Earl, 2018). It is plausible that the traditional dichotomous framing fails to account for this. Hence, participation needs to be understood as multifaceted and fluid.

3.2 Setting the Scene of the YS4C Narrative: Disconnect between Crisis and Action

The setting of the story is a world which is headed for catastrophe with world leaders who are doing too little to avert the disaster. The evidence suggests that the biosphere is becoming irreparably damaged by human activity and the sixth mass extinction is already underway (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018). There is an incongruence between the promises made through the Paris Agreement and what

is being achieved in reality (Han & Ahn, 2020). This disconnect between the scientific evidence and action from governments is a galvanising force for the climate movement (Thomas, et al., 2019).

3.2.1 Facing an Existential Threat – Psychological Impacts

The mental health effects of the CEE are increasingly becoming a part of the discourse (Clayton, et al., 2017). A new set of psychological phenomena has emerged as a result of the climate crisis; these have been termed “psychoterratic” impacts (Albrecht, 2020). In the context of this research based in the UK, these impacts are considered more relevant than direct physical impacts at the current time. The anxiety induced by awareness of the extent of climate and ecological breakdown is often termed eco-anxiety and is expected to become more common as the planet further destabilises (Hickman, 2019). Pihkala (2018) comments that eco-anxiety can be felt as a direct impact of an environmental problem, such as loss of an area of natural beauty but that is even more common as an indirect impact when people feel that climate change is ‘taking away their future’. This is tied into the idea of anticipatory grief, which is defined as “grief emergent from anxiety of, or preparation for, future losses and mourning for an anticipated future that will likely cease to be” (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018, p. 278). The authors recognise that this type of grief may particularly impact children and young people, hence it is of particular relevance to this study.

The emotive language that serves to sustain the wider narrative of YS4C as a social movement is often linked to the notions presented here. Jasper (1998) recognised the power of emotion in mobilising activists and sustaining social movements. Hence a consideration of the emotional responses associated with climate change is important in engaging with the wider narrative.

3.3 The Villains and Victims in the Story

The plot of this story is that the villains have failed to act to avoid disaster and therefore future generations and the Earth have become victims. The story’s villains take on a range of forms, from

past generations to current state leaders and the media. The abstract nature of these roles has been identified as a key feature of the movement (Holmberg & Alvinus, 2020). This allows for fluidity in pointing the finger of blame. This also has implications for the role of the youth activists themselves as they are part of the future generations, as will be considered in the next section.

Williston (2012) uses ethics to argue that “future people, in spite of their current non-existence, are members of our moral community” (p.177), hence we have a moral duty towards them. Indeed, this plotline relies heavily on the notion of inter-generational justice, as it is widely recognised that youth have the highest stakes in the future of the planet. Hence the inaction of governments today is presented as a betrayal of the younger generations. This framing creates a moral shock and outrage, which when accompanied with blame is a vital ingredient in mobilising protestors (Jasper, 1998).

It should be added that this theme of broken promises is not distinct to the climate movement.

Pickard and Bessant (2018) in discussing the reforms driven by the dominant neoliberal worldview claim that “for too many young people, the reality of their (everyday) lives differs quite radically from that expectation of a decent future” (p.2). The main difference is that the ‘stolen future’ narratives deals with an existential threat which has potential implications for civilisation as a whole.

3.4 The Protagonists in the Narrative: The Youth Strikers

Han and Ahn (2020) frame the youth activists as the heroes in the narrative and suggest that “they see themselves as agents of change who can improve the status quo in multiple ways” (p.10). The accuracy of this depiction of youth activists’ view of themselves as the heroes of the story is debateable. At various points in her speeches, Thunberg also acknowledges the limitations on young people due to lack of political power and resources (Han & Ahn, 2020). Indeed, mixed messages of children are transferred in the global discourse on climate change; at times they are portrayed as vulnerable and as victims (Tanner, 2010; Trajber, et al., 2019), and at others as crucial agents for change (Holmberg & Alvinus, 2020). In framing future generations as victims, the youth activists are

necessarily including themselves in the victim category hence they are playing conflicting roles at once. Thunberg herself can be seen to embody this paradox; “the vulnerable-looking young girl speaking her version of truth to the most powerful people on earth” (Rowlatt, 2020). This juxtaposition creates complexity in the narrative.

There is another vital element in the YS4C narrative which Han and Ahn overlooked: the role of science. The young activists do not purport to hold the answers to the crisis, instead they consistently implore politicians to ‘listen to the science’ (Milman & Smith, 2019; Togoh, 2020). This rhetoric has been criticised as it is based on various false assumptions: that science is value-free (Rayner, 2019); that science can tell us what action to take (Evensen, 2019). Whether or not one agrees with this rhetoric, it positions the young activists in a slightly different role than that suggested by Han and Ahn. In this depiction, YS4C is a movement of alarm ringers reminding politicians to turn to the scientists for the solutions.

Whether we construe them as the heroes or the alarm ringers, in this narrative youth activists play the main role. This remainder of this section will explore the key features of the YS4C movement.

3.4.1 Youth as Leaders

A key feature of the Climate Strike movement is that it is entirely youth-led, whereas many activist spaces tend to be adult-led, sometimes with a separate youth off-shoot group, for example XR Youth. There are many tensions which can arise in adult-youth activist spaces which sometimes leads youth to form their own organisations (Earl, et al., 2017; Elliott & Earl, 2018). While O’Donoghue and Strobel (2007) found that adult support can have positive impacts within community-based youth organisations, this was dependent on particular strategies used by the adults to develop youth-adult partnerships, such as “support of youth voice, attending to the emotional needs of young people, and building reciprocal partnerships.” (p.481). Although their

study showed that particular types of youth-adult interactions can be beneficial for youth and their communities, this may have less relevance beyond the community setting.

There is no doubt that the YS4C founder Greta Thunberg is the most well-known youth of all, as evidenced by data on social media mentions (Munawar, 2019). In Sep 2019, The Guardian wrote of Greta: “In just 13 months, she has become the figurehead of a global movement” (The Guardian, 2019). However, there are many prominent figures emerging within the movement. Numerous young people have stepped into leadership roles through YS4C in their respective countries and local groups are coordinated by local young people.

3.4.2 Who are the Strikers?

YS4C consists of multiple groups with a variety of names, logos, websites, hashtags, etc. Participation may occur through organising or attending strikes, or alternatively through sharing content on social media as a form of engagement in its own right (Boulianne, et al., 2020). Given that there is no formal membership it is difficult to clearly define participation on an ‘in’ or ‘out’ basis. Wahlström et al. (2019) published a report of findings from surveys and interviews conducted with Strikers on 15th March 2019 in 13 European cities where Climate Strike actions were underway. They found that many respondents had never taken part in protests before. Another key finding was that the protests were strongly dominated by women – 66.4% among school students. The authors speculate that the over-representation of females at the protests may be linked to the prevalence of mainly female leaders in the movement. Perhaps it is either the story of Greta’s rise to notoriety or the ‘Stolen Future’ narrative itself which is particularly captivating to females. Further research would be necessary to unpick that statistic.

According to Bowman (2019), the Wahlström et al. report depicted a “heterogenous movement with some salient characteristics” (p.297). While the movement may be heterogenous to a certain degree, it has been suggested that inclusiveness is reduced in environmental activist groups due to

perceived barriers to participation. Strandbu and Krange (2003) introduced the term ‘symbolic fences’ to describe this phenomenon and identified several examples, such as cultural identity, style and intellectual exclusivity.

3.4.3 Why Do They Strike?

This question could generate a range of responses, from individual motivations, to collective aims, to strategic tactical choices. The first two categories will be briefly considered. There are a multitude of motivating factors for people to engage in pro-environmental behaviours; Gifford and Nilsson (2014) reviewed existing studies and identified eighteen distinct personal and social factors. Numerous studies have linked environmental concern to parental influence and childhood experiences (Grønhøj & Thøgersen, 2017; Gifford & Nilsson, 2014; Andolina, et al., 2003). Grønhøj & Thøgersen (2017) further examined the roles of different parenting styles and found that an ‘autonomy supporting parenting style’ was associated with children’s motivation to act. This could link to self-determination theory which suggests that individuals who are self-motivated, as opposed to being externally obligated to act, are more inclined to engage in certain behaviours (Andolina, et al., 2003). When it comes to activism, there is a tendency to distinguish between ‘instrumental’ goals, which seek to put pressure on politicians, and ‘expressive’ goals which involve expressing personal ideologies (Bowman, 2019; Wahlström, et al., 2019; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The study by Wahlström et al. found that individual respondents identified strongly with *both* instrumental and expressive goals: the binary framing breaks down.

In terms of collective aims, many local branches of YS4C groups in cities and localities around the world have their own sets of demands. In Aotearoa, New Zealand, for example, a specific demand is that “all adaptation and mitigation is rooted in Te Tiriti and social and intergenerational justice”, preserving Māori rights and land ownership (Thomas, et al., 2019, p. 96). In Bristol, a set of demands were drawn up by Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate (see Appendix 3.1) after splitting away from the

national network, UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN) (see Appendix 3.2 for UKSCN demands). The demands reflect the local context so in Bristol this involves improving air quality and public transport and a call to pedestrianise areas of the city.

3.5 The Action

YS4C emerged as movement united behind the clear tactic of school striking as a tool of dissent (Thomas, et al., 2019). It has been noted that movement strategies can create a collective identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). This is not the first time school absenteeism has been used to wield political power; Thunberg references the 2018 March for our Lives in the US as an inspiration (Klein, 2019). The Climate Strike movement has been positioned as part of a new wave of what Pickard (2019) terms 'Do-It-Ourselves' (DIO) politics. DIO politics feature a combination of individual and collective action, in which there is no reliance on established organisations or traditional political structures (Pickard, 2019).

In order to further contextualise this form of action, I turn to the work of O'Brien et al. (2019) which drew on research from Norway as well as existing literature to create a typology of youth dissent expressed through climate activism. Although this research was conducted pre-YS4C, the theoretical concepts can be applied in an attempt to classify the specific form of dissent. The first category identified by O'Brien et al. is 'dutiful' dissent, which YS4C does not fit into as it works outside of existing structures. It would be more aptly positioned as a combination of the second two: 'disruptive' and 'dangerous' dissent. The use of school striking as a main tactic constitutes disruptive collective action. Furthermore, in generating their own power through weaponizing school attendance as a tool of dissent, youth are demonstrating a real danger to the status quo. Rather than simply disrupting, youth strikers are proposing alternatives through comprehensive lists of demands (see Appendices 3.1; 3.2), which include reference to climate justice - this propositional praxis and focus on justice is consistent with O'Brien et al.'s definition of dangerous dissent.

3.6 The Power of the Narrative

In many ways, Han and Ahn's breakdown of the narrative is reflective of Monbiot's depiction of the 'Restoration Story', whose plotline features the overthrowing of nefarious forces by a triumphant hero, restoring order to the land (Monbiot, 2017). Due to the familiarity of this structure Monbiot suggests restoration stories are particularly powerful because they adhere to a narrative construction which our minds are prepared for. Additionally, narratives rely on pre-existing patterns of affect to create a moral shock (Jasper, 1998). Care for children is a reliable and relatively universal affect to build on.

The power of the 'stolen future' narrative was evident in Thunberg's emotive 2019 speech at the U.N. Climate Action Summit (see Figure 3.1). Here the grief is evidenced through Greta's visibly emotional delivery. Cunsolo and Ellis (2018) consider ecological grief to be a form of 'disenfranchised grief', meaning that it is not generally publicly acknowledged. By laying it bare in this way, the YS4C movement has given legitimacy to what many are feeling. Narrative forms of communication are generally more effective at generating emotional responses (Bieniek-Tobasco, 2019). Hence, the use of an emotive narrative creates a dialectical relationship between emotion and narrative; the emotions feed into the narrative and the narrative generates further emotional responses.

3.7 Implications for this Inquiry

The meta-narrative as outlined serves as "a tool that united the participants and as a weapon for the weak in challenging much more powerful antagonists" (Han & Ahn, 2020, p. 16). However, it must be understood as a tool and not as a representation of the perspectives of the individuals who make up the movement. By focussing solely on the universal meta-narrative, issues of locality and context are removed from the conversation. The conceptualisation of the narrative as discussed above will be used in the inquiry to examine the components as they emerge in the experiences of the individuals.

The narrative components will be relevant in understanding the youth activists' perceptions of their own roles, which in turn form their stories to live by. Successful narrative frames distinguish 'us' from 'them' (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). YS4C messaging has successfully pointed the finger of blame in various directions, creating a conveniently abstract 'them'. The notion of 'us' is somewhat paradoxical. If the youth activists fall into the victim category, can they also be the heroes? This conflict will need attentive unpicking.

As recommended by Bowman (2019), the inquiry should seek to move beyond the common binary framings using an open and inductive approach. This will allow participants to choose what to focus on and ensure the researcher's preconceptions are not imposed on the youth activists. Nevertheless, I bring my own particular concerns to the inquiry. In particular, I am concerned about the emotional burden on young people.

4 Designing the Narrative Inquiry: Methodology

This chapter presents the specific methodology which was formulated for this inquiry: both the theoretical exploration of NI in chapter 2 and the exercise of imagining the lifespace have guided the decisions. Additionally, the seven key considerations for designing a NI set out by Clandinin and Connelly were considered in detail in order to shape this methodology (see Figure 4.1).

Considerations in designing a NI:

1. Imagining a lifespace
2. Living and telling as starting points.
3. Defining and balancing the commonplaces
4. Investment of the self in the inquiry
5. Researcher-participant relationship
6. Duration of study
7. Relational ethics of NI

Figure 4.1: Design Considerations, taken from Connelly & Clandinin (2006)

4.1 Data Collection Methods

The COVID-19 lockdown made 'living' experiences with participants impossible, hence the study necessarily started with the 'telling'. In-depth interviews were chosen as the data collection method. Five was deemed an optimal number of participants for a study of this size, with each participant interviewed once for approximately forty minutes. The interviews were necessarily conducted using Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) due to the COVID-19 lockdown. It would have been preferable to conduct a face-to-face interview as this would have made it easier to establish a relationship of trust.

Reimagining Field Work

Under different circumstances I may have conducted field work, by attending a School Strike rally to immerse myself in the lived experience. Throughout the process of imagining the lifespace, I engaged with the topic by watching videos, listening to podcasts and attending webinars (see Appendix 4.1 for a list), as well as reading extensively. This could be considered as metaphorical field work. I kept a reflective journal throughout this exercise which acted as field notes.

4.2 Sampling

The method of snowball sampling was implemented (Matthews & Ross, 2010). To access potential participants initially, existing contacts in the youth strike movement were used, including contacts made through the researcher's own environmental activism, as well as through their work as a teacher. From those initial contacts, two agreed to participate while others passed on the information within their circles which brought new participants to the study. This method meant that potential participants self-defined as Youth Strikers. An unforeseen consequence of this sampling method was that the participants who self-selected were all very heavily involved in the organisational side of Bristol YS4C, rather than simply attending strikes.

4.3 Research Tools

Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000) provided the basis for constructing an interview protocol, see Figure 4.2 for the main points which were taken from their structure.

Phases	Rules
1. Initiation	Establish trust through transparency. Build common ground through sharing stories briefly.
2. Main narration	No interruptions. Some prompts if necessary. Non-verbal encouragement favoured.
3. Questioning	Phrase questions using informant's own language. Only 'what happened?' style questions. No opinion and attitude questions. No pointing out contradictions.
4. Concluding talk	Stop recording [make written notes only]. Why questions allowed. Reflect initial interpretations back to informants as part of checking process.

Figure 4.2: Interview Protocol Based on Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000).

Two significant adaptations were made to the protocol suggested by the scholars. Firstly, the

initiation phase was extended to include more of a dialogue between interviewer and participant at the start. The initiation phase of the interview is deemed the most important by Jovchelovitch and Bauer, hence it was worth taking the time to ensure the interview started well. Secondly, due to the potentially stilted nature of interviewing young people over the internet, multiple prompts for phase 2 were prepared to ensure the interview flowed. This resulted in something closer to a semi-structured interview than the usual narrative approach, however it ensured a more comfortable experience. Additionally, some potential questions for phase 3 were drafted ahead of time to be adapted to each participant's accounts (see Appendix 4.2). Following the pilot, the protocol was revised; this will be explained in the next section.

The Flow

The interview protocol design sought to address the three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place by using prompts that cover all three aspects. Temporality was addressed through separate phases to the interview (see Figure 4.3).



Figure 4.3: Temporal Phases of the Interview

4.4 Piloting

The pilot was conducted with a participant from my own school. The data was deemed of sufficient quality to be included in the analysis, which was considered appropriate given that the research design remained sufficiently similar in the following stages to maintain consistency. Necessarily some small adjustments were made following the pilot interview, which I shall now outline.

Firstly, the need to refrain from asking questions during the narration stage was recognised. This occurred partly due to my keen interest in what the informant was saying and partly due to my inexperience. Secondly, upon transcribing the pilot interview, I became aware of how much I had spoken. For the initial phase this was appropriate to build the relationship of trust. However, in phases 2 and 3 the focus should be on the informant (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). I found a single solution to address both of these problems; a much more rigorous protocol (see Appendix 4.4). This ensured I kept to the structure, kept quality field notes and did not speak too much. Finally, a few specific questions were added at the start to ensure key information is captured from each participant before beginning the narration phase.

The Revised Protocol Prompts

The first prompt asked about the journey to becoming a school striker. Prompt 2 asked participants to 'describe a scene' from memory as if it were a photograph. This idea was an adaptation of the practice by many NI scholars of using of physical artefacts to encourage story-telling (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As interviews were not conducted in person this was not possible, however the practice of describing a from memory served a similar purpose. As well as relating to temporality, this prompt aimed to transport participants back to a particular place.

Prompts 3 and 5 addressed sociality by asking the people involved in the movement and the responses of adults.

Prompt 4 asked participants to talk about the emotional responses to the CEE which Youth Strikers tend to discuss, based on my observation that the 'stolen future' narrative relies heavily on emotions. However, the prompt was specifically designed to allow participants to talk about other people's emotional responses without having to own them personally, as the subject could trigger

The final two prompts asked about the transition to lockdown and the activists' visions for the future.

4.5 Investment of the Self in the Inquiry and Researcher-Participant Relationship

Narrative inquirers are encouraged to “imagine themselves as more of an insider than an outsider” in relation to their subject matter (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 629). The inquirer should not bracket themselves out of the inquiry in NI, rather they should use the relational inquiry process to inquire into both participants’ and their own experiences (Clandinin, 2006). As the researcher I am a part of the landscape of the study and in turn that landscape influences me; alternatively, “The places I inhabit also inhabit me” (Hutchinson, 2015, p. 15). Attending to the commonplaces, I consider myself a part of the environmental movement in Bristol at the present time, which not only shapes me personally, it also shapes my position in relation to the participants and their view of me. Furthermore, Coulter and Smith (2009) highlight the notion of a researcher performing multiple functions within the process. I must consider my own different functions – first as researcher then as author of the stories. Recognising my own function at all times requires a fully reflexive approach. I will therefore use the first-person singular pronoun ‘I’ at many stages in this report, to acknowledge my part in the meaning-making process.

Tensions

Dwelling on possible tensions in my own research was important in the planning stages (Clandinin, et al., 2009). Firstly, I am bound my job contract to remain professional and non-political in my conduct within school which may influence the way participants from my own school perceive me. A second potential tension is my involvement in XR. There is a chance that participants have a negative perception of XR, as has been the case with some Youth Strikers I have met previously, which could influence the way the participants relate to me.

4.6 Reflections on the Data Collection Process

There are no broadly accepted criteria by which to assess the quality of NI (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). However, Atkinson also posits that the most promising NI research is that which “turns an interrogative lens on itself” (Atkinson, 2010, p. 93) hence this study seeks to do that at every stage.

Upon reflection, I am aware that my interview technique is not that of a skilled narrative inquirer.

Following the pilot, I improved my technique through the use of redeveloped research tools.

However, the structure remained more rigid than desired and the narratives I collected were not as free-flowing as originally hoped.

The final question in the initiation phase - ‘do you consider yourself an activist?’ – produced lengthier and more insightful responses than I had foreseen and would have been best included in the recorded section of the interview. Fortuitously, my improved system of note-taking after the pilot allowed me to record this data nonetheless.

4.7 Review of Data Analysis Methods

One aspect not covered by Clandinin and Connelly in their seven design considerations is data analysis. In order to maintain a more holistic approach to the research design, as recommended by Matthews and Ross (2010), the methods of data analysis have been considered within the initial design in this inquiry, with analysis being understood as a creative active making process (Cragg & Cook, 2011). Drawing upon an idea from Maxwell (1996), the RQ-Analysis matrix was developed, adding appropriate analysis methods to accompany the potential RQs (see Appendix 4.4). The various methods were then reviewed to determine suitability.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discuss the perceived need to create something generalizable, by creating themes that cut across narratives. They suggest that giving in to this loses the richness of the narratives of experience, describing this as a “reduction downward to themes” (p. 140). This is

precisely the type of top-down research this study aims to avoid, favouring a more open approach as suggested by Bowman (2019). Hence a full thematic analysis will be avoided.

The data collected is narrative in form, however, this should not be conflated with narrative analysis (Wiles, et al., 2005). Narrative analysis can take many forms, from formal structural analyses to looser and more interpretive approaches (Feldman, et al., 2004; Wiles, et al., 2005). This study took a relatively loose approach to structure, whilst attending to the commonplaces. Content was examined for choice of language and implicit implications (Feldman, et al., 2004). Additionally, two principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as described by Smith (2004) were adopted. Firstly, the analysis was idiographic, beginning with a detailed examination of each individual case, before interrogating across cases. Secondly, it took a flexible, inductive approach which was grounded in the text to allow themes to emerge.

4.8 Returning to the Question of Research Questions

Following the exploration of possible analysis strategies, the most suitable research questions became clear:

RQ1: What stories are told by YS4C activists about their experiences within the movement?

RQ2: How do the individual narratives relate to the 'stolen future' narrative?

4.9 Data Analysis Strategy

An original data analysis framework was constructed (see Figure 4.4 on next page). This represents a synthesis of the researcher's interpretations of the methods reviewed with consideration made to the specific nature of the data. This framework allowed the analysis to proceed systematically. The steps shown in the flowchart were closely followed, as evidenced in Appendices 4.5-4.9.

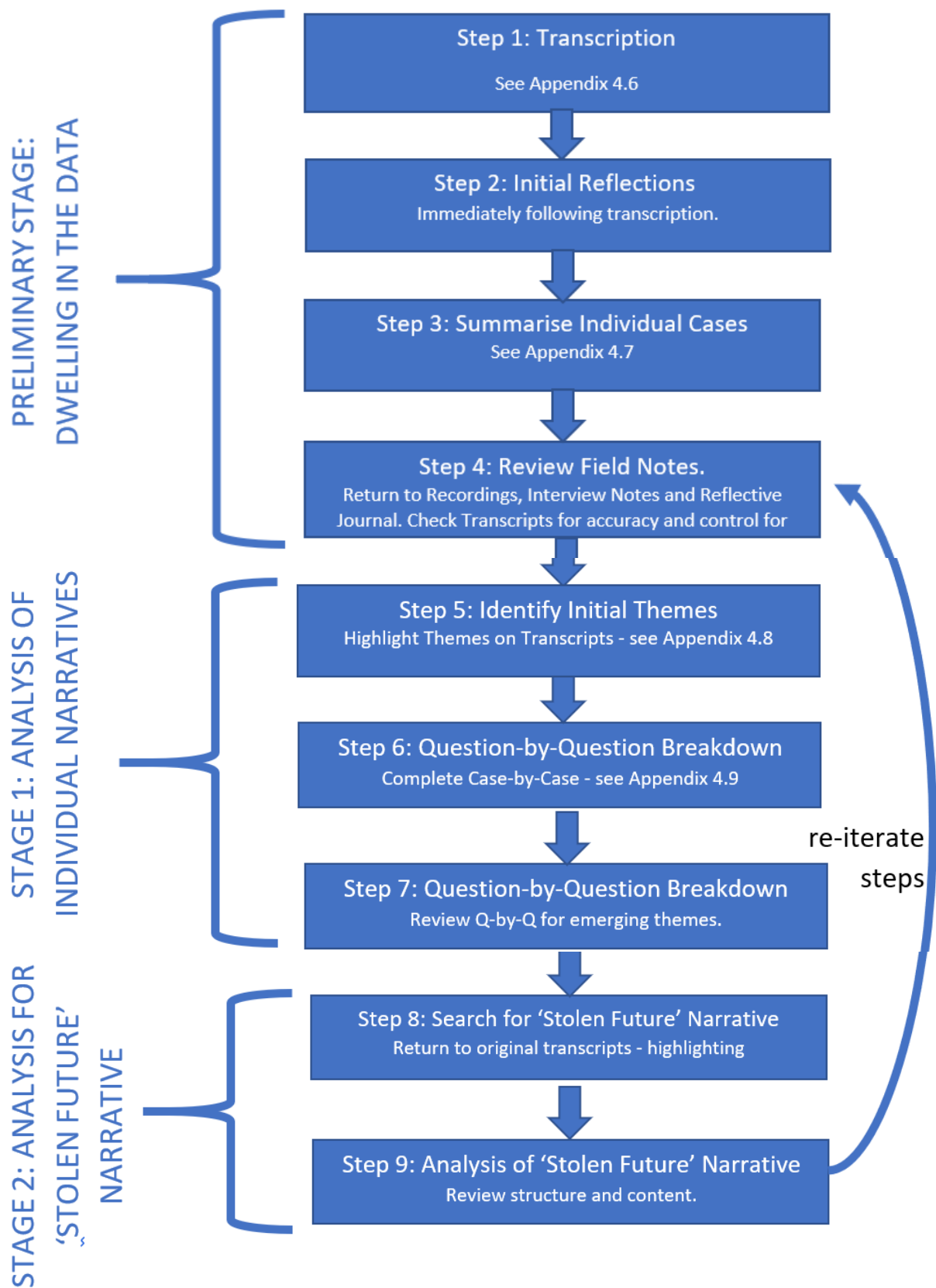


Figure 4.4: Data Analysis Process Flowchart

Stage 1: The idiographic review was achieved through the use of the Question-by-Question Breakdown table as shown in Appendix 4.9. Firstly, I filled the cells for each individual case, then I cross-analysed responses to each question. The three commonalities of temporality, sociality and place were considered within this stage, as well as emergent themes from the data (see Figure 4.5).

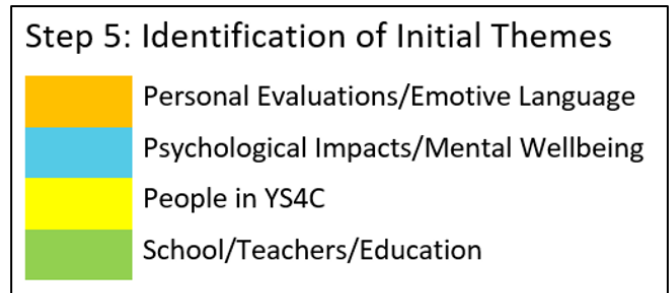


Figure 4.5: Initial Themes from the Data

Stage 2: In stage 2, the data was re-examined with a specific focus on reference to components of the ‘stolen future’ narrative as identified in chapter 3 and displayed in the table (Figure 4.6).

Narrative Components	References to look for in the data
Scene setting	Climate crisis, scale of emergency, government inaction, nothing being done
Villains	Politicians, governments, world leaders, council, adults, older generations
Victims	Future generations, children of today, adults of tomorrow, youth (worry about future)
Plotline	Broken promises, false hope, betrayal, impacts of activism, shift in dialogue, action
Heroes	Greta Thunberg, Youth Strikers, climate activists

Figure 4.6: Components of ‘stolen future’ Narrative to search for in the Data

Finally, the steps were reiterated to confirm findings.

Use of NVivo

Some initial experimentation with the data analysis software package NVivo took place. Ultimately, as thematic analysis was not selected, the benefit of the software was limited and hence it was not used for the main stages of analysis.

Addressing the Research Questions

The data analysis process was necessarily broken down into distinct stages, with RQ1 addressed before RQ2. However, the findings which are presented in the next chapter do not distinguish between the separate research questions in this way; both are answered simultaneously through the process of re-telling the stories.

4.10 Discussion of Ethics

General Ethical Considerations

The full ethics application from can be seen in Appendix 4.13. Initially, I approached students from my own school who I knew to be active in YS4C, as well as another contact I have through XR Youth, hence there was a pre-existing relationship making researcher access less of an issue. The subsequent use of snowball sampling meant that there was a trusted connection between each participant and myself. Potential participants were sent an information sheet and consent form by email (see Appendices 4.10-4.12). A parental consent form was included, giving parents/carers the option to be present with their child during the interview. All consent forms relating to students from my own school were shared with the school for their records.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, asking participants to leave their homes could constitute a health risk, which I was not willing to take. Hence all interviews were conducted online using university-approved software. Lack of face-to-face contact meant trust needed to be established via a screen. Recognising the potential for participants to feel uncomfortable, I ensured each interview began with a friendly chat. I did not begin recording until the second phase of each interview. In this initial chat I was explicit about my personal relationship to the topic and my roles as researcher, teacher and XR activist. This guaranteed that a level of transparency appropriate to NI was upheld.

To maintain anonymity, participants are not named in the study - pseudonyms are used at all times. Similarly, no personal information about participants was shared with other participants. All data has

been stored on my personal computer which is password protected, as well as backed up through University of Bristol servers, in accordance with GDPR. Recordings will be deleted once the data analysis phase of the research is complete. All participants as well as other interested parties will be offered a copy of the report at the end of the project.

Emotional Wellbeing

The emotional wellbeing of participants and researcher is an important ethical consideration of this project. The topic under study is profound: it deals with an existential threat to humanity. The participants are committed environmental activists, which naturally involves a high degree of emotional investment to that cause. This implies an above-average level of concern about environmental issues. This inquiry asks the participants to pause and reflect on what they do. There was a risk that this process might bring up difficult emotions given the psychological impacts of coming to terms with the CEE that were discussed in Chapter 3. For that reason, I thought in great detail about the ethical implications of my research and the approach I should take. As part of the initial considerations, I contacted an academic associated with the Climate Psychology Alliance for advice on speaking to young people about the CEE.

In addition to the complex nature of the CEE, we are in the midst of a global pandemic which is affecting people's well-being through both the concern caused by the virus and the constraints to our liberties due to the measures to suppress the virus (Chakraborty, 2020).

During the inquiry, it was likely that many of these concerns would be brought to the surface, potentially impacting on the wellbeing of participants and/or researcher. As the researcher and the adult, I needed to take care not to let my own fears weigh down the youth activists. I decided to make sure the interviews ended in a light-hearted manner, by allowing some time in the final phase to have a joke and conclude the interview with positivity.

Whose Stories Are They?

NI requires particular attention to ethical considerations, based in “negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 52). The data collected is the stories of the young people. This raises ethical questions of ownership and misrepresentation. I addressed this issue by ensuring that at the end of the interview process, I reflected back to the participants my initial interpretations of their stories. This gave them a chance to feed into the analytical process and maintain their sense of ownership. Had there been scope, I would have had a second meeting with each participant to collaboratively re-construct their narratives following my initial analysis.

5 Findings and Discussion

Presenting the findings in a narrative inquiry is a task bestowed with responsibility (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I have felt the weight of that responsibility in the process of translating my field texts into the present research text. I have acknowledged my own positioning on the landscape from the outset and it is only right that I acknowledge it again here. I have my own specific aims and purpose in this study and have selected data which I feel shed most light on the phenomena under inquiry. Nevertheless, I have sought to honour the voices of all five participants through my portrayal of their narratives. It is the intention of this chapter to elicit the value of the participants' stories, through the process of re-telling. References to supporting literature will be made where relevant, but they should not overshadow the narratives. In terms of the deductions to be drawn, the expectation in narrative research is for multiple interpretations to be made by multiple readers (Coulter & Smith, 2009). I will present my interpretations; the reader is invited to join the meaning-making process by constructing their own.

RQ1: What stories are told by YS4C activists about their experiences within the movement?

RQ2: How do the individual narratives relate to the 'stolen future' narrative?

Figure 5.1: Reminder of Research Questions

The two research questions (see Figure 5.1) will be answered concurrently through the presentations of findings. The chapter consists of an exploration of elements of each of the five narratives loosely following the temporal flow of the interview. The three NI commonplaces of **temporality**, **sociality** and **place** will be referred to throughout the discussions (with coloured text used as indicated to highlight each commonplace) to fully answer RQ1 in the style of NI. Cross-

comparison of narratives will be used occasionally to highlight similarities and differences in narrative construction. Themes will be presented at the point which they emerged from the inductive analysis of the text. Within each section, findings which echo or diverge from the ‘stolen future’ narrative will be explored and elaborated to address RQ2. I will conclude the chapter by reflecting on my findings. All findings will be further summarised in the final conclusions chapter.

5.1 Exploring the Narratives

Framing the Cases

The table (Figure 5.2) shows the information which was gathered in Phase 1 of the interview (not included in the pilot interview with Amari). It should be noted here that Amari and Ciaran were both known to me and directly invited to partake. Gender-neutral pseudonyms and non-gendered pronouns are used, as gender differences is not a focus of the present inquiry. Furthermore, as participants were not asked how they identify it would be wrong to make assumptions as to their gender.

Name (pseudonym)	Amari	Bobby	Ciaran	Dayo	Eden
Age	15	15	14	18	17
Attendee/ Organiser?	Attendee	Organiser	Attendee	Organiser	Organiser
Self-defined Activist?	X	Yes, line between attending and organising.	No, quite definitely not.	‘I think so yeah, more recently’	‘Yes...I think’
First attended a strike	X	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Feb/Mar 2019	Jun/Jul 2019

Figure 5.2: Initial Information about each Participant

Do they define themselves as activists?

In this report, the Youth Strikers have been framed as activists. This is an imposition of my own interpretation. When asked directly whether they consider themselves activists, not a single participant was able to respond affirmatively without some hesitation or deliberation. Bobby outlined the specific organisational roles they undertake which puts them in the activist category. They drew a comparison to attending anti-Brexit marches but not considering themselves an anti-Brexit activist. Both Dayo and Eden responded with “I think so”, with Dayo adding “more recently”. Hence all three demonstrate a belief that a certain degree of commitment is needed to earn the classification of ‘activist’.

Ciaran on the other hand was clear that they do not consider themselves an activist. It is worth noting here that Ciaran was one of the participants I selected for the study and who does not hold an organisational role; this raises the question as to whether they would have self-selected. They explained that they felt defining oneself as an activist, turns it into a “big thing” and implies some level of exclusivity. They define themselves as “someone who feels very strongly” and believes that every person should be involved.

The depth of these responses led me to a consideration of how these self-attributed classifications may affect the way Youth Strikers perceive and play their role. Monbiot (2017) discussed the way the stories we tell about who we are influence our perceptions of ourselves, which in turn influences the way we behave. This brought to mind the following words:

“One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves.” (Okri, 1997, p. 46)

Defining oneself as an activist is an example both of planting oneself within a certain story (i.e. that of being part of something bigger than oneself) and also planting a story inside oneself. Relating this

back to Clandinin and Connelly's notions, the Youth Strikers are defining their own stories to live by through their interpretations of their role within the movement.

5.1.1 Journey

Amari, Ciaran and Eden began their stories by referring to their own long-standing environmental values, which were expressed in terms of 'a love of nature and animal', 'turning veggie' and 'concern about the environment'. These three did not mention any form of social influence at all in this initial part of the narration; they report on their motivations from a purely individualistic perspective. This resonated with the idea of self-determination theory being a strong motivator to take action (Andolina, et al., 2003).

Bobby and Dayo on the other hand both began by referring to their upbringing and the influences of their parents. Bobby then talked about being with friends when they heard about the first strike and deciding to go together, showing the importance of the social context to Bobby. To be clear, the distinction here is not to imply that Bobby and Dayo are not autonomous or intrinsically self-motivated. However, the choice to acknowledge external influences at this initial stage is of interest and could imply the value placed on social connections more broadly.

Temporality

Temporally, the structures of this initial part of the five narratives were aligned. Although the prompt asked about the 'journey', the participants controlled the flow. Each participant dwelled only for a sentence or two in their past, before bringing the story to their first engagement with YS4C. The choice to speak only briefly about early experiences could imply that little value is placed on them. Alternatively, it could imply a keenness to talk about the YS4C movement, which could be a reflection of the significance of the current movement to them. Furthermore, this style of narrative progression could be influenced by the audience, i.e. a fellow environmentalist; the perception that

environmental values are shared could suggest they require little explanation or justification and hence the story can move on.

Comparisons to Other Protests – Another Time and Place

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) discuss the need to think about different places in which the study takes place over time. The beauty of conducting the study entirely through ‘telling’ was that the participants retained full control of the places they took their stories, allowing place to change with temporality. Amari helped to frame their depiction of the YS4C movement by **taking us back to a previous**, less positive experience of an **activist space**:

“it was completely different from any other sort of activism I've been involved in. Because before that I was quite active in the ‘Remain’ campaign. But that was mostly adults”. (Amari)

This is a clear articulation of the distinct nature of the movement as perceived by Amari, who seems to be a seasoned protestor. The direct comparison to the ‘Remain’ campaign puts the emphasis on the adult make-up of the movement as the main distinguishing feature. Although Amari does not directly refer to adult-youth tensions in the ‘Remain’ campaign space, through Feldman et al.’s (2004) rhetorical approach to narrative analysis, I took this comment to be an implication that Amari preferred **the dynamic of a youth-led movement**. This shows the **importance of sociality within the movement** and concurs with the points made in the literature on youth activism (Earl, et al., 2017; Elliott & Earl, 2018; O'Donoghue, 2007). It seems that to Amari the version of the ‘stolen future’ narrative which casts youth as the protagonists is particularly powerful.

The narrative technique of comparing to another movement to emphasise the uniqueness of YS4C was also used by Bobby. Although they had never attended another protest themselves, they drew a comparison with the **2018 March For Our Lives rally organised by students in the US** (Sanchez, 2018) and commented that they had never seen anything like it **in the UK before** the first YS4C rally. This travel in **space** and **time** gave context and brought life to the description.

5.1.2 Emergent Theme: Joy and Hope

In the initial part of their stories, all participants but Eden used some form of emotive language about the strikes to describe the atmosphere and how they felt, this included the following: ‘inspired’; ‘amazed’; ‘part of something’ (see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: How the YS4C movement made participants feel

The second prompt - ‘describe the scene as if it were a photograph’ – also generated emotive responses regarding participants’ first strike experiences (see Figure 5.4). Despite the prompt asking for descriptions only, four out of five participants added their own evaluations of the experience and alluded to the emotions they experienced.



Figure 5.4: Comments on first strike attended

– in response to ‘describe the scene as if it were a photograph’ prompt

Eden said they really like the atmosphere, and described it as ‘really busy’, ‘really loud’, ‘really friendly’ and ‘really colourful’. Bobby’s description began in a very matter-of-fact tone, before becoming impassioned: “It was something that was really like ‘wow, this is actually happening’.” (Bobby). These quotes describe a **specific space** at a **specific moment in time**, hence tying together place and temporality. However, I would suggest that the most important commonplace on display here is that of **sociality given the number of references to the people involved**, which will be discussed further in section 5.1.4.

Joy

The comments above resonate with findings in the Wahlström et al. (2019) report, which describes the atmosphere of the protest in Vienna as ‘very joyful and festival-like’ (p. 92) and in Manchester as ‘excited’ and ‘youthful’ (p. 33). However, these descriptions are not reflected in the quantitative data gathered by the researchers. Bowman (2019) comments that the methodology of the study did

not allow for data to capture the joy, as the adult researchers did not consider it in the design. This shows the tendency of adults to overlook the important questions of sociality which define the youth movement and points to the need for more open, participatory research methods such as the present inquiry to leave space for those experiences to be captured.

Ciaran's Concern: The Problem of Joy

As illustrated above, each of the narratives at some point uses positive, emotive language to describe the events themselves. However, the depiction of the events as purely joyful can cause tensions, as Ciaran explained:

“some people don't understand that at the protest it's like a really, really nice atmosphere, everyone's very happy but it's what drove us to be there is generally anger that nothing's being done” (Ciaran)

This comment shows the tension in striking the balance. Within the current binary framing of 'expressive' versus 'instrumental' goals of protest (Wahlström, et al., 2019), Ciaran clearly feels the frustration that the message isn't getting through. This supports Bowman's (2019) call to move beyond the binary. Furthermore, this comment from Ciaran echoes the 'stolen future' narrative by using the term 'nothing' to elude to the idea of complete inaction.

Hope

The comments above were interpreted to imply feelings of joy associated with the protests. A sense of hope is more difficult to capture in this way, but it was explicitly named by Dayo:

“it's kind of more of a feeling ... it's like the feeling when you're at the front like leading, like kind of guiding people to where to go and it's like the kind of sense of, there's such a sense of hope” (Dayo)

This quote to me not only speaks to the positive emotions of collective action but it also entrenches the importance of youth leadership. The imagery of youth leading and guiding people to me

epitomises this moment in moral terms. While Dayo may be referring to the act of pointing protestors in the right direction, they are equally describing the role of Youth Strikers on the world stage in directing politicians and public opinion. This portrayal firmly frames the youth as the protagonists. This quote from Dayo also brought to my mind the words of Thunberg in her 2018 TED talk: ‘Once we start to act, hope is everywhere’ (Thunberg, 2018).

Amari on the other hand did not explicitly use the word hope, but the sentiment was implied in the way they spoke about the potential of YS4C for impact:

“when this youth strike happened with Greta Thunberg, it was suddenly a massive thing that the media was reporting on. And it felt like I was part of something that could actually make a difference.” (Amari)

There is a lot to unpack in this quote from Amari. Firstly, the idea of being ‘part of something’ suggests [the importance of collective identity to Amari](#) (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). It also speaks to the need to have a place within the movement which for me is akin to determining one’s stories to live by. Secondly, there is the notion of the perceived impact of the action – that it’s a ‘massive thing’ which could ‘make a difference’. This idea of impact comes up again when Amari refers to the successful campaign to prevent the Bristol Airport expansion. Here [the perceived impact of the strikes is specifically relevant to the Bristol context](#). This acknowledgment of positive steps contrasts with the ‘stolen future’ theme of total inaction. Finally, the mention of the media attention around Thunberg is evidence of the way Amari has been particularly captivated by the story surrounding Thunberg. Within a consideration of powerful narratives, the tale of Thunberg’s own rise to prominence is of significance. Klein (2019) writes “Greta’s voyage from invisible schoolgirl to global voice of conscience is an extraordinary one” (p. 13). Indeed, media attention has overwhelmingly focussed on her to the point that Thunberg has demanded they shift their focus (Nikolic, 2019).

Amari is not the only participant to convey the perceived potential for impact. Bobby states a belief in the capacity of the Bristol YS4C group to “get a lot done”. Additionally, Bobby refers to positive

relations with Bristol City Council and other institutions as promising signs of potential change to come. This faith in existing institutions is somewhat at odds with the 'stolen future' narrative but shows an approach which is propositional rather than purely oppositional, which is what the youth movement will ultimately need to fundamentally change the status quo (O'Brien, et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Bobby recognises the effectiveness of the YS4C narrative and Greta's way of speaking:

"I think the school strikes with Greta Thunberg and the way she speaks, I think has really rallied a lot of people. And I think that is going to continue" (Bobby)

This comment implies the sense of hope that the success of the 'stolen future' narrative in mobilising youth activists will endure. It is notable that although Bobby showed awareness of the power of the narrative, at no point does their own storytelling style resonate with the 'stolen future' messaging; Bobby favours contextual accounts over emotive language, as will be further discussed in the next section.

5.1.3 Worry about Future

The previous section focussed on the positive emotions revealed in the narratives. However, the 'stolen future' narrative is built on worry and anger. It is those negative emotions which will be addressed in this section.

Ciaran and Dayo were the only participants who spoke of their concern for the future in the initial part of their narratives. They both strongly echoed elements of the YS4C narrative in their own stories:

"the fact that we're ruining that and we're killing all the animals. It just, it really upsets me."

(Ciaran)

"I've gone through waves throughout the year of being absolutely terrified and like anxious about the future" (Dayo)

Ciaran's quote here expresses their own grief at the scale of ecological loss. This is done in an open way which suggests emotional awareness on Ciaran's behalf as well as real ownership of their feelings. This is in contrast with Cunsolo and Ellis's claim that ecological grief is often disenfranchised grief, which isn't publicly expressed (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018). Interestingly in Ciaran's statement the use of 'we' seems to apportion blame to the whole of humanity, which shows a conflict with the usual YS4C framing. Ciaran includes themselves within the guilty party, which could explain the extent of the anguish they feel.

From Dayo the use of powerful language to refer to the emotional turmoil they have suffered due to the uncertainty of their future is a direct reflection of the 'stolen future' narrative and potentially an expression of eco-anxiety (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018; Pihkala, 2018; Hickman, 2019). As well as being effective in signalling the emotional ups and downs, the metaphor of waves also calls to mind the problem of rising sea levels, at least it did for me. Ideas of rising up like water are prevalent in the climate movement's messaging, for example XR's "Blue Wave" parade in Glasgow in February 2020 (Cameron, 2020). This is reminiscent of the double significance of the 'house on fire' metaphor frequently employed by Greta Thunberg, which simultaneously calls to mind the urgency of the crisis as well as the images of raging forest fires which increasingly dominated world news stories (Dalby, 2019). The 'house on fire' metaphor serves the additional purpose of framing the youth as the literal alarm ringers, which could clarify their role but could at the same time limit their perceived capacity to effect real change.

Dayo also referred to striking as a way to "channel frustration" and "to manage my emotions ...cos I feel like I'm actually doing something". Bradley and Reser (2017) found that pro-environmental behaviours can lead to reduction in distress caused by perceived climate-related risks. This supports Dayo's statement that their activism is a way to channel their upset and manage their emotions.

Prompt 4: Participants were asked whether Youth Strikers tended to discuss their emotional responses to the crisis. This question was included due to my observation that the 'stolen future'

narrative relies heavily on emotional reactions to the crisis. Hence this section should be understood as an imposition of the researcher's interests and structure on the narratives.

Ciaran's response here repeated the same grief and anger as expressed in their initial narrative. However, when asked if these emotions were discussed with other Strikers, they shook their head and said "I don't think so, no". Given how openly Ciaran had begun their narrative through impassioned descriptions of the anger and sadness they felt, this response was particularly surprising to me. It is possible that the emotions expressed to me so seemingly fluently by Ciaran are not so openly voiced in other settings, such as with peers. Alternatively, Ciaran may not define this anger and sadness as an emotional response and therefore may not consider it relevant. This suggests to me that there is some disconnect between the use of powerful emotive language and the recognition of the underlying psychological affectations. This is something which needs further exploration.

Similarly, Bobby shows some contradiction in their answer. Bobby begins with "I don't think we do that, like, particularly much" and then explains that other groups have come in to do talks about "climate anxiety and other issues". They then comment that the BYS4C group is very supportive and a wellbeing lead was recently appointed for "mental health purposes for people". This shows an unambiguous awareness of the emotional burden of this type of activism, which makes the initial statement somewhat surprising. Bobby's closing statement is "I'm not sure we really talk about it like from a climate change perspective", which leads me to question if my prompt had not specified 'emotions related to climate change' whether it would have elicited a different answer. Perhaps Bobby does not connect the potential emotional burden of activism with the emotional impacts of the climate crisis, this would be an interesting avenue to further explore.

Amari and Eden both echoed elements of the 'stolen future' narrative in their answer about emotions, although Eden required some prompting to elaborate. It is notable that neither of them used the singular first person to express concerns, hence not owning them personally. It is also

important to remember that the question was specifically designed not to refer to the individual participant's own emotional responses so as not to make them uncomfortable. However, there are clear differences to the way each participant approached the topic. Amari refers to the worry and anxiety about 'our futures', stating, "we don't really know what's going to happen and what the world will be like." Here it can be seen that Amari is including themselves in the collective worry about the existential threat. Although Amari recognises the magnitude of the uncertainty about the future, it is done so in a matter of fact manner with little use of hyperbole.

Eden uses a more passive construction, placing distance between themselves and the worry: "there's like fear that this is happening at the moment." This phrasing does not connect the emotional state of fear to any particular subject. Eden then goes on to explain further and at this point their narrative takes on a third person plural construction to expand on what 'people' tend to talk about:

"they really need to get involved because it needs to be happening for them to like be able to have a good future and stuff... I think is quite a common thing that people like talk about"
(Eden)

This use of 'they' imitates the format in which the question was posed, however it is a very different way of responding than the other participants who all used 'we' or 'I'. The final phrase creates even more detachment from the subject by implying that Eden is not even certain as to whether people talk about this. It appears here that Eden does not want to be personally connected with the emotions experienced by other members of the movement. This detached mode of narration meant it came across as scripted rather than heart-felt. It occurred to me initially that Eden perhaps felt the need to recite the 'stolen future' narrative to conform to the collective identity of the movement, however I rejected this notion given that the response was the result of my probing and not offered up freely. The part I find the most fascinating is that Eden not only distances themselves from the fear, they also distance themselves from the 'future', when they say 'for *them* to... have a good future'. While Eden may not share the worry, the future it would seem to me remains shared. To me, the

manner with which Eden talks about the fear for the future implies two possibilities: either they do not feel the emotional burden in the same way as the others; or they use a distancing mechanism because they lack the tools to process their personal emotional responses. Perhaps the reader will draw a different interpretation.

Interestingly, Dayo's response was more definite than the others and they felt they were speaking for all:

"Yeah, definitely. I think we all acknowledge significantly that a large reason why we're so heavily involved, is because of like these strong feelings that we have" (Dayo)

It is notable that Dayo is the oldest of the participants and particularly articulate and expressive.

Additionally, Dayo is the newly-appointed wellbeing lead, therefore would be expected to be tuned into the emotional aspect. The fact that they so confidently assert what 'all' of the group feel is interesting. This could imply an assumption on Dayo's behalf of the experiences of others.

Alternatively, Dayo may be either more aware or more equipped to verbalise the strong feelings of the youth activists than they are themselves. I imagine it is a mix between the two. Dayo's framing is consistent with research that suggests emotion is a motivator for participation (Jasper, 1998).

Dayo ends their response about emotions with the following sentiment:

"if everyone's collectively feeling that it brings together a sense of, like, community and almost positivity in the fact that you're all, like, in it together." (Dayo)

This echoes the idea that grief and mourning have 'we-creating' capacities, which can bring people together (Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018). This comment encapsulates the role of emotion in forming collective identity. Here, the shared emotional burden can be seen to have two benefits: lightening the load for the individual, and the formulation of a collective identity which serves to sustain participation (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). This is a clear indication of [the importance of sociality](#) in Dayo's narrative, which notably began with reference to family members as inspiring their activism.

although Eden's account suggests this has been a pleasant unexpected outcome rather than a motivating factor. Bobby commented that they had also made a lot of friends and said "there's a lot of people that I trust quite a lot in the movement". Trust has been identified as an emotional affect with an enormous impact on political action (Jasper, 1998). Throughout the narratives there was a tendency to focus on [the people which make the movement, showing how sociality emerges as a key commonplace in the narratives.](#)

Bobby's Narrative Focus: People and Place

Bobby's narrative weaves together issues of [place](#) and [social connection](#). Initially, to refer to the general support Bristol YS4C receives, they explain "We're quite a left-wing city". It is notable they use the first-person plural form to include themselves in this statement. Later, Bobby says the 'nice people' on the organising team have "built the movement", before adding "at least in the Bristol group". As mentioned previously, Bobby refers to a belief in the potential for impact in Bristol in particular. Overall, it seems that Bobby's experiences of the movement are inextricably connected to the place in a way which is more apparent than in any of the other individual narratives. Not only does Bobby position the Youth Strikers as protagonists, they seem to portray the Bristol group as the avant-garde. Given that Bristol was the chosen spot for Thunberg's 2020 UK visit, Bobby's perspective is not unfounded.

Place and Sociality

Place and sociality within the movement are further tied together in comments made by other participants. Dayo highlights that the YS4C organising team is made up of [people](#) from the [inner city](#), from 'Clifton to Gloucester Road' specifically. By making this point Dayo shows a distinct awareness that the group is not necessarily representative of the entire city. This suggests sensitivity to potential fences to inclusion, as reviewed by Strandbu and Krange (2003).

As well as referring to the city of Bristol, the notion of place can be extended [to place within the movement](#). Ciaran as a non-organiser talks about participation from the perspective of someone

who attends YS4C strikes. They do not **access organising spaces** and they have **not met anyone through their involvement**. On the other hand, the three organisers notably speak extensively about the **other people on the organising team**. Hence **place** and **sociality** are interlinked in that way.

5.1.5 Looking Forwards

All of the participants discussed their **visions for the future** of either the movement or wider society at some point in their narratives. I have selected three particular approaches to thinking about the future to highlight here for the diversity they offer.

Eden's Pragmatic Approach

When asked about the transition to lockdown and the future of the movement, Eden spoke in a purely pragmatic manner. Their approach focussed entirely on strategic decisions for the movement and how to “branch out” tactically, due to the impossibility of striking **for the foreseeable future**. Rather than framing this as a huge hurdle to overcome, they explained there had been discussions about moving away from striking as a main tactic **since before the lockdown**, as strikes were “losing momentum”. They also spoke about the opportunities lockdown had given to restructure the organising team of BYS4C by setting up a role system as well as getting on top of social media and writing a new set of local demands. Eden’s insights reveal the organisational competency of the youth activists and the successful internal collaboration. Furthermore, this structural focus shows a problem-solving approach which is far more sophisticated than the ‘stolen future’ narrative portrays.

Dayo's Frustration: a Call for Support

Dayo expressed frustration at the lack of active support from adults. While they said that their family are ‘very supportive’ they continued to explain that this support manifested as exclamations of admiration rather than positive action:

“In order for our voices to be heard there needs to be someone that's like listening and responding to what we're actually asking because there's only so much we can do” (Dayo)

This comment reflects an awareness of the problem that youth are often given a voice but no real political power (O'Brien, et al., 2019). Oftentimes, youth are given a platform to speak as a tokenistic gesture, which fits with “the prevailing perception that youth are vulnerable recipients, not proactive protagonists” (Trajber, et al., 2019, p. 90). Dayo is both frustrated by this understanding that youth political power is limited yet realistic in their evaluation of the situation. This feels like a challenge to all adults and to educators in particular.

Amari's Visions of the Future

When asked [about the future](#), Amari discusses ideas of global justice and a just transformation. They spoke about the “opportunity to rebuild” following the covid crisis and the need for a “just transition to a decarbonised economy”. This shows a real awareness of issues of global justice, which could be as a result of the self-education they reported pursuing during lockdown. This exercise in world-building suggests a very nuanced and informed approach to potential solutions, which goes well beyond the ‘listen to the science’ rhetoric which the YS4C messaging has been criticised for overusing (Rayner, 2019).

5.1.6 Reflections on the Findings

The data was rich enough to produce a far longer report and I have necessarily been very selective. It has been suggested that the value of NI comes from the consequences of its representations, in other words in the action it inspires in its readers in terms of changes to their practices or ways of thinking (Atkinson, 2010). I hope that the reader has found something in the present study to inspire change.

The purpose of the inductive analysis process was to ground the findings in the text. Naturally, I had my own expectations as to what may emerge. I had initially anticipated a greater focus in the report on the Youth Strikers’ adaptation to lockdown, however that did not emerge as the most relevant topic. I could have probed further, however, it is of more interest for the purposes of this study to know what the participants themselves choose to value in their narratives.

In the final chapter, I present my conclusions. The conclusions will focus on elements of the narratives which are considered generalisable and on the open nature of the methodology which is advocated for similar future research.

6 Conclusions

The powerful narrative of the YS4C movement has successfully secured a place on the world stage for youth climate activists and given them a voice. However, each individual has their own personal narrative. At the start, I suggested that educators and researchers need to listen to the young people taking action within their local communities. This study has shown how listening to the individual voices builds a more vivid, contextualised picture and allows us to move beyond the sweeping meta-narrative. Furthermore, for the participants, the act of re-living these experiences through narration is part of the process of determining their own stories to live by.

The conclusions presented here have emerged from synthesising the findings in to the following key categories: context, contradictions, community and collaboration. Reference will be made to the links to the ‘stolen future’ narrative which were discussed within the process of re-telling the stories.

To summarise those links, the following table was made (Figure 6.1).

Narrative Components	Mentions in the Data
Scene setting	Inaction – C, D
Villains	Humanity – C
Victims	Youth (through worry about future) – C & D (initially), A & E (Q.4) Natural world – C
Plotline	Impacts – A, B
Heroes	Greta Thunberg – A, B Strikers as protagonists – D Youth as leaders – A, D

Figure 6.1: Table summarising links to ‘stolen future’ narrative. Participants represented by first letter of pseudonym.

Context

The findings of this inquiry were inextricably linked to notions of place, temporality and sociality, which suggests the importance of localised studies which allow contextual issues to come to the fore. It was seen that the individuals' stories both echo and diverge from the meta-narrative; at times this happens within the same sentence. This shows how a collective narrative fails to account for the intricacies of individual experience. The participants included insight and nuance which the 'stolen future' narrative overlooks. Through structural organising, strategic discussions, comprehensive lists of demands and ideas of a 'just transition', the Youth Strikers have shown an approach to action which is far more sophisticated than the meta-narrative can convey.

Contradictions

Conflicting ideas were common both within and across the narratives. The fear that drives the 'stolen future' narrative is evident in many of the narratives to varying degrees. However, there were discrepancies between the emotional responses detected and those reported. This reveals either a lack of emotional awareness or an inability to articulate those emotions, implying a need for support in developing these skills.

Furthermore, it was found that the role of youth evoked conflicting representations. The participants portrayed themselves as leaders and agents of change whilst also recognising their powerlessness and need for support. Some participants regularly portrayed the Youth Strikers as the protagonists, a framing which is consistent with Han and Ahn's (2020) conceptualisation. One participant placed Youth Strikers within the 'villain' role by depicting nature as the victim and all of humanity as the perpetrators. This is evidence of conflicting self-perceptions, with Youth Strikers filling the roles of both victims and heroes, and even villains at times. In the task of transitioning to a regenerative future, we must ensure that youth have a role which fits with their stories to live by.

In terms of perceived progress, the narratives showed more nuance than the hyperbolic messaging of 'nothing is being done'. Vague reference was made to the 'total inaction' of those in power by

some participants while others expressed some faith in institutions and organisations to take action, thereby deviating from the premise of the 'stolen future' narrative. Similarly, participants commented on both potential and achieved impacts, including the success in preventing the expansion of Bristol Airport. The participants in this study notably avoided assigning blame. This could be due to the abstract nature of the 'villain' role in the meta-narrative which does not give clear direction as to where to apportion blame, or perhaps it suggests that the youth activists are more focussed on moving forwards. Overall, the hyperbole of the 'stolen future' narrative cannot capture the complexity of the ever-changing situation and the youth activists will need support in developing their critical thinking to address this.

Community

The youth-led nature of the movement was a key factor for many participants. Moreover, sociality emerged as the most prominent commonplace which shows the importance of community to the activists. It was claimed by one participant that the collective concern for the future has been instrumental in creating a sense of community within the movement. Diverging from the 'stolen future' narrative, the participants all expressed elements of joy and hope. There is a sense of collective identity based on shared positive experiences which seems to be more prominent in the participants' narratives than the emotional burden implied by 'stolen future'.

Collaboration

Effective internal collaboration was evidenced by comments from multiple participants regarding clearly assigned roles and support networks within the movement. However, participants recognised the limitations of youth power and the need for adult support. Indeed, the lack of concrete action from supportive adults was a cause of deep frustration for some. The task of creating a regenerative future will necessarily be collaborative (Figueres & Rivett-Carnac, 2020), hence researchers and educators must find their own role to play alongside the youth.

6.1 Towards the Task of World-Building

This study has filled a gap by providing an approach to research into youth climate activism which is both open and exploratory. The intention is to inspire a mobilisation of educators and researchers to pursue creative methods with world-building potential.

Although this study treated YS4C as a single global movement, in reality multiple groups operate under this umbrella term with distinct forms, strategies and narratives. Further research could explore the distinct approaches of local movements, which will be particularly interesting in a post-COVID world in which activists will be looking to new tactics and potentially new narratives. Another avenue for exploration would be the over-representation of females in YS4C - the suggestion that this could be explained by the prevalence of female leaders requires empirical evidence (Wahlström, et al., 2019). Similarly, a further avenue for research is the impact of Thunberg's personal story in the mobilisation of youth climate activists. This study has alluded to the need for greater support to develop emotional intelligence in youth climate activism and the duty of educators in meeting this need. Further research into the emotional realities of youth activists would be a useful starting point.

This study framed itself as laying foundations for the collaborative task of world-building: to continue this task further studies must necessarily focus on the future that young people envisage.

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Appendices

1.1 Potential Research Questions

1.2 My Research Journey

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3.1 BYS4C Demands

3.2 UKSCN Demands

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4.11 Participant Consent Form

4.12 Parental Consent Form

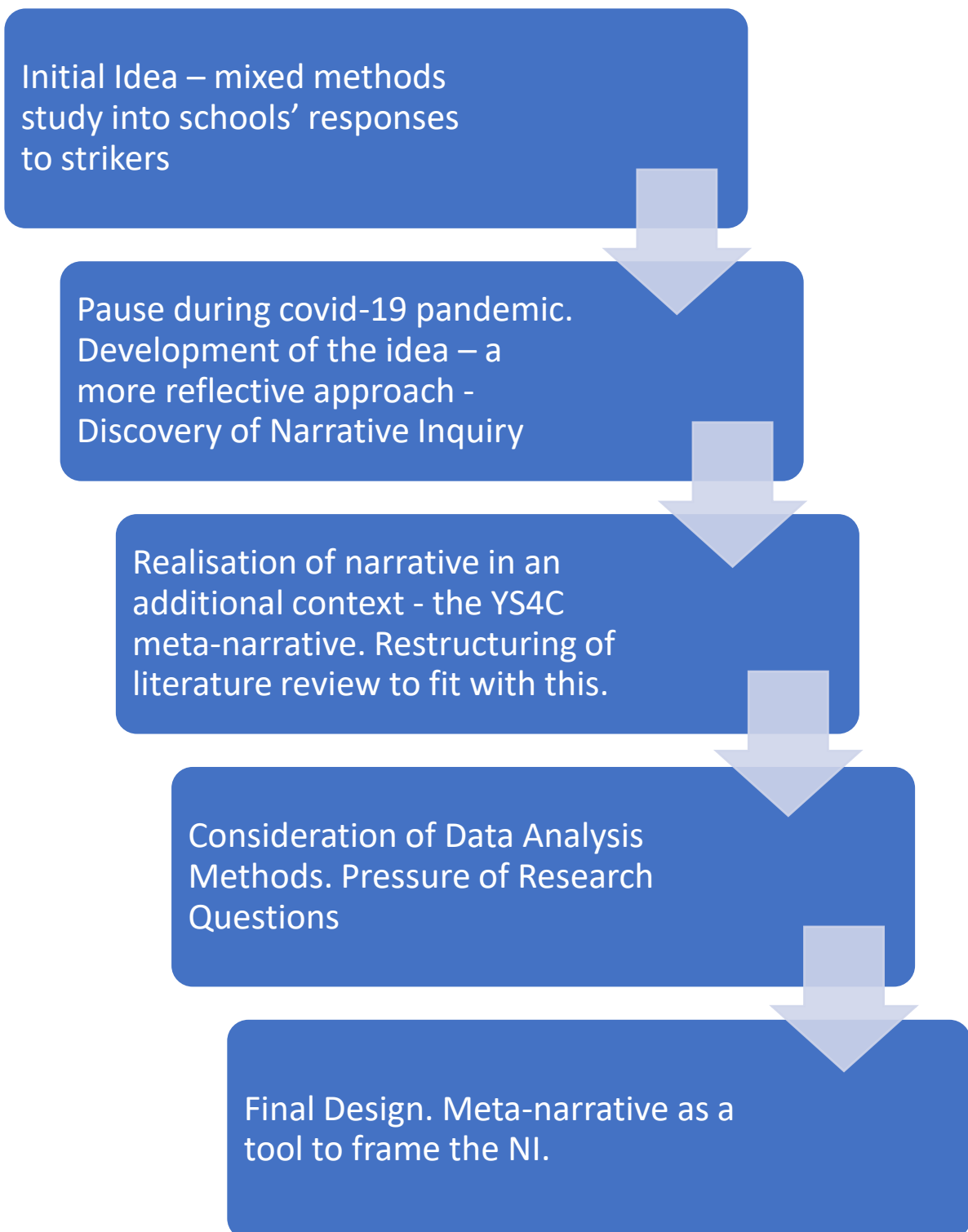
4.13 Full Ethics Application

4.14 Ethics Approval

Appendix 1.1 – Potential Research Questions

Q.	Potential Research Question	Possible Sub-Questions
1.a	How do Youth Climate Strikers construct stories about their initial experiences within the movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do they order their narrative? - What is emphasised? - What details do they provide? - What do they omit?
1.b [follow-up to 1.a]	What are the similarities and differences in the way that Youth Climate Strikers construct stories about their initial experiences within the movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the case-by-case analysis in Q.1.a, what are the common themes that emerge? Where do the constructed stories differ?
2.	How do youth activists assign meaning to their personal experiences within the School Strike movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do the various layers of meaning reveal?
3.	What role do emotions play in the stories told by youth climate strikers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what context do Strikers bring up emotions in their narratives? - To what extent do Youth Climate Strikers acknowledge the emotional impacts of the CC in their narratives?
4.	How does school and education feature in the narratives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much do strikers mention school/teachers/education?
5.	How do the individual narratives of Youth Climate Strikers fit with the overarching narrative of the movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which of the components of the ‘Stolen Future’ narrative feature in the individuals’ narratives? - To what extent have the individuals embodied that narrative?

Appendix 1.2 – My Research Journey



Appendix 2.1 – My Own Narrative Beginnings

I am of the wrong generation to be an active school striker myself. Although I did once organise a school strike at the age of twelve when the UK went to war in Iraq.

Unfortunately, it was not particularly successful.

As well as being an activist at heart and campaigner for justice, I have recently realised that you cannot be a true socialist without also being an environmentalist. The exploitation of people and planet are so inextricably linked that it makes no sense to oppose one without opposing the other. Although it may be my passion for defending human rights that brought me to the environmental movement, I have always been an environmentalist through sheer hatred of waste. And destruction. As I grow older, I am willing to work much harder to protect what already exists.

All of this to say, I have a deep connection to the aims of the movement.

Personally, I became involved in Extinction Rebellion in February 2019. I took on various roles, including coordinating the local group in South Bristol. Although I have taken a step back to focus on other commitments, I would still define myself as an environmental activist.

Through my work as a secondary Mathematics teacher in Bristol, I have sought to bring my values into my work by striving to teach issues of environmental and social justice through the Mathematics curriculum and attending conferences and work groups to develop these ideas. Earlier this year I set up an environmental campaign group for students in my current school which allowed me to support students in engaging with activism. The buzz created through Greta's visit helped me launch the new club with much success. Sadly, we then went into lockdown soon after.

Appendix 2.1 – My Own Narrative Beginnings cont.

Through meeting my supervisor at a climate conference at the university in October, I was invited to take part in another research project focussed on the CEE and young people.

Through my involvement in that and the planning of the present research project, I was finally able to bring together the three strands of myself: activist, educator and researcher.

And in a genuinely meaningful way. I am incredibly excited about the opportunity to carry out this research and hope to produce something of value to all of those communities I represent.

Demands of Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate

RESHAPING THE STREETS OF BRISTOL

- **Ensure air pollution across Bristol is at or below the legal limit.**
- **Free bus travel for under 18s and students.**
- **Pedestrianise roads in the city centre.**

GREEN NEW DEAL

- **2021 Bristol Mayoral candidates must have a two term plan for 2030 carbon neutrality.**
- **Increased retrofitting of houses and clear regulations to ensure new builds adhere to 2030 carbon neutrality.**

Taken from: <https://www.bristolys4c.org/demands> [24/06/2020]

Demands of UKSCN

DEMAND 1-SAVE THE FUTURE

The Government declare a climate emergency and implement a [Green New Deal](#) to achieve Climate Justice.

DEMAND 2-TEACH THE FUTURE

The education system is reformed to [teach young people about the urgency, severity and scientific basis of the climate crisis.](#)

DEMAND 3-TELL THE FUTURE

The Government communicate the severity of the ecological crisis and the necessity to act now to the general public.

DEMAND 4-EMPOWER THE FUTURE

Young people must be included in policy making, and [no one should be excluded from participation in our democracy](#) on the basis of age, citizenship, permanent address, incarceration or anything else. For as long as UK democracy is conducted through a representative system, everyone living in the UK over the age of 16 must have the right to vote in elections, conducted via [proportional representation](#), so that everyone's vote is reflected in our government and is worth the same.

Taken from: <https://ukscn.org/our-demands/> [24/06/2020]

Appendix 4.1 – List of Virtual Field Work Sources

Podcasts

Climate Crisis Conversations <https://climatepsychology.podbean.com/>

Outrage or Optimism: <https://globaloptimism.com/podcast/>

Summer with Greta: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08kbsm0>

Videos

Climate Protests and Civil Disobedience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_7pGfRnZao

VICE Documentary, 'The 16 Year Old Calling Out Global Leaders on Climate Change':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCVQdr9QFwY>

BBC Newsround, Two years of Greta - what impact has she had?:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/53816924>

Greta Thunberg speeches:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=zKTQW5i9_p8&feature=emb_logo;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok&t=1s;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMrtLsQbaok&t=1s)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAmUIEsN9A&t=77s;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAmUIEsN9A&t=77s)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0G6AynmOU8;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0G6AynmOU8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYNM4rsnNFM&t=12s>

Webinars

Eco-anxiety school staff training with Caroline **Hickman** and Clover Hogan. Mon, 27 April 2020

Appendix 4.2 – Potential Phase 3 Questions

Topics which may emerge	Resulting questions
Attending large rallies	At the rally you told me about, what was your favourite moment? What was happening? How did you feel? Who was there?
Making friends	Tell me more about some of the people you met.
Involvement/support of adults	You mentioned something about , can you tell me more about that person and their support?
Response of school	You mentioned the way your school responded, can you tell me more about that?
Emotional responses	What sort of things do school strikers say about their feelings regarding the climate crisis? What words often come up in discussions about emotions?

Appendix 4.3 – Interview Protocol – Revised Version

Phase 1: Intro – My name is Lauren. I am a teacher, a part-time Maths teacher. I am also a part-time student at the University of Bristol which is why I am conducting this research, in the school of social sciences.

Phase 1 Questions	Notes
Do you consider yourself an activist?	
How long have you been involved in the School Strike movement?	
How many strikes have you attended?	
Do you have a role in the organisation as well?	

Phase 2:

Phase 2 Prompts	Notes
1. Tell me about your journey to becoming a school striker.	
2. Tell me about your first experience of being at a school strike – describe the scene.	
3. Tell me about some of the people you know or people you have met through school strikes.	
4. Do youth strikers generally spend much time talking about their feelings in relation to the climate crisis? → Tell me about an experience of hearing youth strikers discuss their emotions.	
5. Do you remember any particular conversations you had at that time, with adults, about going on the schools strike? → school adults?	
6. Tell me what it has been like to transition into lockdown - what's that been like to try and adjust to the new situation? → Personal / movement	
7. Looking forward, how do you see the future of the movement?	

Appendix 4.3 – Interview Protocol – Revised Version cont.

Phase 3: Questioning Phase

Phrase questions using informant's own language. Only 'what happened?' style questions.
No opinion and attitude questions. No pointing out contradictions.

Questions (to jot down during phase 2)	Notes

Phase 4: Concluding Talk (stop recording)

Notes

Appendix 4.4 – Research Questions – Data Analysis - Matrix

Q.	Potential Research Question	Possible Sub-Questions	Appropriate Data Analysis Method
1.a	How do Youth Climate Strikers construct stories about their initial experiences within the movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do they order their narrative? - What is emphasised? - What details do they provide? - What do they omit? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Narrative analysis of responses to Q.1 and 2 -Content Analysis of responses to Q.1 and 2
1.b [follow-up to 1.a]	What are the similarities and differences in the way that Youth Climate Strikers construct stories about their initial experiences within the movement?	- Following the case-by-case analysis in Q.1.a, what are the common themes that emerge? Where do the constructed stories differ?	Thematic analysis of responses to Q.1 and 2 [following on from the previous narrative and content analyses]
2.	How do youth activists assign meaning to their personal experiences within the School Strike movement?	- What do the various layers of meaning reveal?	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
3.	What role do emotions play in the stories told by youth climate strikers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In what context do Strikers bring up emotions in their narratives? - To what extent do Youth Climate Strikers acknowledge the emotional impacts of the CC in their narratives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Content analysis / narrative analysis - Thematic analysis
4.	How does school and education feature in the narratives?	- How much do strikers mention school/teachers/education?	Thematic analysis
5.	How do the individual narratives of Youth Climate Strikers fit with the overarching narrative of the movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which of the components of the 'Stolen Future' narrative feature in the individuals' narratives? - To what extent have the individuals embodied that narrative? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discourse Analysis (potentially) or base on a previous study -Contextual Narrative Analysis

Inspired by Maxwell (1996) – adapted to include data analysis methods, rather than data collection methods.

Appendix 4.6 – Analysis Step 1 – Transcripts – Example

-Um, and so when you first decided to attend a school strike. Do you remember any conversations you had with adults, whether it's your parents or family members or adults at school, or... Do you remember any, any particular conversations that might stand out to you about that?

] [no pause] No, but, I remember conversations with, like, friends, and a couple of other people at school. Um, one of my friends I was trying to get them to go with me, but they just didn't see the point. And that really, really made me very annoyed because, it was just, I don't understand how you can't see the point. Another person I talked about so well just started talking about 'Oh, great a day off school, I'll go'. And that also made me mad because what's the point in going if you're not going to try and make a difference. I don't think they understood, either but it was about, which just kind of made me stop because I there, because people need to understand, everyone needs to be able to understand what is going on. And the fact that they did such a huge thing just doesn't. It just wasn't good really, yeah.

-Interesting, thank you for sharing that. And that so it's interesting that it's more your friends' or sort of classmates' reactions that you remember, rather than any teachers did, did any teacher say anything? Do you remember if you had any comments at the beginning from any teachers or any point?

] Um, I remember when we were leaving, when we were leaving school, the people at reception, were kind of saying 'Well done for doing this', which was really really nice of them. Yeah, that was really nice of them.

-Great, so you had a bit of support. And so all of that so far has kind of been about what it was like before coronavirus hit. Now obviously we're in quite a different time, and obviously you can't really strike from school when school isn't happening. Um, so, I just wonder if you could tell me a bit about what has it been like going into this lockdown, how, how's it been for you to adjust to this new situation?

Appendix 4.6 – Analysis Step 1 – Transcripts – Example cont.

] What do you mean as in like.. what bits of it?... I don't really know...

-Yeah, they're good question, good question. I specifically didn't specify to leave it open. So I suppose there's your, your right to ask there's kind of two aspects to my question for you as an individual, but it's also for you as a school striker as part of a wider movement. So I suppose those are kind of two separate questions really but you could pick and choose which bit you want to answer or if it comes all together.

] yeah, OK, so, I, I've not really heard anything from... so I always look out on the Extinction Rebellion, on the Extinction Rebellion Instagram for anything that I need to know but I haven't seen anything on that for a while, so I don't really know what's going on. I know that there have been a couple of things that happened, I think in London, where there were there were things like people put pairs of shoes laid out to resemble people without to be there. And that was really nice to see. But I haven't really seen much else. But one thing I have, one thing I did want to talk about was that with the air travel industry. With the. I'm not sure how to close this. So, because things have been good working with that. What's, what's happened is this giving. This isn't like I notice that this isn't particularly. I'm not sure if this is completely relevant but this is like, interesting.

-Umm [encouraging sound]..

] My dad's job is to do with focusing on what technology should be used to help in the, in the travel industry, and he has told me that it's one thing but looking at doing is changing the way air travel works so that it's more accurate and fuel effective and things like that to make it more eco-friendly. And I thought that was really interesting to say everybody was like basically telephone again so we can get an update.

-Right.

] That's gonna come out very well that should be good.

-Oh, that's interesting.

Appendix 4.7 – Analysis Step 6 – Case -by-Case Summary

Initial Reflections – Summary – Case-by-case

<p>Amari, 15</p> <p>No organising role. Previously attended marches, no impact. Youth strike with Greta → media attention on. Feeling part of something. On last XR youth. Distinct form of activism. Different from Ruman comparison. Mostly adults went with friends. Lots of young people community, experiencing something different. Parental support, fear allowed to. De finite impact → British airport expansion blocked. New friends through visit and XR open to talking about emotions. Looking after wellbeing. Focus on emphasis dealing with climate anxiety. Worry about unknown futures. Other crises - economic, Brexit, Covid. Grief. Partially for the worst affected. No marches but many strikes attended. BLM strikes, discussions. Self education on workshops advertised on social media and XR chats. Lots of grassroots of groups. Those in local South should be leading.</p>	<p>Bobby, 15</p> <p>On organising team. Powerful influence. Heard about first strike with friends and someone's teacher went along & teacher. Found it overwhelming and chaotic, but inspiring. First protest lots of people, signs, chants, posters, people, dedication. Unseen in UK before. Great to be a part of. Meet new people, organising team and regular cycle, particularly in Bristol. (Jesse of text 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000)</p>	<p>Ciaran, 14</p> <p>No organising role. Unofficially organises friends/family to get involved. Doesn't know people through XR. Does not follow their goals. Look at XR's head. Lots of passion and emotion expressed that we are doing nature and telling animals and that many people don't care, don't get it. Frustration at inaction. Mention scale of crisis repeatedly. Talks about happy atmosphere at protests but the anger that drives it. Many that come from anxiety that some people classmate don't see the point in striking, just want a day off school. Not aware of talking about emotions with friends. No mention of teachers - some supports on reception school that dad's job. Air travel - dad's job. Future: educate people.</p>	<p>Dayo, 18</p> <p>On organising team. Upbringing → active, involved, mostly by friends. Protests attended. Amazed by numbers who kept turning up. Not just a deep care for education. Managing emotions (nerves) of fear about future by translating into action. Defines events by feelings → sense of hope. Passionate, invested. People willing to turn up and push for change. Close friends. 12 main people - lovely people, passion + skills. Turn struggles, supportive group. No shame in stepping back. Strong feelings as organisers had motivational talk, wellbeing offer. Collective fear → sense of community → positive from family, support of action from passively supportive parents. Youth have voice but limited power. Future: different actions. Accessible, goal, more permanence of organs.</p>	<p>Eden, 17</p> <p>On organising team. Interest in environment, turned veggie a few years ago. Started learning more and in terms of themes. Attended a conference in Oct → someone from Brixton was speaking, decided to get involved. Lots of mention of nice people. Positive atmosphere at strikes. Group of friends, removed that. No mention of negative emotions experienced personally. Alluded to others talking about fear and anxiety and feeling action to have a good future. Surprised by support from mum, and some teachers. Disenchantment from school to attend strikes outside of friends (6th form) but some teacher story from that position. Need to branch out from striking.</p>
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Appendix 4.8 – Analysis Step 5 – Identifying Initial Themes – Highlighting Transcripts

Colour-coding Key → Step 5: Identification of Initial Themes

- Personal Evaluations/Emotive Language
- Psychological Impacts/Mental Wellbeing
- People in YS4C
- School/Teachers/Education

school. And it was great because there were loads of young people who seemed to sort of care about the environment, like I did. And it just sort of felt like a great community to be part of. And yeah, it was especially the first time when there was so many people there. It was really empowering. Especially sort of seeing it as reported in the media afterwards.

-Nice. Nice.

So I hear that you mentioned, kind of the difference between spaces that are just more adults centred activism, whereas, this is very much a youth space. I wonder, do you remember having conversations. At that time, with adults, about going on the schools strike. I don't know maybe adults at home, adults at school. Do you remember any specific conversations you had with adults about it?

Yeah. Both my parents were supportive of the strikes, and were happy for me to go. But I definitely did talk to them about it. And the teachers at school. Also, let us go. So I think they handled it quite well. Because they let the parents sign us out. And let us go to the strikes. But I mean, there have definitely been some people who I've talked to who thought we shouldn't be missing school, or that it wouldn't make a difference. But we can see that the activism. Over the past year or so definitely has. Like for example, the Bristol airport expansion has been blocked. Due to grassroots activism. Like the youth strikes, and extinction rebellion.

-Yeah. Great.

So I noticed you said about that first event that you went with some friends from school. So, the people that you've sort of been to youth strikes with, or maybe people that you've met there. I just wonder like what kind of conversations. Do you have. Do you talk about how you feel about the climate crisis? I'm just intrigued by those sorts of interactions, you have with the people at those events.

Inspiring thing. Then, I didn't, I didn't go back to the next one. Um, I think the next one I was busy. But then I did actually come back. And I think it was something that really inspired me. So when someone said, Do you want to get involved, I was like, Yeah, sure. So I started going to meetings. And it just felt like a cause I really cared about. And there was actually some way I could actually help.

-Lovely. So you've kind of talked there about your first experience of a school strike. I'd really love to imagine like to see what that was like for you. Would you be able to sort of describe, like, imagine, imagine you're looking at like a photo of that first time you were there, can you describe the scene to me? What was it like?

Q2: Yeah. Well yeah, it was... quite a chaotic scene. There were people lining all the way around the walls like outside City Hall, all the way up like the arch where you can like drive up. Loads of us had signs, we were all like chanting. And it was just like everyone, there was just like a lot of very passionate people, even though that particular event had very little coordination. Some people were speaking on an amp system. It was like, there were a lot of very dedicated people in a way that hadn't really, I'd ever seen before, hadn't really happened in the UK for a long time. In America, with March for Our Lives a few years prior but... it was something that was really like wow, this is actually happening. This is some I'd never been to any protests before I was 14 at the time. It was something that I thought was really powerful. Even though it wasn't very coordinated and organised at the time. But it was, it was, people were shouting, but, you know, I think it was something that was like really great to be a part of.

-So you're talking quite a lot about the people that are there, which is obviously, the people. I suppose is what makes the movement. So can you tell me a bit about some of the people that

was off school. And then, that was something, as we always got a really strong reaction from an animal lover, and I just love nature, because it's just something that I think we kind of take for granted. The fact that we live in such nice place. And I feel like that we're ruining that and we're killing all the animals. It just, it really upsets me. And I feel like nothing's being done, because we are talking about an extinction event. I don't think people understand like the scale of what's going on and people don't understand that it affects everyone, um, which is part of the problem, because we are going, to the point of no return already aren't we? So, it's bad and I don't think people really understand the scale of it. Another thing is that I think we need to make decisions, to move forward. And some people don't understand that, the, at the protest it's like a really, really nice atmosphere, everyone's very happy but it's what drove us to be there is generally that nothing's being done. At least in quite a lot of people's cases there is, I think, quite a lot.

-So yeah, thanks. So you kind of already mentioned about being at the strike everyone sort of being happy to be there. I just wonder if you could take me back to your first ever experience of being at a

interview 5 - Eden, 17

-So the first thing that I'm interested in is how you became a school striker, so that journey, that, what brought you to that point, like last September you told me you joined. What, what, what happened to bring you there? Can you tell me a bit about your journey?

] Well, I suppose I've kind of been interested in that sort of thing for a while, cuz like I went veggie a few years before. And then, I think I went to the first strike around June or so, or July, cuz I went to any of the early ones but then I went to that one with some friends. And then like, I use I was just like hearing about it more and I started doing like some more reading about it and learning about it in geography and stuff. And I just kind of wanted you to get like more involved in it so in September, like, after the big strike, I was at like this climate change conference thing, one of the people from the group was speaking. And I think they said something about like them trying to get more people to get involved so then I like came and spoke to him last night about getting involved in it and stuff.

tastic. And, and so thinking about the first ever time that you went to a strike, then, I think you June, can you try and just describe to me what was like, like almost as if you were like showing a photo, like can you just like describe the scene of what it was like when you first attended?

n, I was like really busy and there were like these people. And I think it was really like the atmosphere, it was like everyone was really friendly, and it was like people you didn't really know would just be up to you and start conversations to like, just seeing who you were happening. And it was like people chatting.

ew 4 - Dayo, 18

first bit that I'm interested in is your journey to becoming a school striker so what brought that point, when you got involved last spring Can you tell me a bit about that?

guess like, like, kind of the way that I was brought up it was always like you if you want to something change you have to be like actively involved in it, for my parents it was very much active involvement, like, voting and things like that but then also like, um, I did attend protests, like, I had previously attended protests when I was younger. And then I went to the first one in February, which was organised by a group that was completely separate from our, like, group now. But she, and I was amazed by kind of it, and by how many people actually turned up and then when they were turning up because, obviously, it was like you were missing out on something, for the first one so it's like, you know, that's kind of a novelty, but then when the novelty wears off I kind of was very interested in getting more involved, so I can actively like make it a thing and because now we're trying to kind of expand what we do as well so it's no longer just about other tactics because obviously we recognise, obviously we can't strike now. And also, like when we go to school people have missed so much school, and I think that's often like one of the, well, missed education (cont)

Appendix 4.9 – Analysis Steps 6 and 7 – Question-by-Question Breakdown

Question-by-Question Breakdown

Q. Theme	Amari	Bobby	Ciaran	Dayo	Eden
1 Journey	<p>Always been concerned about environment. Attended marches when younger but didn't feel like they achieved anything. Youth strike with Greba → media attention. Felt like being part of something which could make a difference. Been to almost all strikes. And joined local XR youth.</p>	<p>Parental influence. Family's interest in politics: mum - Lib Dem, dad - Labour & Green. Environmentalists use green transport to persuade change as a way of protest. Heard about strike through friends (via a teacher), saw the FB event, got OK from parents and went down. First impression: unorganised, but inspiring. Came back on one after next and got more involved.</p>	<p>Always felt really strongly. Animals nature lover. Feels it's reason for grassed up that we're running the place we live in and killing the animals. Really upset. Feels nothing's being done. Lack of understanding of scale of crisis. Anger is needed to make decisions, to move forward. Really nice having atmosphere at protests. People don't understand it's driven by anger.</p>	<p>Opening up → change comes through active involvement. Attended protests when younger; amazed by first strike by numbers of people and how they kept coming not just for the novelty of missing school, but wanted to get more involved to actively grow it. Expand tactics: passionate about education, channeling frustration: wages of fear and anxiety about future & managing emotions through action.</p>	<p>Been interested for a while. Turned 17 years ago. Went to first strike with some friends; started reading more about it, and hearing more and learning in A-level Geography. Attended climate conf. and someone from Brixia was more relevant and said need a spoke to him about getting involved.</p>
2 Describe the scene	<p>Distinct from any other sort of activism. Different from Remain because that was mostly adults, went with family. Youth strike, went with friends, loads of young people who care about the environment. Great community to be a part of. The first time, there were so many people. Really empowering. Especially seeing it reported in the media.</p>	<p>Quite a chaotic scene. People lining the walls. Signs, chants. Lots of passionate people, despite lack of coordination. People speaking on amp system. Lots of very dedicated people in a way unseen in the UK before. Comparison to US march for our lives. It was like 'wow', this is actually happening. First protests really powerful. Despite lack of coordination, people shouting, glad to be a part of it.</p>	<p>Rainy day so not so many people! Went with friend and regular with placards. Mum came too, sat on College Green in the mud, bit muddy. Big set-up at front - speeches at the start went on march then went back up to school afterwards.</p>	<p>More of a feeling. We [organisers] would be at the front guiding people. Feeling of the front leading. Sense of hope. That's why a lot of people are so willing to turn up. You hear the horrible things and see the lack of action then see this group of people coming together with real hope drive. Friends feeling sense of hope, passion. Even in the rain → so invested, so beautiful, really, really care, willing to push for change.</p>	<p>Really, busy. Loads of people. Really liked the atmosphere, everyone was really friendly. People you didn't know would come and talk to you. Really loud. All youth-led, which I really liked, all the speeches were being done by kids. Really colourful. Like all the people.</p>

Appendix 4.10 – Information Sheet

University of Bristol Education (MSc) Dissertation Project - Information Sheet

The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of youth climate strikers. The nature of the study has been adapted since the covid-19 outbreak and will look at the way that young activists have adapted to this new situation. The participants will be asked to talk about their experiences as part of the youth strike movement before the lockdown and also during it.

The hope is to shed some light on the ways in which young activists make sense of crises, referring both to the climate crisis and the coronavirus crisis. This may be of use to the young people participating in the research themselves and also to the wider community of researchers and environmental activists.

The data collected will be the stories told by the young people. This will happen through a one-to-one interview over video conferencing software, such as Skype. This interview will be recorded. Parents/carers who wish to be present during the interview are free to do so, with the agreement of their child who is the participant in the study. To be clear, the parent/carer would be present only as a silent observer and not as a participant themselves.

Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw at any time before, during and up to two weeks after the interview, without giving reason. Parents/carers reserve the right to withdraw their child from the study, within the same timeframe. In the case of a withdrawal, all data would be deleted immediately and not considered in the study.

The data analysis will involve transcribing the recordings. In the case that a professional transcription service is used, it will be through a company which has been approved by the University to process data subject to the Data Protection Act. Data will be stored on secure university servers and deleted once the data analysis phase of the research is complete.

Appendix 4.10 – Information Sheet

All names will be anonymised in the final report and nothing will be included that could give away the identity of an individual. A final copy of the written report will be sent to you at the end of the study (September 2020) if you request this. The report may be circulated to other interested parties in the School Strike movement.

In the case of concerns or complaints, these can be addressed to the project supervisor, David Sands at david.sands@bristol.ac.uk.

If you have any further questions before you are happy to sign the consent form, please contact me at lh17711@bristol.ac.uk.

Thank you for your participation.

Lauren Hennessy

Appendix 4.11 – Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet. I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered fully.
2. I understand that participation is voluntary. I am free to withdraw at any time before, during and up to two weeks after the interview, without giving reason. I understand that my parent/carer also has the right to withdraw me from the study. Upon withdrawal, all data would be deleted immediately and not considered in the study.
3. I understand that during the interview I can choose to have my parent/carer present in the room with me.
4. I understand that the interview will be recorded and the recording and transcript will be stored securely on school or university servers, until the completion of the data analysis when it will be permanently deleted.
5. I understand that if I have any complaints, they may be addressed to David Sands the project supervisor at david.sands@bristol.ac.uk.

Signed:

(participant)

Date:

Appendix 4.12 – Parental Consent Form

Parental Consent Form

1. I confirm that my child and I have read and understood the information sheet. We have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered fully.
2. I understand that participation is voluntary. My child is free to withdraw at any time before, during and up to two weeks after the interview, without giving reason. I reserve the right to withdraw my child from the study within the same time frame. Upon withdrawal, all data would be deleted immediately and not considered in the study.
3. I understand that during the interview I have the option to be present and this is to be agreed between myself and my child.
4. I understand that the interview will be recorded and the recording and transcript will be stored securely on school or university servers, until the completion of the data analysis when it will be permanently deleted.
5. I understand that if I have any complaints, they may be addressed to David Sands the project supervisor at david.sands@bristol.ac.uk.

Signed:

(parent/carer)

Date:

Appendix 4.13 – Full Ethics Application

Project Summary

Name(s): Lauren Hennessy

Proposed research project: Making sense of a crisis from within a crisis: the experiences of youth climate strikers during the covid-19 pandemic

Proposed funder(s): N/A

Discussant for the ethics meeting: William Barkley

Name of supervisor: David Sands

Has your supervisor seen this submitted draft of your ethics application? Y/~~N~~

Outline of the project:

This study will explore the stories of young environmental activists and their involvement in the School Strike movement*. Given the current context, two months into the covid-19 lockdown in the UK, the study will explore how the activists have adapted to the new situation and what it means for the movement. My personal interest in this topic stems from my own environmental activism. Hence, I will be positioning myself as a fellow activist when speaking to the young people, in order to establish a relationship of trust and transparency. It is recognised that my personal investment in the cause will have implications to the validity of the study and this will be considered throughout.

Environmental activism can be driven by a variety of motivations which will be discussed further in the literature review. The strongest driver for action is self-motivation (Grønhøj and Thøgersen, 2017), which must itself have a cause. This study will look for clues to the motivation of the activist, whilst recognising that determining true motives is a complex psychological exercise. It is important to recognise that the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) is “one of the biggest threats not only to human society but also the stability and wellbeing of ecosystems across the world.” (Thomas et al, p.96). Given the scale of the problem many people feel anxiety about the CEE, this has been termed ‘eco-anxiety’. Pihkala (2018) suggests that although many sufferers of eco-anxiety are people who have experienced direct impacts of the CEE, “even more people experience anxiety because they feel that climate change is taking away their future.” (Pihkala, p.546). The implication for conducting research with young environmental activists is that a high level of sensitivity from the researcher is required.

Five or six young activists will participate, with parental consent. The sampling method will be snowball sampling, drawing on personal contacts as gatekeepers to potential participants. After making initial contact, if more than six people respond I will select six of them to participate. I will select one of the participants to pilot the study with, conducting their interview before the others and using the experience to hone my interviewing technique and modify the structure if necessary.

The methodological approach selected is narrative inquiry, hence the focus will be on the stories told by the participants, or informants. The interviews will be conducted in the narrative style, using an adaptation of the framework suggested by Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000). This is a very open form of interview, even more so than a semi-structured interview, so as not to impose structure on the stories the young people tell. They will be given the space to express their experiences in the

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way that makes sense to them. The most important feature will be the questions that I pose, which must be based entirely on the narration I have heard, using the language of the participant themselves. The interview protocol is detailed in one of the attached documents.

The data collected will be the stories as communicated by the informants; of particular interest will be the way they construct those stories and give meaning to their experiences. The data will be transcribed and analysed using narrative structural analysis.

The hope is that participating in the study will facilitate both the participants and the researcher to make sense of their own experiences of activism, as well as providing valuable learning for the research community into how youth activists respond to crises.

*School Strike movement is used as a collective term to refer to the collection of youth activist movements using school strikes as a tactic to raise awareness of the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE). Some specific groups within that movement are UK Student Climate Network, Youth Strike 4 Climate, School Strike 4 Climate and Fridays For Future.

References

Grønhøj, A. and Thøgersen, J. (2017). Why young people do things for the environment: The role of parenting for adolescents' motivation to engage in pro-environmental behaviour, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 54, pp. 11-19.

Jovchelovitch, S. and Bauer, M., W. (2000). Narrative interviewing [online]. London: LSE Research Online. Available in LSE Research Online: August 2007

Pihkala, P. (2018). Eco-anxiety, tragedy, and hope: Psychological and spiritual dimensions of climate change. *Zygon*, 53(2), 545–569.

Ethical Considerations

These notes were constructed with consideration of guidance from:

School of Education staff (through Blackboard, taught sessions and supervision)

Bristol University School of Education Ethical procedure

British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines 2018

Caroline Hickman, Department of Social & Policy Sciences at the University of Bath and Climate Psychology Alliance (CPA) Executive Committee

A fellow MSc Education student: William Barkley – suggestions made in this conversation have been typed in bold.

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Researcher access/exit

I will use existing contacts in the youth strike movement to access potential participants. These include contacts made through my own activism, as well as through my work as a teacher.

I have already gained permission from a member of senior management at school to contact a particular student who I know through the Youth Environmental Society I set up. They are known to me as somebody who is active in the School Strike movement and would be a good starting point to make contact. I will first contact parents and gain consent (see point 4).

When contacting young people who I have met through my involvement in environmental activism, I must be mindful of my responsibility to both the activist organisations and the University to do this in an appropriate way through existing platforms.

If more than six people respond to my initial communication, I will choose six of them to participate and will thank the others for their interest and let them know that they have not been selected.

The young people I reach out to will not be pressurised in any way to participate in the study. Trust between researcher and participant will be paramount to this study and will be established through transparency.

After the conclusion of the interviews, I will email participants with a thank you message and invite them to contact me should they have any further questions about the research.

Researcher bias

I am approaching this study not only as a researcher, but also as an environmental activist.

Therefore, I must acknowledge this in both the way I present myself to the participants and the resulting write-up. The methodological approach of narrative inquiry calls for transparency between researcher and participants (see point 3).

Power and participant relations

It will be very important that the participants are made to feel comfortable at the start of the interview, so that they have a positive experience and feel able to talk freely. Although I will not hide the fact that I work as a teacher, I will make it clear that I am talking to them as a researcher and not as a teacher. For the narrative inquiry method, it is also important that the participants understand the researchers own positioning in relation to the topic, hence I will tell them at the beginning that I am also an environmental activist. I will be open about my own beliefs in the initial phase but thereafter I will be careful not to express many views of my own as this could influence the data.

Information given to participants

Potential participants will be sent an information sheet by e-mail (see attached). This is to be shared with parents/carers.

Informed Consent

The young people who are selected to participate in this study will be over the age of thirteen and hence able to give their own informed consent. However, I have also decided to speak to the parents/carers before conducting the research to ask for their consent. Due to the nature of the research, which involves discussing a potentially distressing topic which the young people are

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invested in as activists, it seems appropriate that parents are fully aware of what is being discussed. Parents/carers will be informed of the research via telephone call before the interviews take place. Participants and parents/carers will then be emailed an information sheet and a consent form to read and send back.

If a student from my own school agrees to take part, I must email their consent form to my school, as requested by the senior member of staff I consulted with.

Participant's right of withdrawal

Should a participant wish to withdraw at any point before or during the interview stage they will have the right to do so. If a participant wishes to withdraw during an interview, they will have the choice whether they wish to recommence on another occasion or withdraw completely. After completing the interview phase, participants will be given a two-week window in which to withdraw their data should they wish. In the case of a withdrawal, the recordings and transcripts would be destroyed and the data would not be recorded in the project. I would then need to contact another potential participant to replace them.

The parents/carers of participants will be given the same rights as the participants themselves to withdraw their child from the study.

Concerns/Complaints

If a participant feels negatively affected by their participation in the study, I will provide some links to resources that could help, this will be explained in the information sheet.

I will also provide the contact details for my supervisor on the information sheet in case participants or their families have concerns or complaints that they do not wish to discuss with me.

Safety and well-being of participants/researchers

The physical safety of participants and researcher will not be put at risk in this study. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, asking participants to go anywhere outside of their homes could constitute a health risk. Hence, interviews will be conducted entirely online using video conferencing software. Parents/carers will be given the option to be present in the same room as the young people during the interview process, however this will be at the discretion of the families themselves to decide what feels most appropriate to them.

The use of technology could pose e-safety risks, particularly when conducting research with young people. University of Bristol supported remote conference facilities will be used (see point 9).

The emotional well-being of participants and researcher is an important ethical consideration of this project. All of those involved will be committed activists in the environmental movement, which naturally involves a high degree of emotional investment to that cause. This implies an above-average level of concern about environmental issues, potentially serious eco-anxiety. On top of that, we are in the midst of a global pandemic which is affecting people's well-being through both the concern caused by the virus and the constraints to our liberties due to the measures to suppress the virus. Caroline Hickman noted here that the young activists she has been speaking to recently are for the most part extremely angry that the reaction to covid-19 has been so drastic and is distracting people from the climate crisis. Bearing all of these tensions in mind, it is likely that through the process of interviewing, many of these concerns are brought to the surface. This could impact on the well-being of participants and/or researcher. As the researcher and the adult, I must also be very

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careful not to let my own fears and concerns about the current situation weigh down the young people I am speaking to. I will make sure the interview concludes in a light-hearted manner, by allowing some time at the end to have a joke and conclude the interview with positivity.

If I have a concern that a participant seems distressed after an interview, I will contact the parent/carer to let them know.

Anonymity/confidentiality

Participants will not be named in the study - pseudonyms will be used to refer to the individuals at all times. No personal information which could identify them will be included. Information about participants will not be shared with other participants.

Data Collection

Interviews will occur using university approved software, such as Skype for Business.

Depending on the preference of the individual participant, this may be in the form of two shorter interviews (approximately half an hour each) or one longer interview. The timings will be arranged at the convenience of the participants.

The data to be collected is the stories of the young people. This raises ethical questions of ownership and misrepresentation. The information sheet clearly states that I will be recording the stories of the activists and that they should only share with me experiences they are happy to have recorded. I will address the issue of potential misrepresentation by ensuring that at the end of the interview process, I reflect back to the participants the main points that I have heard and some of my initial reflections. This gives them a chance to feed into the analysis process and maintain their sense of ownership.

Data analysis

The recordings will be transcribed as the first stage of the analysis. If I were to use a professional transcription service, in which case I will use a company which has been approved to process data subject to the Data Protection Act. However, if time allows it I intend to transcribe the recordings myself.

Data storage

Data will be stored on my personal computer which is password protected, as well as backed up through University of Bristol servers. Recordings will be deleted once the data analysis phase of the research is complete.

Data protection

All processes will abide by GDPR, no unnecessary information will be collected or held for longer than necessary. Any data from withdrawn participants will be deleted immediately and not considered in the study.

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Reporting of research

The hope is to shed some light on the ways in which young people make sense of crises. This may be of use to the young people participating in the research themselves and also to the wider community of researchers and environmental activists.

All participants will have the chance to receive a copy of the report at the end of the project upon request. Representatives of the youth strike movement and other environmental groups will also be offered a copy, as will Caroline Hickman, as an acknowledgment of her advice in the early stages. Participants will be offered in the information sheet that the report may be circulated in this way among interested parties.

If you feel you need to discuss any issue further, or to highlight difficulties, please contact the GSoE's ethics co-ordinators who will suggest possible ways forward.

Signed: L. Hennessy (Researcher)

Signed: W. Barkley (Discussant)

Date: 14.05.20

Appendix 4.14 – Ethics Approval

Ethics Online Tool: application signed off

Research Governance and Ethics Officer <Liam.McKervey@bristol.ac.uk>

Tue 19/05/2020 11:20

To:

- Lauren Hennesy <lh17711@bristol.ac.uk>

Your online ethics application for your research project "Making sense of a crisis from within a crisis: the experiences of youth climate strikers during the covid-19 pandemic" has been granted ethical approval. Please ensure that any additional required approvals are in place before you undertake data collection, for example NHS R&D Trust approval, Research Governance Registration or Site Approval.

For your reference, details of your online ethics application can be found online here:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/ethics-online-tool/applications/105162>