Rising to the Top: A Developmental-Ecological Case Study Exploring the Development of Underrepresented Young Black Men in Higher Education.

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Declaration of Originality

I certify that this thesis is my own work and where the work of others has been used, it has been appropriately acknowledged and cited within the text.

Bianca Bailey Wilson

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Abstract

Research on the educational development of young black men and other underrepresented students has explored many areas but has overwhelmingly addressed this topic through a Bourdiesian lens, exploring the role of social inequalities and disadvantage on their education (Archer & Francis, 2007; Byfield, 2008; Dumangane, 2017; Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2009; Rollock, 2007, 2012). While this approach is justified as Bourdieu's theory of capital (1986) provides insight into the social inequalities that exist in society, it does little to highlight the role of the individual on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and how their sense of agency, their efficacy and their motivations influence their engagement and experiences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This thesis sought to address this, investigating black male educational development from a developmental-ecological viewpoint (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Through an instrumental case study evaluation (Stake, 1995) of the Amos Bursary, a charitable organisation supporting underprivileged young black men from London, this study drew on US research (Renn et al., 2003; Renn & Arnold, 2003; Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012) to explore the relationship between the developing young black man and their environment on their educational and career development. Moving away from the metanarrative of young black men as underachievers towards one where achievement and success are possible (Harper, 2012), this study used mixed qualitative methods such as graphic methods (Bagnioli, 2009) and participatory evaluation methods (Douthwaite et al., 2008) to explore the role of the environment in supporting young black men to become hopeful for the future (Little, Snyder & Wehemeyer, 2006) and to become more competent in their ability to navigate the system (Renn & Arnold, 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 2001b). It concludes with the presentation of DETUS (Developmental-Ecological-Theory for Underrepresented -Students), a theory for positive underrepresented student development that can be used by professionals and researchers to support more students to achieve their goals.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the study

"The deepest urge in human nature is the desire to be important." (John Dewey, cited in Carnegie, 1963)

Young black men, like many other members of society want to feel important. For some, that importance may mean gaining the respect and recognition of their parents, their peers or members of their local community (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). For those living in complex inner-city communities where there are issues of violence and crime related behaviours, the importance and recognition they desire may come from those involved in gang-related behaviour (Seal, Nguyen & Bayer, 2014) whereas for others, they may be fully engrossed in a youth subculture (Bucholtz, 2002). The young black men who get involved with the Amos Bursary become part of a 'family' when they join the organisation. For many, they feel that they gain a band of brothers when they get involved, brothers that they can learn from, share with, and develop with while on their journey out of poverty, towards a graduate career (Amos Bursary, 2014).

This research focuses primarily on the experiences of the Amos Bursary members and stakeholders, and as such does not attempt to explain the behaviours and desires of all young black men. However, it can shed some light on their experiences and provide the reader with insightful information into an underrepresented group in higher education and graduate employment (Boliver, 2013).

This is after all, arguably the best that this form of case study research can hope to offer. It does not aim to provide opportunities for generalisations as all it can ever do is provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore the narratives and experiences of those being investigated to illuminate and make sense of their views of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2007), in line with the study's focus.

Its insights however could be particularly useful for anyone thinking about the experiences of underrepresented peoples in education and the workplace; whether that be disabled students in higher education, young women in STEM (Usher & Pajares, 2009) or black and ethnic minority students in higher education (Renn et al., 2003), all members of the wider community who are often underrepresented. It is a starting point, a point of departure and its approach, methods and findings may be of use in researching underrepresentation wherever it is.

1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the role that the Amos Bursary plays in the educational development of the young black men that they work with. This took the form of an instrumental case study as the Amos Bursary was explored and evaluated to facilitate greater understanding of what barriers the young black men they work with face and how they overcome these barriers to access higher education and graduate careers. Young black men are underrepresented in the UK higher education system, particularly at Russell Group and other elite institutions (Boliver, 2013), and the Amos Bursary was recognised as an organisation that was working in this space and supporting young black men to successfully access universities and graduate careers.

The results of this case study therefore have multiple uses and audiences. Firstly, as evaluation insights for members of the Amos Bursary and their stakeholders to review and consider for programme purposes. Secondly, for higher education policy makers and institutions reviewing areas of access, widening participation and social mobility who may want to know more about black student experiences and perceptions. Lastly, its findings may be of interest to education professionals, researcher and others working in the space of underrepresentation, looking for new perspectives in this field.

1.3 The Case - The Amos Bursary

Background

Set up in 2009, the Amos Bursary is a small charitable organisation that provides financial, pastoral and developmental support to academically able young black men from London to achieve their full potential academically and achieve their career goals (Amos Bursary, 2015). Originally started by the Amos family in memory of their parents who were said to be passionate about education (Amos Bursary, 2016) the Bursary targets young black men from under-privileged backgrounds in year 12 and supports them until graduation. Run primarily by volunteers and with the support of its donors and partners, the Amos Bursary has approximately 65 student members who are young British black men with heritage from across the African and Caribbean diaspora.

The Amos Bursary focuses on supporting young black men and they state that this is due to the culmination of a lack of black men being represented in the workplace, as well as historic educational issues experienced by young black men in the UK. They do occasionally allow young black women to gain access to their network during their annual conference and at some of their larger events; however, it could be said that young black women are not part of their raison d'etre.

1.3.1 What Do They Do?

> 'The Amos Bursary was set up to redress the under representation in established higher education institutions and the professions, of young British men of African and Caribbean descent. We provide the support to ensure each student moves from potential to performance' (Amos Bursary, 2016).

As stated above, the Amos Bursary supports young black male students aged from age 16, who are looking to move into higher education and graduate careers and provides them with both financial

and developmental support (including access to two mentors per student). Each year they take on a cohort of students (approximately 10-15 students) as their main bursars who receive all of their support as long as they meet certain criteria. A priority here is that they reach the right individuals with the focus on students being:

- State school educated (compulsory)
- Home students (compulsory)

And also fulfil at least one of the following criteria:

- Single parent household
- Receiving social care support
- Free School Meals
- Little or no family history in higher education
- Household income below £40,000* (London based)

Financial Support

- £500 per year while at university to support with books, resources and/or living costs for all its main bursars.
- They also provide two main scholarships for year 13 and gap year students in conjunction with University College London (UCL) and Brierly Price Prior (BPP) universities. With BPP university, the Amos Bursary offer full three-year scholarships for those interested in studying law, accountancy and business studies. For those who have been able to secure a place at UCL, they offer the chance to receive a £1000 per annum scholarship and encourage applications from those interested in the law, social sciences, humanities, and arts.[1]

[1] Those who receive a BPP or UCL scholarship are not eligible to also receive the annual Amos Bursary scholarship of £500 per annum.

Developmental Support

- Mentoring – a professional mentor linked to the student's career interests and peer mentor who is either a recent graduate or more senior undergraduate (mentors are both male and female and come from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds).
- Learning and development programme – including sessions on personal development, exam preparation, public speaking and goal setting.
- Networking and business events.
- General coaching and advice.

Pastoral Support

- Access to wider network of young black people in higher education and graduate careers
- Advice and support with university applications
- Careers advice and planning
- Support with coping with academic stress and pressures

They also provide access to their networking events and annual conference for students who were not accepted as part of the main cohort and for female students from African and Caribbean backgrounds.

1.3.2 Who are the participants?

The Amos Bursary recruits young British men of African and Caribbean heritage who are undertaking their A-levels to become recipients of their bursary support (financial and developmental). These young men need to fulfil at least two of their criteria in order to receive their full support which includes coming from low-income households (with an annual income of less than £40,000),

eligibility for free school meals, care leavers or those currently in the care system, and no or little history of university attendance in the family.

They also have a number of affiliate students which includes:

- Young men (of African and/or Caribbean heritage) who are able to attend development sessions and large events but do not receive financial support;
- Young women (of African and/or Caribbean heritage) who are able to attend some networking events and some sessions during their annual conference.

1.3.3 Partners and Supporters

Partners

The Amos Bursary works with several partner organisations to achieve its goals including large corporate organisations, small businesses, and higher education institutions. These partners provide both direct financial support in the form of sponsorship of a cohort of students, and in direct/in-kind support which includes use of facilities for development events and catering and resources.

Supporters

As a small charitable organisation, the Amos Bursary fundraises for support and has a number or supporters and donors who give their time and money to support their cause. This includes some high net worth individuals (HNWI), business leaders who provide training and support, and those who volunteer in various ways such as through mentoring, providing leadership support, speaking at events, or allowing access to their networks.

1.4 Researching Complexity in Context Using Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development

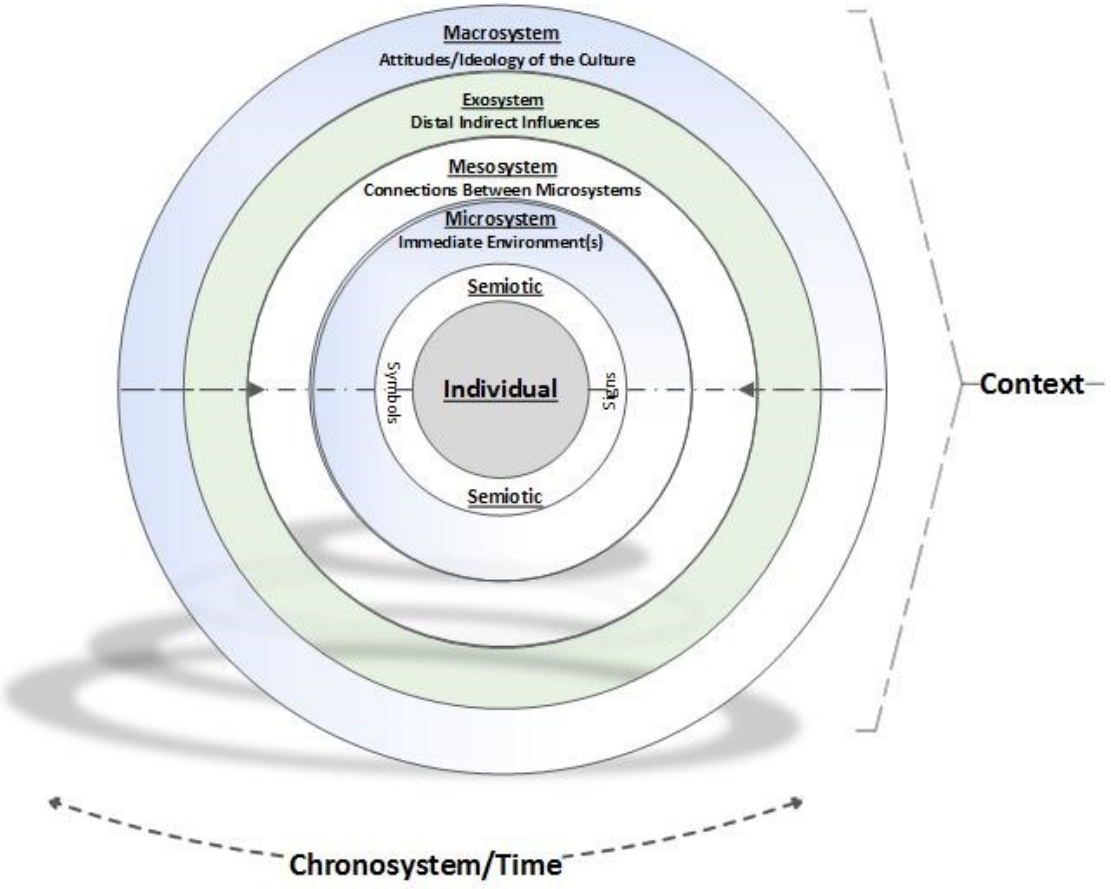
'Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform' (Mark Twain, 1904, cited in Paine, 2006).

Much of the research that has been done to explore the educational experiences of young black and ethnic minority people and other underrepresented students (Archer & Francis, 2007; Byfield, 2008; Dumangane, 2017; Rollock, 2007, 2012; Watson, 2009, 2013) in the UK has heavily used Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu, 1985). This is quite understandable as Bourdieu's theory and perspectives neatly provide a frame of reference when thinking about the interrelationships between social class, race, and education (Swartz, 1997). Such complexity can often be daunting for any researcher and a theory that can assist with the articulation of a perspective as succinctly as possible will undoubtedly be attractive. However, in the pursuit of knowledge creation it is vital that fresh thinking and new perspectives are present,that researchers continue to challenge and question, and that new ways of thinking and working can come to the fore. As Mark Twain remarks (Paine, 2006), being on the side of the majority may mean that it is time to pause, question and rethink.

I did not endeavour to dismiss Bourdieu's thinking and theoretical perspective when I began this study, however, the analyses of some of the work I read that had used it (Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014; Byfield, 2008; Rollock, 2006, 2007) and the theory itself left me with the desire for something more that could encapsulate the multi-layered complexity of the black male educational experience without reducing it to the role of society and class alone. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994) and bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) arguably shares similarities with Bourdieu's work (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong,

2012), however it remains focused on the role of the individual as well as the multiple layers of society on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The young men involved in the Amos Bursary come from home environments that have issues relating to poverty, fostering and social care, single-parent households, and more (Amos Bursary, 2014). However, they have managed to attain academically and have a strong desire to shape and influence their lives in positive ways. Bronfenbrenner's theory allows for their own characteristics and dispositions to be prevalent in the study of their development, while also providing an overarching theory where other developmental constructs can be incorporated (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

FIGURE 1:1 ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY MODEL (BASED ON BRONFENBRENNER, 1979, 2005, 2006)



Complexity and Intersectionality

The experiences of black boys and young men in the U.K and globally is different from black women in many respects (Harper, 2012; Rollock, 2007) with race, ethnicity and gender interacting in

different ways. Young black men do not do as well as young black women in relation to their educational development (CoDE, 2013), however, boys and young men from all ethnic backgrounds do not achieve academically as highly as girls and young women across the board from age five through to higher education (Department for Education, 2013, 2014, 2016, Fantuzzo et al., 2012). This is not to say that there are not important issues in relation to the educational development of young black women and black women generally in the workplace and society (Marsh, 2013; Rollock, 2007). However, this complexity means that it is difficult to talk of boys versus girls or black versus white as this does nothing to illuminate the experience of particular members of society (Crenshaw, 1991; Rollock, 2007, 12). Intersectionality is a perspective that is most helpful in aiding this type of thinking and allowing the researcher to be aware of the connections between aspects of people's identities and how these interplay in relation in social injustice or issues of equity (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality sits comfortably within Bronfenbrenner's theory as it recognises the layers within personal identities and allows for a nuanced approach to research of this kind.

1.5 Evaluating Effective Programmes using the Positive Youth Development Approach

Positive youth development (PYD) emerged in the United States in the late 20th Century, growing out of a desire by youth and community psychologists and researchers to move away from seeing young people as 'problems to be managed' (Barcelona & Quinn 2011: p21). Instead, PYD sees youth as 'assets' (Barcelona & Quinn, 2011: p.21) who play a vital role in their own development and growth. Youth development is seen as a natural process, where young people grow and develop in a way that allows them to understand their world and manoeuvre effectively in their environment. It is also an applied theoretical approach that focuses on 'active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations, and institutions, particularly at the community level' (Hamilton et al., 2004: p.1). These two elements often come together in the form of positive youth

development programmes that try to support a particular area of development through a planned set of activities.

The theoretical approach of PYD recognises that the developmental process young people undergo takes place in a range of environments, and through a range of interactions. While influenced by a range of theorists, it is built upon the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 1998, 2005) and his bioecological theory of development (2005). As seen in figure 1:1, within this ecological systems framework a range of systems are 'nested' (Bronfenbrenner, 1993: p.39) within one another, moving from the microsystem (immediately around the individual) out to the macrosystem (at the wider society and cultural level). Bronfenbrenner's work (1986) underpins the PYD approach allowing programme planners to identify at which level or levels their interventions need to operate as a way to bring about the change they hope to foster.

Relevance for The Evaluation of the Amos Bursary

The Amos Bursary is a volunteer-led organisation that runs a series of programmes and events for disadvantaged young black men from London, as well as providing them with peer and professional mentors. Preliminary conversations have shown that their programme of activities include learning and development sessions, which are highly focused on personal development and they also provide a number of networking events and professional experiences, which seem to be an essential part of their aim of 'realising the ambitions of young men' (Amos Bursary, 2015). Youth development alongside the theories underpinning it may become useful in framing the Amos Bursary's activities, and in analysing and reflecting on the experiences of the young men involved.

1.6 Rationale and Aims

Rationale

Fair access to higher education has been recognised as a key factor in supporting social mobility (Milburn, 2012) and access to higher education for black and minority ethnic (BME) people has been recognised as an issue for some time (Boliver, 2013, 2016; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Law et al., 2012). Considering this, the rationale for this study was to support research and practice on black male access to higher education as this group of students have been identified as underrepresented in higher education both in the UK and US (Boliver, 2013; Byfield, 2008; Harper, 2012, Law et al., 2012; Milburn, 2012). The findings and conclusions of this study it was believed would support researchers and practitioners across the education sector to improve outcomes for black male students in the UK.

Aims

This research project is two-dimensional, in the sense that it has two interconnected aims. These are:

- To explore the educational experiences and development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary to further support secondary, tertiary and higher education policy and practice.

- To evaluate the Amos Bursary and gain a rich understanding of what they do and arrive at some conclusions of its merit and worth (Clarke, 2003) with the hope of assisting its primary stakeholders and others with an interest in their work.

1.7 Research questions

In line with the rationale and aims presented previously, a number of research questions were devised to address the multifaceted nature of the project, while remaining focused on key issues.

The overarching question for the study was:

1. What are the developmental changes that young black men experience as a result of their participation in the Amos Bursary?

A number of sub-questions were also created to cover the key issues that were also identified as important to the study. These were:

a. What are the issues/barriers facing Amos Bursary young black men on their journey towards a graduate career?
b. How does involvement with the Amos Bursary interact with the individual young man's developmental pathway?
c. How does the Amos Bursary define and measure success?
d. What are the outcomes for the young black men as a result of their engagement with the Amos Bursary?
e. What are the corporate motivations for engaging with the Amos Bursary?

1.7.1 Outline of Thesis

This thesis presents eight chapters in response to the research questions and aims. The literature review follows this chapter, exploring relevant research and policy literature on the educational experiences and outcomes for young black men and other BME students in education and issues relating to race, gender and social class. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework for the study and is covers four areas of the framework. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory (2005) is the overarching theory and this is presented in some detail, followed by sections on the social cognitive theories such as self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995) and self-determination. This chapter also includes the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Approach (Catalano et al., 2004, 2008) which was used to support the evaluation elements of the study.

Chapter four sets out the study's design and methods in detail, followed by two chapters of findings, chapter five relating to the research directly focused on young black men, and chapter six presenting findings on the Amos Bursary's organisational practice. Both findings chapters are brought together in the discussion chapter (chapter seven), followed by the conclusions and recommendations in chapter eight. Several appendices have been included to support the reader with additional information which follows the bibliography.

2 Context: Literature Review on Black Students

Overview

The aim of this literature review was to support the research project by providing a foundation of the literature landscape that exists, identifying trends and key topics as well as areas that may have been under-researched and warranted further investigation. A range of academic literature relating to the education and employment of black and ethnic minority (BME) children and young people was explored, with particular focus paid to the black male experience. Relevant policy papers and government documents and reports were also explored as this project crosses the boundaries of research, evaluation and policy and practice.

2.1 Identifying the Research Field

Preliminary discussions with the directors of the Amos Bursary illustrated their desire for this research to help them to understand what they are doing that is working and help them to discover what may not be working so well. There was a clear sense that it was evident that elements of the programme were indeed working but how and why was far more ambiguous for them. These discussions also gave more information on what the organisation does at a helicopter level, not in detail but as an overview. The Amos Bursary is indeed as its name implies a bursary, an organisation that provides financial assistance to disadvantaged young black men who show intellectual promise and have achieved high GCSE results[2]. This concept of disadvantaged appears to be centred on families with low household incomes, and families where their little history of university attendance.

[2] GCSE stands for the General Certificate of Secondary Education and is taken by students of secondary age, usually at age 16.

They support these young men from the age of 16/17 for a four-and-a-half-year period (in most cases through to university graduation), providing a range of learning and development opportunities, assisting with the university admission process, provide professional networking opportunities, and financial support is given to the young men from their first year of university to assist with university related costs. The young men are also provided two mentors each, a professional mentor from industry, and a peer mentor, someone who is currently in university or has recently graduated. They also get the opportunity to engage in a number of residential personal development events, and are connected with a number of internship opportunities.

It may be quite evident as to why young men who come from families where household incomes are low may need financial assistance to support them through to university, but it may not be as evident as to why these young men who are already achieving academically need additional support with personal development and why they may need professional mentors. These contemplations were influential in the search for literature as I sought to discover more on the social, cultural, and political environment that these young men inhabit and that the Amos Bursary programmes operate in.

Black or African-Caribbean – Search Terminology?

When searching for the relevant literature, it immediately became clear that terminology relating to race, ethnicity and heritage would be important. The Amos Bursary refers to their students as those of African-Caribbean descent, and this includes students from mixed backgrounds (Amos Bursary, 2015), however, in conversation members of the Amos Bursary, both students and staff often refer to themselves as black. An initial search was conducted using a range of terms including African-Caribbean and black, which presented a range of literature, but also highlighted the multiplicity of terms.

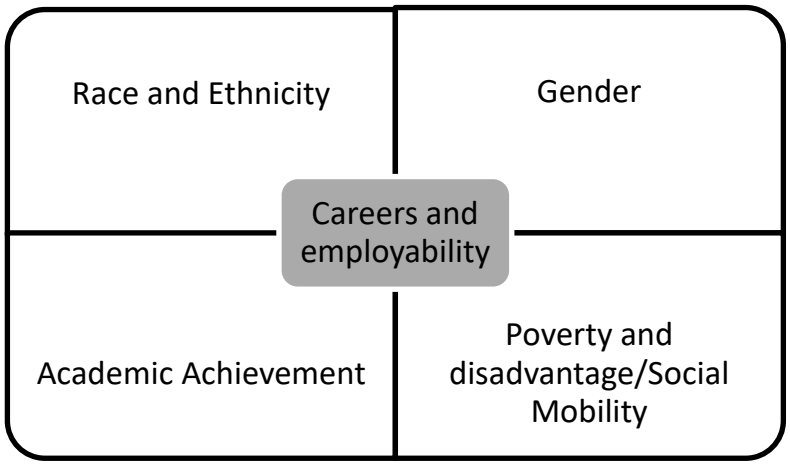
Like the Amos Bursary, some in the UK use the term African-Caribbean (Arbouin, 2009; Gosai, 2009; Rhamie, 2012), however the terms black and ethnic minority (BME) are used widely in UK policy and research to refer to people of colour (Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014; Bhopal, 2015; Bhopal, Brown & Jackson, 2016; Cotton et al., 2016; Crozier, 2003; Desai, 2017; Law et al., 2012; Rollock, 2006; Rollock, 2007). Similarly, within the US literature, the term African-American is used to refer to black people (Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Hackett, 1995; Spencer et al., 1993) as well as black (Harper, 2012; Marsh, 2013; Okech & Harrington, 2002) bi-racial and mixed race (Renn et al., 2003).

Therefore, a range of searches were conducted using all relevant terms but the term black was used throughout the study process.

Intersections of the Study

The Amos Bursary's work and the educational development of young black men more generally is multifaceted and therefore, the literature review needed to reflect this. A multi-disciplinary literature search was needed as the organisation's activities are multi-faceted. Figure 2.1 illustrates this point and indicates what could be seen as the core themes related to the Amos Bursary's work. The Amos Bursary is complex and has several central components to it. Upon initial inquiry, it seemed clear that the most obvious of the central components for the literature review were race and ethnicity, and gender, as the Amos Bursary is an initiative for young black British men of African and Caribbean descent. While young black women are invited to various Amos Bursary events and are involved as peer mentors in some instances, the programme of activities are marketed to and developed primarily for young black men and the learning and development aspects of the project are predominantly for young black men.

FIGURE 2:1 INTERSECTIONS OF STUDY



As well as this, continuing academic achievement and success, and social mobility are key to the Amos Bursary, as it aims to support academically gifted young men who come from families on low incomes, or from single parent households, and/or those where there is little history of higher education to become upwardly socially mobile and improve their personal situations. These young men are supported as they progress through their A-Levels, into university and beyond, with a raft of learning and development experiences. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly to this research, employability appears to be at the core of the Amos Bursary, as these are young men who are already achieving academically but are supported by professional mentors, provided with numerous opportunities to network with corporations and senior corporate professionals, and are supported in developing *soft skills* such as communication skills and public speaking, presentation skills, teamwork and problem-solving skills, personal narrative development for applications and interviews, and more (Andrews and Higson, 2008).

By putting employability at the centre of my perspective of the Amos Bursary, this study aimed to look further at the debate of the achievement of young black men. Some of the literature on the achievement of black African and Caribbean boys and the black African and Caribbean community in the UK has focused heavily on underachievement, (Gillborn, 2008; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Rollock, 2007), and a limited amount of studies have been conducted 'exploring African-Caribbean success'

(Rhamie, 2012: p.684). This is understandable as over the last 30 years there have been major issues and concerns with the continuing academic underachievement of the black community which has been present in national educational statistics.

While academic achievement and success in relation to schooling and the education system is still an important factor for some members of the black community (namely black Caribbean boys) as well as other ethnic minority groups, data from the 2011 census has shown that attainment levels have risen 'significantly for ethnic minorities, but these have not translated into improved outcomes in the labour market' (CoDE, 2013: p1). Therefore, this review sought to gain a well-rounded picture of the educational and career landscape for black students.

2.2 A Metanarrative of Black Boys as Underachievement and Unemployable

There has been much written about the academic achievement, or rather the academic underachievement of young people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds in the UK in both the academic press (Archer and Francis 2007; Ball, 2008; Byfield, 2008; Fitzgerald and Finch, 2000; Gillborn, 2008; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Rhamie, 2012; Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2007; Rollock, 2007; Strand, 2007, 2011), and the national press (Wardrop, 2011). This is particularly strong in relation to black African and Caribbean boys who have had a history of underachievement at the end of schooling (Ball, 2008) and beyond, with it being noted that,

> ‘there are more young men from black backgrounds in prison in the UK than there are UK-domiciled undergraduate black male students attending Russell Group institutions[3]’ (Milburn 2012: p12).

Data on national GCSE results shows that overall, fewer black boys are gaining five A* to C grades than black girls, including students not on free school meals (Department for Education, 2016). Similarly, black students who are not in receipt of free school meals have been lagging behind their peers now for a number of years (Department for Education, 2013, 2016).

Black Caribbean boys not in receipt of free school meals are the lowest attaining group across all ethnicities (Department for Education, 2016), with black Caribbean boys in receipt of free schools attaining similar to white working-class boys putting them in the lowest attaining groups at GCSE level. For those from households with lower incomes however, not all black boys are falling behind their white counterparts and black African boys from low-income households are outperforming all other black boys, and their peers from Pakistani and white British, Irish and Gypsy/Traveller backgrounds.[4]

If we look outside of education into employment, there are issues for young people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, with more than twice as many unemployed than their white counterparts. Young black people aged 16-24 have had low unemployment rates for a number of years (Law et al., 2012) with 25% of those from black backgrounds unemployed in 2016, in stark comparison to 10% of white 16-24-year olds (Powell, 2017) and for all black men, ‘unemployment has remained persistently double that of Whites’ (CoDE, 2013: p.1).

[3] Russell Group institutions refers to a group of 24 UK universities that are seen as leaders in research and teaching. For more information on the Russell Group, please visit Russell group website www.russellgroup.ac.uk

[4] The data mentioned was taken from the Department for Education’s National and Local Authority tables for the academic years 2012/13 and 2014/15. This data was specifically looking at those obtaining five GCSE’s at grades A* to C including English and Mathematics. A copy of the data for year 2014/15 is available in appendix 4 of this thesis.

Similarly, as mentioned earlier it has been documented that there are five times more black people in prison than white people in England and Wales, and a young black adult has triple the likelihood of being imprisoned than their white counterpart (Law et al., 2012: p.2), even though black people only make up 3.3% of the UK population (Office for National Statistics, 2012). Therefore, it is quite evident that the issue is complex and the landscape that the Amos bursary is operating in is one where academic achievement, although a key factor in later success for many, does not necessarily lead to employment, professional success, or stability for young black men.

This data and literature alongside wider social and political discourse on young black men is valid as there has been and still remains a major issue of young black men (particularly those of black Caribbean descent) struggling through the education system, struggling to find employment, and being affected by gang related crime. Statistics from the Department for Education (Department for Education, 2013) show that,

> 'Pupils of Black Caribbean and 'White and Black Caribbean' ethnic groups are around three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole – similar to the previous year' (Department for Education Statistical First Release, 2013: p.3).

And similarly, data from the department for education on 2015/16 exclusion rates highlighted that,

> 'Black Caribbean pupils were over three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole' (Department for Education Statistical First Release, 2017).[5]

[5] These statistics were taken from the Department for Education's National tables of permanent and fixed period exclusions from schools in England: 2011 to 2012 academic year (Department for Education, 2013) and 2015/16 academic year. These exclusions range across primary, middle, and secondary schools and include all school forms (academies, voluntary aided, comprehensive, grant maintained).These statistics are accessible here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-from-schools-in-england-2011-to-2012-academic-year and here: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633365/SFR35_2017_text.pdf

These are among the highest exclusion rates of any ethnic group for boys and girls, and whilst the data for black African boys and mixed white and black African boys are not as high as for black Caribbean, they are also alarming.

To add to this picture, over the last fifteen to twenty years there has been an issue of gang related violence and gun crime involving young black men in London in particular, which led to the formation of a special police unit called Operation Trident in 1998, which was specifically set up to deal with gun crime and murders affecting the black community (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, 2014). There have been improvements made in this area (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, 2014) but it is fair to conclude that the picture for young black men over the last 20 years has been alarming and these issues of low educational achievement, unemployment, and involvement in criminal behaviour.

2.2.1 Beyond Grades A-C

Educational achievement in 21st century Britain could be said to rely heavily on a 'narrowly conceived' (Archer and Francis, 2007: p.18) concept of achievement which is defined 'almost exclusively in terms of academic attainment measured by exam credentials' (Archer and Francis, 2007: p.18). In an environment where education and qualification league tables for local authorities, counties, and nations are compared and debated on a regular basis, Archer and Francis (2007) in their work on minority ethnic achievement express that this has produced an 'audit culture' (Archer and Francis, 2007: p.19) focusing on attainment statistics and measures, rather than a broader idea of educational achievement. They frame this culture within a wider neo-liberalist western society, one that requires a well-qualified workforce to maintain its position in the global economy with the onus for this highly-qualified workforce put onto the individual, and other researchers echo this position (Ball, 2008; Law et al., 2012).

The focus on GCSE grades is understandable as these are seen as the academic grades needed to enter tertiary, further, and higher education at a high level as well as often sighted as basic requirements desired by employers (Hodgen and Marks, 2013). However, for black boys, this measure of five A* to C grades has raised cause for concern over the years, with a large number of them not achieving at this level (Rollock, 2007), and many academic and government reports (Rampton Report, 1981; Swann Report, 1985; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Strand, 2007; Wright et al., 2010) focusing primarily on this area of low levels of attainment.

Some have claimed that issues of racism in schools and within the education system may be partly responsible, as longitudinal data has shown that for black African-Caribbean boys, the attainment gap between them and their peers widens as they move through education (Archer and Francis, 2007; Greater London Authority, 2004;Wright et al., 2010). Alongside the issues relating to exclusion seen earlier, some have concluded that there has been a failure in the education system to adapt or provide support and understanding to the differing needs of black and ethnic minority pupils (Wright et al., 2010). However, though the continual focus on highlighting the issues of underachievement may be warranted, it has arguably added to a *metanarrative* (Boje, 2001) of black boys and men that is made up of narratives that frame them as a collection of individuals who struggle to achieve educationally and in their careers.

This metanarrative could be seen to reinforce the ideology that black males are in deficit or are in need, as it focuses on the issues of the group as a whole and not the individual narratives of those who may have managed to achieve in education and/or employment, or those who have had alternate experiences. The same does not seem to apply for black girls and black women, and as Rollock highlights in fact the grand narratives in education often put them in opposition to black boys and black men, as individuals who are 'academically predisposed' (Rollock, 2007: p.201). Rollock argues (2007) that these grand narratives often silence any discourse on concern for black girls' academic achievement or issues they may be facing in the education system, which in turn

avoids addressing these issues such as having higher rates of permanent exclusion and lower academic achievement results than their white peers (Rollock, 2007). Nonetheless Rollock (2007) highlights the issue of the 'ongoing bothered beliefs and contentious concerns that exist for black boys' (p.201) in the minds and thoughts of educators, and it is clear that this reinforces the metanarrative of individuals who struggle.

Finding literature that explored young black men who do achieve academically and professionally (of primary concern to this research), was difficult in this landscape. Rhamie (2012) discusses how this was similarly an issue for her research into the achievement and underachievement of African-Caribbeans in the UK, and Harper (2012), a prolific scholar in the area of black male success talks about similar issues in this line of research in the US. Harper (2012) argues that 'Amplifying the troubled status of Black male students at all levels of education has, unfortunately, yielded few solutions' (p.1) as it has focused on 'the deficit orientation that is constantly reinforced in media, academic research journals, and educational practice' (p.1). Harper (2012) instead argued that we should pay attention and learn from those who have indeed been successful and encourages researchers to present these individual experiences, (or narratives as I would refer to them) in opposition to the dominant message (or metanarrative) on black male achievement, and in doing so it will in turn provide insightful information into the strategies that they used along their journey (Harper, 2012).

Post-2008 Recession

Within this landscape of underachievement, it was also important to take into consideration that the Amos Bursary began in 2009, post the 2008 financial crisis which has been classed as the worst economic crisis since the Second World War (Verick, 2009). Unemployment has reduced for all ethnic groups since 2012 (Powell, 2017) even though the gap has remained between those from white and BME backgrounds (Powell, 2017).

Being a London based organisation, the Amos Bursary works within a global city where people can and do move and work freely, but also one that is changing in relation to work (City of London Economic Research, 2015). Employment and work is fundamentally changing and since the turn of the 21st century, into the digital/information age the skills, traits, and experiences needed to succeed not just into employment but into the professional labour market have evolved (Andrews and Higson, 2008).

Competition is rife for top university places and for jobs, especially during times of recession, and the young can often find it hard when up against senior, more experienced professionals (Verick, 2009: p.3). This is arguably an even bigger factor for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may perhaps struggle without the qualifications and experiences of those who have not been had such disadvantage (Boliver, 2013).

It has been shown that qualifications are 'such a strong determinant of later-life income and opportunities' (Goodman & Gregg 2010: p.5) and that those from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK do far worse educationally than those who are not disadvantaged. However, it appears that for the majority of the black community, there is still a bigger disadvantage that exists that may be as a result of the interplay between race and class, which amplifies disadvantage (Ball, 2008; Law et al., 2012; O'Connor, Lewis & Mueller, 2007) especially in relation to black Caribbean student outcomes.

2.3 Notions of Educational Achievement and Contributory Factors to Success

Higher education and young black males, at the other end of the educational experience has also been an area of focus for researchers and policymakers. There has been a focus on the lack of young black males at top tier universities and Russell Group institutions (Boliver, 2013; Dumangane, 2017), as well as little focus on the number of those who have obtained, or rather failed to obtain first class

or upper second-class degrees (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007; Bolivier, 2013), often seen as a measure of higher educational success. This has led to some highlighting that there may be issues of unconscious bias (Boliver, 2013) occurring in the case of admission tutors to Russell Group institutions, or that ethnicity along with other variables such as prior attainment has an impact of attainment results at university (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007). However, in these studies little attention is paid to the experiences of those who do achieve success.

A smaller number of researchers have decided to look at the factors that have resulted in successful outcomes for young black males (Byfield, 2008; Harper, 2012; Rhamie, 2012) and offer insightful information into what seems to be a rare phenomenon in the academic literature, of the successful black male. Within this literature, four key themes emerge that are attributed to this success. These are the role of parents and the community, positive relationship with teachers and schooling, personal characteristics and beliefs, and the influence of identity on educational and career aspirations. These themes will now be explored further.

2.3.1 The Role of Parents

The role of parents is a factor that has been noted as contributory to the success of members of the black British community (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002). In her study on the achievement and underachievement of African-Caribbean youth and adults, Rhamie (2012) discusses this issue of prejudice and racism in the education system, through the narratives of her research participants particularly in relation to their parents' understanding of this prejudice. In her study, a mixed methodology of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was used to explore the perceptions and individual interpretations of her research participants in relation to their achievement or underachievement at school. Questionnaires were received from 43 respondents and 18 people were interviewed from within this group of respondents (those who indicated a willingness to be

interviewed), and this recruitment was done through a range of community settings such as churches, community centres, youth centres, and employment related centres.

From this sample, two main groups of individuals were identified, the 'High fliers and Underachievers' (Rhamie, 2012: p. 686), with the *high fliers* (n=13) defined as those who achieved at least five A* to C grades and the *underachievers* (n=5) being individuals who for the most part did not achieve any GCSE pass grades and do not have any subsequent qualifications (Rhamie, 2012: p.686). The age group of the participants varied between 16-40 years of age, however the high fliers group was made up solely of 16-25-year olds (Rhamie, 2012: p.687).

Positive Parenting

Parents were said to play a key role in success in this report with the analysis showing that a large majority of the high achieving group attributed their success to their parents' encouragement of education, their parents' positive attitude to education, and 92% of this group said that they had received actual help and support from their parents (Rhamie, 2012: p.688). Many of this group spoke of homework supervision, oversight and practical support by their parents being an important part of their daily experience and routine, as well as their parents' awareness and monitoring of what was happening at their school. One respondent commented that her father

> 'realised that he needed to keep a check. If he wanted the children to get an education here, with all the racism, he needed to keep a check on school.' (Rhamie, 2012: p.688).

Conversely, for the group described as *underachievers,* most reported to not having this positive encouragement and guidance in the home environment, with some reporting that their parents had a less than positive attitude towards education. Others felt that even when their parents had a somewhat more positive attitude towards education, this struggled to manifest itself into 'positive and effective practical help and support' (Rhamie, 2012: p.692). Interestingly, in this group of *underachievers* parents were described as being 'satisfied' (Rhamie, 2012: p. 693) with their

children's schools and the education system, and there were fewer positive experiences in relation to practical support with homework from parents.

While it remains unclear from this report why parents in this group were seen as content with the education system, it could be argued that in relation to practical support for homework, this could have been a competency issue. Rhamie (2012) outlines that 52% of the high achieving group reported that their mothers worked in professional or 'associate professional occupations' (Rhamie, 2012: p.687), and 37% had fathers in similar roles. However, this was far less for the underachieving group, with only 21% having mothers in professional roles and none reporting to having fathers in such roles. What is classed as 'professional or associate professional' is not categorised in this paper, and it could be argued that this is less than helpful as readers may have differing opinions on what a professional role or indeed an associate professional role alludes to. However, definition aside this may be indicative of parent's lack of own skills, although this connection was not discussed in the research.

Similarly, age could have been an issue in parent's perception and relationship to education. The respondents in the highly achieving group were all aged 25 years and under, whereas the underachievers were more spread out in age up to 40 years of age. This may have had an impact as the attitudes and opinions to education and school of parents in earlier generations may have been different from those parents who were younger.

Success factors relating to the home environment was also explored in Rhamie and Hallam (2002), as well as factors relating to the community, schools and the individual young person. Their study of African and Caribbean academic success looked at members of the African and Caribbean community in the UK who have had experience of postgraduate education and were in professional roles (all aged between 23 and 40 years of age). 14 people were interviewed and their educational experiences were the primary focus. Within the home parental support, encouragement and motivation were seen by 100% of the participants as the most significant factors relating to their

achievement (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002) and a resourceful, secure and loving home environment was also seen as significant by 93% of the group (p.155).

As in Rhamie's study (2012) practical support by parents in relation to homework, as well a positive attitude towards education were mentioned by participants as key to their success, with all stating that their parents emphasised to them the importance of education. Resources were also mentioned here such as access to books and in some cases private tuition, however, a discussion on the impact of family income and wealth was not explored in detail. This may have been beneficial as it would have allowed the reader to gauge the socioeconomic status of the participants and what relevance this had on the achievement.

Findings in these studies highlighted that parents are influential in the educational success of young black people, especially in relation to school and homework support. Practical help with homework and being aware of the potential for schools to be unfairly prejudicial against black pupils (Rhamie, 2012) have been cited as key attributes possessed by parents, however little debate has surfaced from the literature on this area into the issues of competency and confidence on the part of parents to exercise such attributes.

2.3.2 Positive Relationships and Belief Systems

Often linked with the role of parents, a positive relationship with teachers and school or the lack of a positive relationship between black boys and teachers has been cited as a contributory factor in them not obtaining high levels of academic attainment (Becker and Luthar, 2002; Tomlin and Olusola, 2006; Law et al., 2012). A combination of negative classroom experiences that are not 'friendly and cohesive' (Law et al., 2012: p.7) and low teacher expectations (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002) have been recognised as factors that can create an environment where black pupils struggle to achieve.

In their study of high attaining black students in London and Birmingham, Tomiln and Olusola (2006) found that in successful schools there was clear evidence of positive teacher-pupil relationships especially with black boys, and many of the teachers involved in their study vocalised the importance of this relationship for their school and achieving the coveted five A* to C grades and a positive school environment. While some of their research participants spoke of various issues that they had faced in developing these positive relationships and cohesive environments (namely behaviour management) this was seen by some head teachers as a direct result of poor teaching and teachers having lower expectations of black pupils that were then picked up on by the pupils. Other head teachers felt that negative stereotyping and lack of positive success stories in wider society were affecting black pupils in the classroom.

Relationships with Teachers & School

Positive teacher and school relationships were also put forward as contributory to success in Rhamie and Hallam's study (2002). They present this within a 'home-school based model' (Rhamie and Hallam 2002: p.165) where the pupil, the home, and the school are cohesive to one another, with a 'common purpose, shared language, culture and values' (p.165) particularly in relation to high expectations. This model also sees the school as a vehicle to be used by the pupil or not used if teachers present negative attitudes towards them. However, the ability of pupils to do this is based heavily on their relationships at home and within their community, with the community seen as space where their experiences develop 'self-efficacy in relation to other tasks' (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002: p.165). The home-school model alongside the home community model they present displays similarities to the ecological perspective of Bronfenbrenner (1986) mentioned earlier, with its focus on the relationship between environments. By presenting their findings in this way, it allowed the

reader to get a sense of the interrelationships between different contexts, and their impact on the individual's achievement.

Personal Characteristics and Beliefs

Personal traits and characteristics such as competitiveness and a drive to do well have been referred to as influential factors to academic and career success (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Tomlin and Olusola, 2006; Rhamie, 2012). Teachers mentioned black boys have high aspirations of themselves in Tomlin and Olusola's study (2006), and within Rhamie's study (2012) many of the high achievers spoke of their own competitiveness, motivation, and goals as influential to their achievements. Personal religious beliefs and the religious community may have been influential in the development of these characteristics, as religion (especially Christianity) has been said to influence young blacks in the UK and the USA (Byfield, 2008, Rhamie, 2012). The church in particular has been seen as a place that encourages achievement and positive educational experiences (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008) as well as a space that allowed young people to get involved in a range of extra-curricular activities.

In Byfield's exploratory study of 40 black male students from the UK and USA (2008), 75% of these students reported that religion was 'a contributory factor in their educational achievements' (Byfield, 2008: p.192) with 93% citing their religion as Christianity. Where Christianity was not mentioned, spirituality and the role of a belief in God were also prevalent (Byfield, 2008; Rhamie, 2012) in correspondence with achievement. Beliefs were linked to the idea of one fulfilling their purpose and some believed that 'God has given me talents which I need to trade on, i.e. I have been given certain potentials I need to realise' (Byfield, 2008: p.192). Black males from both the UK and USA shared in Byfield's study (2008) this belief in purpose and achievement and a 'win win' (Byfield, 2008: p.192) outcome as their quest for academic achievement was seen as leading to discovering one's destiny, and successful educational outcomes simultaneously. Similar to Rhamie (2012), Byfield discusses how this personal belief along with the support and opportunities provided by the

Church allow individuals to gain skills, and Byfield concludes that religion in this context provided her participants with 'a wealth of capital that they used to their academic advantage' (Byfield, 2008: p.196).

The Influence of Identity on Educational and Career Aspirations

Law et al.,(2012) explored young black men, their educational and career achievements and hopes in their article on autonomy and identity. Presenting evidence from two research projects that they had conducted in the North of England, they explore agency and autonomy among 40 young black boys of African and Caribbean descent aged 15 years. As well as the preliminary presentation of startling statistics such as those presented earlier on the exclusion and unemployment rates of young black men in the UK, along with attainment data, the prelude to their data and findings is a detailed exploration the areas of social class, black masculinity, and personal aspirations which provides an insightful landscape that illuminates the multi-layered, complex world these young men exist in, and the ways in which they are seen and thus in response see themselves within this world.

Ideas of masculinity are discussed in relation to education and academic success (Law et al., 2012), noting that dominant discourse often posits academic achievement 'in opposition to' (Law et al., 2012: p.4) masculinity, and that this position may have an influential part to play on individual black boys' views towards such success. This is an area that Sewell (1997) has previously commented on, particularly in relation to some black boys seeing achievement in school as not concurrent with their racial identity.

Social class being embedded in race and ethnicity is put forward as a contributory factor in reduced outcomes in education, employment, and housing that may be affecting young black men (Law et al., 2012: p.4). They argue that this is highlighted in education, with the UK described as having a very steep socioeconomic curve in education as children from disadvantaged backgrounds 'do worse than those from advantaged backgrounds by a much greater amount than anywhere else (Hirsch

2007, cited in Law et al., 2012: p.4). However, it has been argued that social class is a less significant predictor of academic achievement for ethnic minorities than for white pupils (Gillborn, 2008; Rhamie, 2012; Wright et al., 2010;), as historic data on pupils receiving free school meals (a widely used indicator for socio-economic disadvantage) shows a greater gap between white pupils in receipt and not in receipt of these meals, compared with those in the same groups from black and ethnic minority backgrounds (Wright et al., 2010: p.4).

However, this may not be a true indicator of the impact of social class on the educational experiences of young black pupils. Gillborn (2008) encourages us to not merely focus on free school meals as a representation of disadvantaged young people's attainment and progress, and argues that the educational inequalities for ethnic minorities, especially young black people still exist when looking within the non-free school meals group in comparison with their white and other 'co-ethnic' (Heath and Martin, 2013) counterparts. Gillborn (2008) highlights that despite much conjecture or 'Gap Talk' (Gillborn, 2008: p.236) there are still issues for black Caribbean boys and girls who are significantly behind their white counterparts and their fellow black African counterparts and that a focus on the free school meals versus non-free school meals groups draws attention away from this. This talk it is felt serves as strategic political discourse that draws attention away from the fact that 'deep-level race inequalities are a fundamental and relatively stable feature of the English education system' (Gillborn 2008: p.237).

Law et al., (2012) like Rhamie (2012) discuss the impact of the individual young person's role in their own achievement and success, sharing this as an emergent theme in the literature particularly from America. The idea that there is a link between a young person's achievement and their 'aspirations and grounded sense of self' (Law et al., 2012: p.4) is introduced as an area that may be influential in mapping the experiences of young black men but seen also seen as under-researched, 'sporadic, sparse and mainly based within American literature when addressing ethnic aspirations and life trajectories' (Law et al., 2012: p.4). This idea is built on the concept of 'possible selves' (Law et al.,

2012: p.5) which are made up of the individual's thoughts on which *self* they would like to become as they grow, and which self they are 'afraid of becoming' (p.5). According to Law et al. (2012) those who have a strong 'highly elaborated' (Law et al., 2012: p.5) sense of their possible selves are more likely to achieve well in education and show higher levels of 'motivation' than other pupils (p.5). However, difficulties may arise in developing positive and effective possible selves in relation to education when these are seen in conflict with social and/or racial identities (Oyserman et al., 2006).

An individual's aspirations has also become prevalent in UK policy papers, and current political rhetoric tends to focus on ways to raise the aspirations of disadvantaged youth (Thornton et al., 2014). While this may warrant some attention, and spotlight on disadvantaged youth could be seen as helpful, as seen in much of the literature discussed in this review, lack of aspirations has not been cited as a factor in low attainment of lack of success. In the case of Tomlin and Olusola's study (2006), high aspirations on the part of the black pupils were in fact mentioned by teachers. Instead the literature has shown that perhaps more critical than the individual child or young persons' aspirations for themselves, are the aspirations and expectations of those around them, namely parents and teachers. For those young black people who have developed positive possible selves, a 'reciprocal process whereby possible selves are validated and affirmed or threatened or ignored by those around us' (Law et al., 2012: p.5) takes place.

This is highlighted in the findings from the first research project reported by Law et al., (2012) which came from a wider European project on ethnicity, school, and educational aspirations. A survey which was conducted as part of this project in an inner-city school in Northern England showed that 'there is no clear strong link between being young, black and male and having low educational or career aspirations.' (Law et al., 2012: p.6), and in fact black males along with black females showed equally high aspirations in terms of employment as their white counterparts. The role of educators in producing negative experiences for young black pupils was also shown through 75% of the black pupils in the group (n=40) commenting that they had received 'unfair treatment in relation to their

behaviour compared to others in the school' (Law et al., 2012: p.7). These negative opinions and experiences culminated in black males having an awareness of an 'external environment of negative, hostile racial stereotyping… either being drug dealers, criminals, being in jail or not getting any GCSEs' (Law et al., 2012: p.7).

2.4 Conclusions

The literature presented in this review has put forward insightful perspectives on areas on identity, aspirations and drivers for success for young black males and black pupils as a whole. A number of new ways of looking at the complex relationship between identity, personality, ethnicity, and achievement for young black males were introduced such as 'possible selves' (Law et al., 2012: p.5) and also the relationship between different environments. Building on these works may be useful for my research and Law et al., (2012) do indeed highlight that this is an area that needs further research in order to better understand the relationship between these areas for young black men, particularly as they move from teenagers into adulthood in and around a range of contexts. What was clear from much of the research highlighted is that young black males are indeed aspirational and want to achieve at school and into employment. What appears to stand in their way are wider societal racial inequalities that have persisted for some time (CoDe, 2013), which may have developed from or continue to evolve due to racial stereotypes (Steele, 1997) and constant discussion on the underachievement of black males in the UK.

It was clear that for a vast amount of young black men in the UK, negative educational experiences persist and many are excluded from mainstream education, which may be fuelling the continuing debate on underachievement and the idea that they need saving and supporting (Law et al., 2012). However, research into successful young blacks (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002) has illuminated features of the home, school, and community environments that are able to yield positive outcomes. By exemplifying this, much can be learned into what can be put in place to create more positive outcomes for young black people.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the theoretical framework for this study is presented. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner 2001a; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) highlights the importance of the relationship between the person and their environment on their development over the life course, and is often used as an overarching theory that is flexible to the phenomenon of focus for research studies into human development (Lumsden, 2012). This theory has been carefully selected to be at the core of the theoretical framework for this study, used to guide the research design and provide a focused lens for exploring the experiences of young black men involved in the Amos Bursary. With its developmental approach and its focus on the role of multiple levels of societal influence on human development, the bioecological theory will illuminate the processes and practices involved in the learning and development that takes place during the years that the young men are involved with the Amos Bursary.

To support this and provide greater insights into the processes that occur within the individual when development is taking place, Bandura's construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) has been integrated into the framework. Self-efficacy is embedded within Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) and emphasises the role of an individual's beliefs about their abilities on their subsequent achievement (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Hackett, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995). The earlier literature review indicated the role of beliefs in the achievement of some young black students who overcome adversities to achieve goals (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Rhamie, 2008; Law et al., 2012), but due to the paucity of studies in the field of black male achievement, little is known on the processes driving personal beliefs. As a result of this, self-efficacy was incorporated into the theoretical framework, in particular its application to educational and career development (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 1994; Hackett, 1995; Zimmerman, 1995) in a bid to

provide deeper insights into the connection between psychological development and the person's social environment.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development

Introduction

The lives of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary are complex, as most human lives are (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). Therefore, this study has a dual purpose of shedding light on their lives, as well as providing insights into the role of the Amos Bursary on their development post 16, through to their early career. The literature review on the achievement of young black men in the United Kingdom (UK) spanned the educational, sociological, political, cultural, and psychological, with scholars from within these disciplines responding to the issue of young black male achievement in different ways (Byfield, 2008; Gillborn 2005; Rhamie, 2012; Rollock 2005;). While this diversity of perspectives shows that this is a topic which has gained much attention over the last 20 years, much of the literature focused on the underachievement of black male students and the issues they face in education and employment (Ball, 2008; Gillborn, 2005; Rollock, 2007; Strand, 2007;).

This literature did however highlight the importance of research in this field remaining focused on the lived experiences of the young black men it is centred on. While it is clear that many social, political, and cultural factors are at play in the educational and career journeys of young black men (Ball, 2008), very few studies contained participant voice, and therefore the perspective of the young black man, particularly one who is achieving educationally, is rarely present. This is not just a UK issue, Harper (2012) argues that in the United States of America (U.S), there is much to learn from black men who have been successful on the topic of black male achievement, and that an over-

emphasis on structural factors relating to underachievement does little to explain to the complexity of this issue. Calling for a renewed approach to studying black male achievement, Harper argues that what is needed is a focus on the narratives and experiences of black males who have achieved academically (at the higher education level particularly) to understand how they 'sustain confidence, resilience and goal commitment' (Harper, 2012: p. 26).

The lack of literature on black male achievement, both in the UK and U.S, alongside the fact that this research study also serves as an evaluation, led to the need to explore theoretical frameworks that would support a multifaceted, complex study. Providing a meaningful evaluation to those involved in the Bursary's work, who will be awaiting information on its merit, worth and opportunities for improvement (Clarke, 2003) is an important part of this study, and the theoretical framework must support this purpose, as well as the academic endeavour of empirical work in the field.

3.2.1 Why Bronfenbrenner?

One theorist and theoretical framework that stood out as being particularly apt for this research was that of developmental psychologist and social ecologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1986, 1993, 1994, 1998). Coming to prominence in the 1970s, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) combined developmental psychology with sociology and social policy, providing a new perspective on the lives of children, young people and families (Lerner, 2005b). Placing the individual at the centre, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory built on the work of Kurt Lewin (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) to present a theory that focused on the impact of the environment on human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner continually developed the ecological systems theory (EST), and towards the latter part of his career he placed more emphasis on the role

of the person on their development in his revised bioecological theory of human development[6] (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999, 2005).

Bronfenbrenner also emphasised the importance of understanding social policy when undertaking developmental research, particularly in relation to the lives of children, young people and families (Lerner, 2005). For Bronfenbrenner, social policy questions should act as 'points of departure for the identification of significant theoretical and scientific questions' (Bronfenbrenner 1994, p. 4), as this would allow studies of human development to work towards enhancing lives, through collaborations between policymakers, academics, practitioners, and social change agents (Lerner, 2005b).

This is of the utmost importance for this research, as its very nature encompasses the social mobility policy agenda, secondary and higher education policy, and the role of voluntary organisations and social programmes such as the Amos Bursary in the development of young people. Bronfenbrenner's focus on explanation and 'optimization' (Lerner, 2005b: p. xiii) lends itself well to an evaluation study such as this, that aims to both shed light on the experiences and development of academically able young black men, and to provide conclusions and recommendations for the Amos Bursary and policymakers to further support and enhance work in this field.

Bronfenbrenner presented a theory that is accessible and supports the operational design of social research (Lumsden, 2012). This is done through clear guidelines on what research in this field should theoretically consist of, in order to provide insights into human development in context. The development of the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model within the revised bioecological theory, guides empirical developmental research with individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 2001), and gives clear theoretical insights into the processes involved, as well as the influence of personal characteristics and time on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). Its interdisciplinary, operational nature, allows for the integration of other theoretical perspectives relating to the individual's

[6] Bronfenbrenner's theory is often referred to as both the bioecological model of human development, and the bioecological theory of human of development. As Bronfenbrenner also refers to another model within this theory, it is referred to as the bioecological theory of human development in this study to avoid confusion.

development, such as psychosocial theories, which will provide a solid structure for this study, allowing for the integration of the construct of self-efficacy and related social cognitive theories on psychological development into the framework (Bandura, 1977; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994).

Critical Nature of Bronfenbrenner's Theory

> 'An ecological framework encompasses the interacting forces of ideology and culture, social and organisational structure, time, and individual agency. Furthermore, this framework provides an analytical tool to identify gaps in the existing literature and points to opportunities for research, policy and practice' (Arnold, Lu and Armstrong, 2012: p. vii).

As a multi-dimensional theory, Bronfenbrenner's work offers the researcher a framework that is critical, reflective and substantial enough to deal with the complexities of human development (Lerner et al., 2001; Renn & Arnold, 2003). It takes into account ideologies, beliefs, social histories, and social values at different levels of the system and the impact this may have on an individual's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and as mentioned by Arnold, Lu and Armstrong (2012) above, this allows researchers from a range of fields to seek gaps in the existing literature and develop insights for research and practice.

3.2.2 The Development of the Ecological Paradigm for Human Development in Context

Background

Bronfenbrenner began developing his theory on the ecology of human development in the 1940s, when he undertook his PhD in psychology at the University of Michigan (Bronfenbrenner, 1942). Bronfenbrenner's doctoral research looked at social status, structure and development in the classroom, and he undertook a socio-metric study of six groups of children from nursery age through

to final year of primary school (Bronfenbrenner Centre for Translational Research, 2014). In 1942, his doctoral dissertation presented his findings as well as his view on such research, taking on the field of sociometers and suggesting a new way of looking at social status, social structure and human development in group environments. He proposed that such studies should move away from focusing purely on mathematical modelling and quantitative techniques for predicting typical behaviour, and should move towards a more holistic approach, focusing on the discovery, description and evaluation of social status, relationships, structure, and human development, through the lens of what is accepted or rejected by the group (Bronfenbrenner, 1942).

At the end of his doctoral research in the 1940s, Bronfenbrenner called for the repositioning of studies on social status and development, to ensure that the child was at the centre of the study, not just seen as means to an end. He also highlighted the importance of this research being adaptable for use by practitioners and policy makers (Bronfenbrenner, 1942). This was taken into his early theoretical work and his ecological systems theory presented a view of developmental psychology that was unlike many of that era (Lang, 2005). He advocated for longitudinal studies on human development that focused on the individual's development in context, rather than in a controlled laboratory environment. He is now considered to have been ahead of his time, with many of his views still accepted today, unlike many developmental psychologists from his era (Negrea, 2014). Building on the life course paradigm that emerged from Elder's work in the 1970s (Elder, 1974) Bronfenbrenner explained the importance of longitudinal studies in this field, and spent the majority of his career defining and refining his theoretical approach.

The Influence of Kurt Lewin on Bronfenbrenner's work

Bronfenbrenner's journey from his early theoretical work undertaken as part of his PhD, to the development of EST and the ecological paradigm was influenced by a number of key theorists and events during his lifetime (Lerner, 2005). One such theorist was Kurt Lewin, whose field theory and work in social psychology (Lewin 1935, 1936) became highly influential in the evolution of the

ecology of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Lewin also became a mentor to Bronfenbrenner shortly after he completed his PhD, and therefore threads of Lewin's epistemology are woven throughout Bronfenbrenner's theory.

Bronfenbrenner, Lewin and the US Army

Immediately after completing his PhD in the early 1940s, Bronfenbrenner enlisted in the US Army and was assigned to the Office for Strategic Services assessment centre in a junior psychologist role (Lang, 2005). The work of the department was led by a range of well-known scientists and psychologists at the time, one of whom was Kurt Lewin, who was very influential in Bronfenbrenner's theoretical work (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). Lewin's focus on the role of behaviour within the context of society, culture, history, theory, and location (Gold, 1999), had a profound impact on Bronfenbrenner theoretical work (Bronfenbrenner, 1978). Similarly, Lewin's focus on applied and action research became integral to Bronfenbrenner's thinking, and this became integrated into his own approach, where the practical was seen as relevant to the development and refinement of theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1978, 1994).

Adaptation of Lewin's heuristic formula

During the early stages of the development of his ecological paradigm, Bronfenbrenner adapted Lewin's well-known formula on human behaviour from,

B = f (PE) [i.e. behaviour is a joint function of person and environment]

to,

D= f (PE) [i.e. development is a joint function of person and environment] (Lewin 1935; Bronfenbrenner 1992).

Bronfenbrenner transformed Lewin's theory for developmental research, substituting development for behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). For Bronfenbrenner, development is time-bound and

research into human development can only explore an individual's characteristics at a given time in their life course, rather than speak of their behaviour as a constant (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992, 1998). This was pivotal to the development of Bronfenbrenner's theory at that time, as he (like Lewin at his time), was presenting a different perspective to that of mainstream developmental psychology (Lang, 2005). Bronfenbrenner used this equation and the Lewinian perspective to highlight that research designs into human development in psychology and sociology should not be looking at the person and the environment independently, but rather interactively, recognising that different layers of the social context can create different developmental consequences depending on the psychological and biological characteristics of the individual(s) living in the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

3.2.3 The Concentric Circles – Ecological Systems Theory (EST)

Overview of the Theory

In his seminal work, The Ecology of Human Development (1979), Bronfenbrenner set out his emerging ecological paradigm and discussed how this approach can be used in rigorous research designs that focus on,

> 'the progressive accommodation, throughout the lifespan, between the growing human organism and the changing environments in which it actually lives and grows.'
> (Bronfenbrenner 1977, p. 513).

Bronfenbrenner outlined that the focus of research in this area should not only be on the immediate environments the developing individual inhabits (such as home, work, school), but also the larger social environments in which their immediate environments are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1977,

1979, 1986), and he presented this as a set of nested systems. These make up what he referred to as the 'ecological environment' (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 3).

The Ecological Environment in Social-Psychological Research

The term ecological environment is used in sociological and psychological research to refer to the 'real-life settings within which people behave' (Baker, 1968: p. 1). Kurt Lewin developed the concept in his work to refer to the space outside of the laboratory or clinic where human behaviour occurs (Baker, 1968) and Bronfenbrenner developed the concept further in his EST, presenting a model of the multiple layers of the ecological environment, and their relationship with human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994).

I. The Microsystem

At the centre of Bronfenbrenner's EST is the individual and the immediate setting they occupy (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In many instances, this is the home environment, a place of learning such as a classroom, or a workplace environment. Within this first iteration of his theory (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979), the microsystem is seen as a place that has particular characteristics and physical features in which the person plays a particular role (such as son, father, manager, mentor) and Bronfenbrenner stated that research into the microsystem should consider 'place, time, physical features, activity, participant, and role' (Bronfenbrenner 1977, p. 514), which should be reflected in the methods and design of the study.

Bronfenbrenner emphasised the importance of these features within the microsystem, and the role they should play in psychological research into development, which at the time of writing was often laboratory based. The role of the participant was at times overlooked, and their behaviour only seen in terms of their interactions and response rates in controlled environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Therefore, Bronfenbrenner used the term activity rather than behaviour to ensure that this element of the microsystem was not disregarded.

The role of the microsystem within the study of human development in context is very important as it ensures the researcher remains focused on a particular individual not only from within the context of the study (such as a classroom or office) but also from the immediate environments they inhabit regularly. This would allow for a more holistic view of development rather than purely in terms of what a typical child, young person or adult should be doing at that time and stage in their life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

2. The Mesosystem

Interconnectedness within the ecological environment is an important principle in Bronfenbrenner's theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The connections and relationships between two or more settings within which the developing individual is an active participant (within their microsystem) at a particular time in their life is referred to as the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979, 2001a). This could be the relationship between home and school, or school and a religious group, for example. For Bronfenbrenner, the easiest way of describing the mesosystem is as a 'system of microsystems' (Bronfenbrenner 1977, p. 515) which could be either formal or informal spaces. An understanding of the linkages and processes between different elements of the individual's various microsystems can provide more detailed insights into the inner workings of their immediate context, and the people and/or places that together have a particular impact on the individual's development. For example, the relationship between home and a religious community and its impact on black male achievement (Byfield, 2008), or between school and home for a young person's educational achievement (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002).

3. The Exosystem

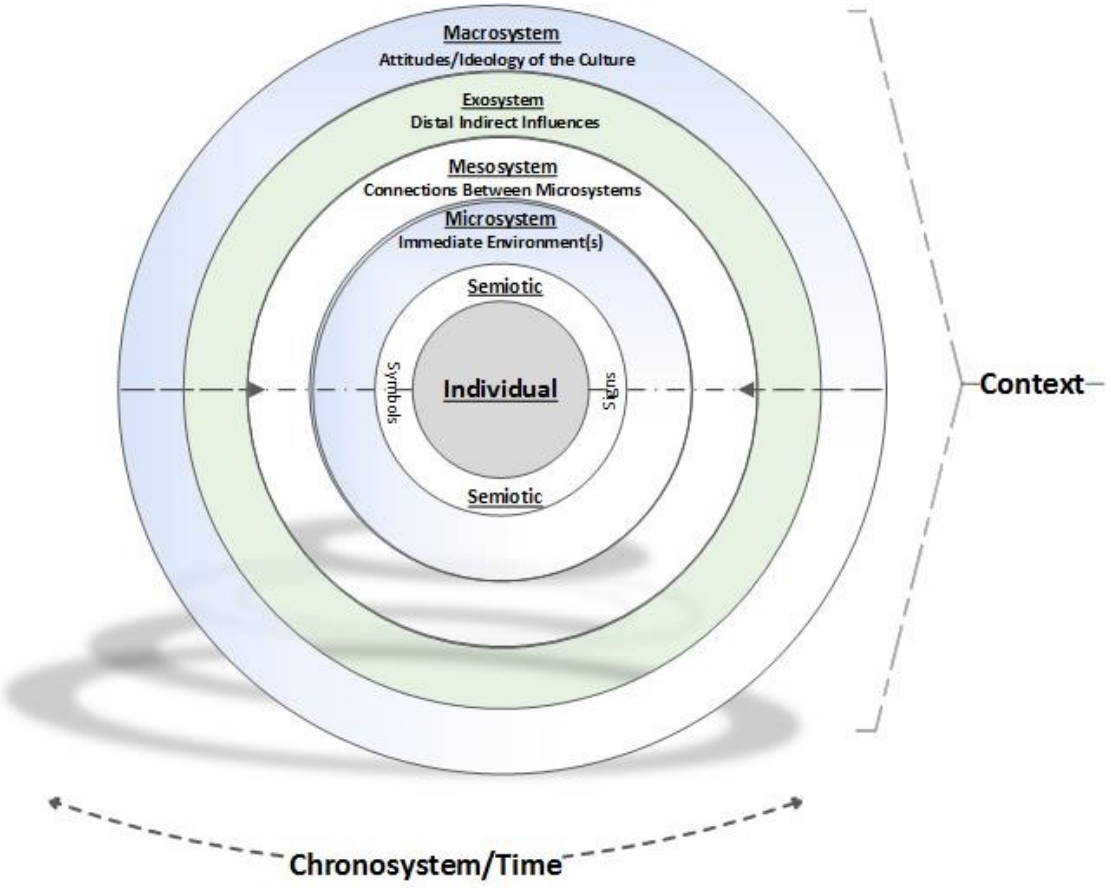
Interconnectedness is also important within the exosystem, as this is seen as an extension of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), but in this extended layer, the focus is on those social structures and settings that impact on the developing individual but do not actually contain that individual. These structures often affect settings in the individual's microsystem even if the individual never actually interacts in these environments. For example, a parent's workplace, the local neighbourhood, local government, local health services, local offices of national government agencies, mass media, transportation systems, and local social networks (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). All of these environments affect how people spend their time and with whom, and Bronfenbrenner stated that this third level within the ecological environment was under-researched in relation to its effect on developmental processes and pathways (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

4. The Macrosystem

As seen in figure 3.1, the macrosystem is the outer most level of this theory, encompassing all other layers of the ecological environment, and reflecting the 'overarching patterns of ideology and organization of the social institutions common to a particular culture or subculture' (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.7). The structure of all other systems within the environment are therefore influenced by the macrosystem, and changes or alterations to this macrosystem, such as a new political party in office, or a change in legislation can lead to corresponding changes at other levels of the ecology, which can lead to changes in human development and behaviour (Laosa, 1999).

Within societies or within social groups the structure of the microsystems, mesosystems and exosystems are often similar, whereas across societies and cultures, they can often be very different (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) as a result of different ideologies, values and norms set within the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005).

FIGURE 3:1 BRONFENBRENNER'S ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL (BASED ON BRONFENBRENNER, 1979, 2005, 2006)



In relation to educational development in the UK, the macrosystem can have a major impact on an individual's outcomes (Lumsden, 2012) as different administrations across the UK set out their educational agenda which impacts on local policies and initiatives (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Linking the Systems to Ethnic and Cultural Differences in Development

Bronfenbrenner's theory also called for a different perspective in understanding ethnic, racial and cultural differences in human development, away from one which predominantly compares developmental outcomes alone without ample attention on 'the nature of the ecological context in which these outcomes occur or the processes through which they are achieved' (Bronfenbrenner, 1977 cited in Bronfenbrenner 2005: p. 47). Rather, he argued for an approach that described the

ecological environment of the ethnic/cultural group of focus, particularly the influence of the mesosystems and exosystems on the types of activities and relationships that are available to children and families. Bronfenbrenner believed this should lead to a renewed view of ethnicity, race, and social class not as personal attributes but as,

> 'structured aspects of the environment that function to enhance or inhibit the processes of making human beings human' (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, cited in Bronfenbrenner 2005: p. 47).

Relationship Between Research and Public Policy

As well as combining elements of social and behavioural sciences to create this theory, Bronfenbrenner highlighted the importance of public policy in this field of research, and encouraged researchers to integrate the public policy in their research design and analysis (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This, he suggested, would allow the researcher to understand the ways in which the different elements of the environment may be affecting an individual's social emotional and cognitive development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8). Bronfenbrenner emphasised however that research and public policy should not be confused with one another, rather that the integration of the two in the research design and analysis process would allow the researcher to identify whether views and interpretations in the society of focus were based on empirical evidence or ideology (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 8). Bronfenbrenner's work has been extremely influential in many areas of academic research and public policy, such as the development of Head Start children's centres in the USA (Lang, 2005; Negrea, 2014), which was the precursor for Sure Start children's centres in the UK (Lumsden, 2012).

The importance of policy to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is particularly important for this research study, as the educational and career development of young black men is a research field that overlaps with empirical social research and social policy. Academics in this field often cite key policy papers and the influence of government initiatives on the educational progress of young black

men (Boliver, 2013; Gillborn and Mirza 2000; Gillborn 2008; Rhamie, 2007; Strand, 2007) and committees such as the Social Mobility Commission (Millburn, 2012) regularly publish reports that illuminate the wider agenda, but the drivers behind them and the overarching ideology surrounding them must also be taken into account by both academics and policy makers if they seek to enhance lives and educational experiences.

3.2.4 The Revised Bioecological Theory of Human Development

Background to the Bioecological Theory

Ten years after the original EST was set out in 1979, Bronfenbrenner began critiquing, revising and extending his original theory, maintaining all of the central elements of the paradigm while enhancing the focus on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). While Bronfenbrenner's original EST was a popular theoretical approach among researchers, Bronfenbrenner criticised it himself for allowing researchers to create studies that spoke more of the environment than the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). He acknowledged that this had led to research in the field of ecology of human development producing studies of 'context without development' (Bronfenbrenner 1992, p. 187). With the core principle of his theory being development as a joint function of person and environment, Bronfenbrenner went on to make a series of changes to further strengthen the theory and allow it to stay true to its core (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Lumsden, 2012).

The revised bioecological theory presented two specific areas that Bronfenbrenner wanted to address, firstly the 'continuity and change in the bio-psychological characteristics of human beings' (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006, p. 795) and secondly, in line with its meta-theory approach, the development of theoretical frameworks and research designs needed for the study of continuity and change in human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; 2001a). In order to address the processes of continuity and change, Bronfenbrenner presented a series of propositions that outlined the

bioecological theory, with the first two of these propositions setting out his process-person-context-time model (PPCT). This model was designed to bridge the gap left from the earlier theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a), by supporting integrated research design that focuses on context and development (Lerner, 2005), which will now be outlined in further detail.

Process-Person-Context-Time Model (PPCT)

Bronfenbrenner presented the process-person-context-time model (PPCT) and a number of supporting propositions to lead and support operational research design within the ecological paradigm (Bronfenbrenner, 1998, 1999, 2005).

The PPCT model has four essential components:

I. Process

Process has been a key feature of Bronfenbrenner's theory since its inception, and in the PPCT model, Bronfenbrenner goes further and introduces the concept of *proximal processes* (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner, 1995). A proximal process is described as

> 'progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment' (Bronfenbrenner 1995, p. 620).

Proximal processes are lasting forms of interaction, which occur at specific moments in time and are seen as the primary engines of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In order to drive this development, they must occur relatively often over extended time periods. Examples of proximal processes are parent and adolescent interactions, adolescent and teacher activities, taking part in regular sport activities, the process of learning and studying, and performing increasingly complex tasks (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 2001a, 2001b).

II. Person

A person's characteristics play a major role in the ability of proximal processes to drive development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). This addition is very important to the PPCT model as Bronfenbrenner undertook careful analysis of various research models in the wider field of human development and felt that many did not focus on the combination of the person and the environment, but focused on what he referred to as 'social addresses' (Bronfenbrenner 1988, p. 28). Social addresses were seen as studies that focused on particular social labels such as social class, racial/ ethnic groups, urban versus rural communities, or single parent-versus two parent households (to name a few). In his critique of these research designs, Bronfenbrenner referred to their limited scope and focus, looking

> 'only at the social address – that is, the environmental label- with no attention to what people are living there, what they are doing, and how activities taking place could affect the child' (Bronfenbrenner 1988, p. 28).

Therefore, in response to this, Bronfenbrenner highlighted the importance of the individual's characteristics in the process of development, as this influences both the strength and direction of development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a).

Three types of person characteristics are seen as the most influential in shaping development. These are:

A. Dispositions

Dispositions of the individual are important in shaping development and Bronfenbrenner put these into two categories – *developmentally generative*, and *developmentally disruptive* (Bronfenbrenner 2001b; p. 810). The latter refers to dispositions that range from being unresponsive and apathetic, to impulsive, distractible, and explosive. The former refers to dispositions that range from inquisitiveness, tendency to engage in and initiate activities, and willingness to defer immediate gains and gratification for longer term goals (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). Bronfenbrenner argued that it

would be difficult for an individual displaying developmentally disruptive dispositions to engage in increasing more complex activities (proximal processes) and therefore urged researchers to be aware of this when investigating the impact of the environment on the individual.

B. Bioecological resources

Bioecological resources relate to the biological and psychological assets, liabilities and characteristics that influence the capacity of the individual to engage effectively in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner 2001a). In relation to liabilities, these are often physical, health related issues such as being born prematurely, or having a genetic illness. In relation to assets, these refer to the individual's abilities in particular areas, their knowledge, skills and experiences. Asset resources are very important for the functioning of proximal processes as their evolution provides more opportunities for proximal processes to work effectively (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). To summarise, as the person develops over their life course, they are able to engage in increasingly more complex activities which drive their development, based on a combination of their knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as their physical and socio-emotional capabilities and functioning.

C. *Demand characteristics*

These characteristics relate to the individual's capacity to either discourage or encourage reactions from the social environment, which in turn has an effect on their psychological development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). These can include characteristics such as an individual's physical appearance, or whether they appear passive or energetic. Influenced by the work of Elder (1974), Bronfenbrenner highlighted that these forms of characteristics influence how other people within the individual's immediate environment perceive them, as well as how those within the wider social environment respond to them, which in turn impacts upon how they see themselves within a social context (Bandura, 1995; Bronfenbrenner, 2001a).

III. Context

Context is central to the ecological paradigm and has been a consistent feature throughout. The original EST model fits into this domain of context, and the systems from micro to macro remain a central part of the model. Bronfenbrenner describes context as,

> 'The environment both immediate and more remote (the systems) in which processes are taking place' (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

And within the PPCT model, context is highlighted as more than just the concentric circles surrounding the individual, but also its role in fostering development through proximal processes, as well as identifying which particular parts of the environment are more or less favourable for development (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

The Semiotic System within the Microsystem

Within the revised bioecological theory, Bronfenbrenner added the semiotic system (symbols, objects and signs) into the microsystem. The addition of semiotics was outlined as a part of ecological relationships (Lerner, 2005) as symbols, objects and signs (Eco, 1978) can invite, support, or inhibit an individual's interaction in activities and relationships within their microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a). Semiotics as a research area has a long-standing tradition in the fields of linguistics and cultural studies (Cobley, 2004) and the reason for its addition to the bioecological theory is unknown. However, Bronfenbrenner referred to Vygotsky's work on symbolism and language more in his later work (Bronfenbrenner, 2001b), as well as the work of action theorists such as Brandtstadter (1998).

IV. Time

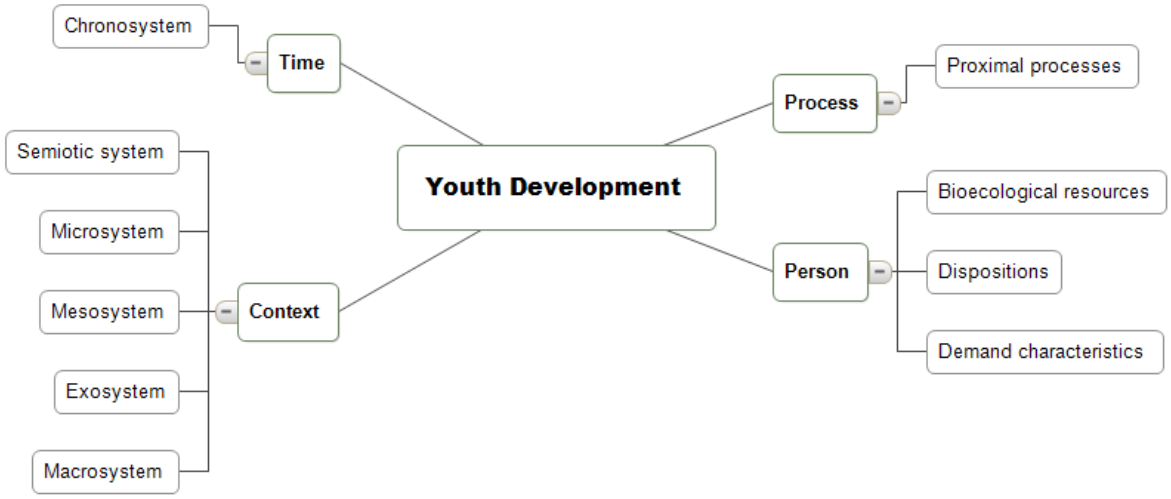
As PPCT is an interlinked model, time links very closely with context as Bronfenbrenner added what he referred to as the chronosystem to his set of concentric circles. Time in this sense refers to,

> 'social continuities and changes occurring over time through the life course and the historical period during which the person has lived' (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 1998, p. 996).

Bronfenbrenner's later work (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 1999, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) illuminated his increasingly awareness of research in the field of sociology on life transitions and the impact of historical events in the individual's development (Elder, 1994). This is seen in the recognition of the importance of time on an individual's trajectory (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 2001a). Therefore, the chronosystem acts as the final part of the systems model and allows the researcher to identify time specific events that occur within the individual (puberty, transition to adulthood), historic events that occur within the individual's most immediate environment (family separation, migration, new profession for parents) and historical events that occur within the meso, exo, and macro systems surrounding the individual.

Time and the chronosystem is particularly important when researching youth development as young people are transitioning through a range of stages from adolescence, youth, and adulthood (Bucholtz, 2002). As shown in figure 3.2, time alongside the other elements of the PPCT model support a fuller investigation into youth development, allowing the researcher to present an in-depth analysis into the young person's experiences.

FIGURE 3:2 PPCT MODEL AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



3.2.5 Applying the Bioecological Theory to Amos Bursary Students

In his revised model, Bronfenbrenner took a bio-psycho-social-cultural and historical perspective, which arguably facilitates both and intersectionality, something that is vital in this research which involves areas of race, gender, social class (Arbouin, 2009). The PPCT model is integrative and will allow for other theories on youth development and educational achievement to be incorporated into the design and analysis as data emerges.

The PPCT model will also allow this research to look at each concept as it relates to the lives of young black men at distinct points in time, namely pre-Amos Bursary, during Amos Bursary and through to graduation. It facilitates a research design that can explore the narratives of the young black men on their own lives before involvement with the Amos Bursary, narratives and historical research exploring their ecological context before the programme, as well as their ecological context subsequent to joining the programme.

Bronfenbrenner makes it clear that the PPCT model is not designed to allow the researcher to provide definitive answers per se, instead its role is to bring new questions to the fore, as it unravels

some of the limitations of ideas and thought prevalent at a specific time (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). It is often used as a way of exploring complex issues that operate in a multi-faceted arena, and can provide policy makers and education leaders with contextually relevant information at a range of levels (Becker and Luthar, 2002). This is particularly important for this research as the issue of black male success at a higher education and graduate career level is one that is relevant to a range of stakeholders in academia, policy, and business sectors, and the Amos Bursary highlights this through the range of stakeholders that it engages with to achieve its aims.

While previous studies on the development on young black people have offered insight into and been useful for understanding the wider policy landscape (Ball, 2008; Byfield, 2008; Rollock, 2005), they have tended to be similar to the social address models Bronfenbrenner refers to (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). For example, Byfield's study into the impact of religion on the educational achievement of young black men in the UK and the USA (2008) is an insightful study and sheds some light on the role of religion, particularly the Christian religious community in developing social capital, cultural capital, and what she termed *religious capital* (Byfield, 2008). However, while Byfield provides some detail of the types of activities that go on within religious environments, little detail is provided on what processes take place to create such capital, and whether these forms of capital can be acquired by all black men who engage in religious activities, by virtue of simply engaging in the activities. It seems fair to point out however that this may not have been a priority of the study undertaken by Byfield (2008), but it serves as an example to highlight the need for more detail in studies that are exploring such complex relationships.

Bronfenbrenner calls on the researcher operating within the bioecological theoretical perspective to look further than social addresses, going deeper into the impact of relationships and events on behaviour and development. As an aid to this complex process, he provided a model and theory to guide the research, and to highlight the importance of making it relevant to people who may be able

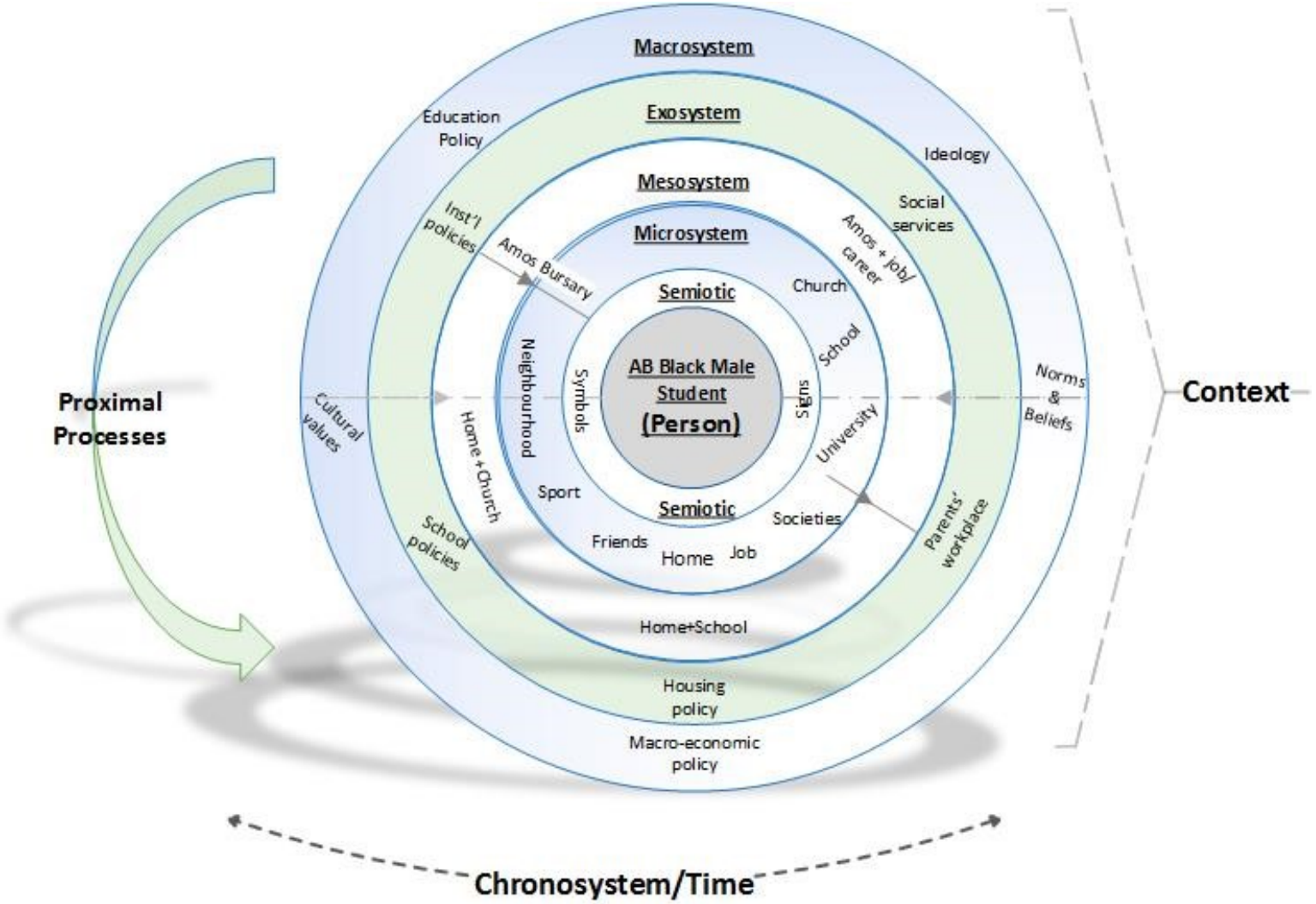
to bring about change for the individual(s) and the society under investigation (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2001b).

Applying Bronfenbrenner's Model to the Amos Student Context

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development emphasises the importance of the interrelationship between the person and their environment on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In his original theory, Bronfenbrenner outlined that the focus of research in this area should not only be on the immediate environments the developing individual inhabits (such as home, work, school), but also the wider context in which their immediate environments are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 1986), and he presented this as a set of nested systems. His ecological systems theory included what he referred to as the 'ecological environment' (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p. 3) centred around the individual. As he developed his work, he incorporated what was referred to as the Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a) which moved the theory forward and included more emphasis on the development of the person and the effects of time on their experiences (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a; Renn, & Arnold, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model was applied to the young black men of the Amos Bursary, and highlighting the major elements of the ecological system affecting their development from age 16 through to the end of their time with the Amos Bursary. Incorporating both the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a) and the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) Figure 5 illustrates the major factors of influence on the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, focusing on their educational development from age 16 through to graduation.

FIGURE 3:3 BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS MODEL AS APPLIED TO THE UNDERREPRESENTED BLACK MALE STUDENT



Critical Awareness of Bronfenbrenner's Theoretical Approach

Bronfenbrenner's theory and writings have influenced many (Darling, 2007), it has also been critiqued for a number of reasons. While this theory ensures that the researcher is focused on the individual and the social environment through its emphasis on the interrelationships between them, it does not explicitly look at group behaviour or group relations (Christensen, 2016). This is an important area for work in education and sociology (Christensen, 2016) especially in relation to teaching, schooling and interactions with peers. Bronfenbrenner's work also puts forward a number of hypotheses relating to development across the ages, and while these are helpful it is important to recognise that they rarely been tested (Darling, 2007). Therefore, they should act as a stimulus and support for research, but should be seen through a critical lens.

Summary

To summarise, this section has looked at Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development from its inception as ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), through to its revised form and the introduction of the process-person-context-time model (PPCT). This has highlighted the integrative nature of the framework and its ability to adapt to the particular phenomenon of focus, through its transferability and focus on human development in a range of contexts (Lumsden, 2012). This theory will provide a strong theoretical underpinning to the study, as it has been well-used and developed by researchers in a range of fields (Lumsden, 2012; McHale, Dotterer & Kim, 2009; Neal & Neal, 2013; Renn & Arnold, 2003) and will support the incorporation of other theoretical perspectives as part of the multi-level theoretical framework.

3.3 Person, Process, Context – The Role of Self-Efficacy Beliefs

Introduction

In this section, the construct of self-efficacy is outlined, explored, and then applied to this research study's focus of educational and career development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary.

As mentioned in the previous section, Bronfenbrenner developed a bioecological theory that supports research investigations and research designs in the field of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Within this, Bronfenbrenner advocates for the inclusion of specific developmental outcomes within research designs, as this, he suggests, will shed light on the role of continuity and change over time on the developing psychological characteristics of the person (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

The developmental construct of self-efficacy was selected to support this research study for three main reasons. Firstly, the literature review on the educational achievement and success of young black males identified their personal characteristics and beliefs as influential in their development (Law et al., 2012; Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012; Tomlin and Olusola, 2006). However, there is limited information on this which offered an opportunity to build upon existing knowledge by exploring self-efficacy further. Secondly, when exploring the literature on youth educational and career development more generally, self-efficacy was often referred to as being influential (Catalano et al., 2004; Larson, 2000; Tsang, Hui & Law, 2012), particularly where studies were exploring academic achievement (Lent, Brown & Larkin, 1984).

Self-efficacy is part of an 'acquirable self-belief system' (Zimmerman 1995: p. 215), and a focus on self-efficacy allows for deeper study into the sources of efficacy beliefs (Zimmerman, 1995). This appears to align with the role of the Amos Bursary in the lives of the young black men, who are

provided a range of mentoring, learning, and development opportunities that the organisation feel will have a positive impact on the educational and career development. Linked with this is the final reason why self-efficacy was selected, which was based on its context-dependent nature. The bioecological theory of human development set out by Bronfenbrenner (1998, 2001a) is centred on the notion of the ecological environment alongside personal characteristics driving development (Lerner, 2005), and Bronfenbrenner himself cites Bandura's self-efficacy as a 'sophisticated formulation of the concept' (Bronfenbrenner 2005, p. 143) of the individual being an active agent within a 'responsive environment' (p.143). Therefore, self-efficacy and its related theory integrates well with the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and the overall theoretical approach.

3.3.1 Background

Self-efficacy is often associated with Albert Bandura's work in the field of social learning and cognition (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1995) and came to prominence in the 1990s, where studies into self-efficacy became more frequent, particularly in the field of education (Tsang, Hui, and Law, 2012). Bandura developed a social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) that put forward the notion that an individual's behaviour is constantly under the influence of the environment and their own personal beliefs, thoughts, and understanding (cognition). For Bandura, an individual's level of motivation and their actions are founded upon what they believe, more than what is 'objectively the case' (Bandura, 1995: p. 2) and therefore people can exercise some degree of control over their lives (Butz & Usher, 2015).

Self-efficacy was presented within the broader social cognitive theory as a way of understanding the origins of these beliefs, their composition, purpose, the processes involved in their operation, and the effects of these beliefs on the individual and society (Bandura, 1977; 1995). Self-efficacy has

often been used to explore academic performance in a range of subject areas, as well as educational and career development more generally (Hackett, 1996; Usher & Pajares, 2009), and is a well-established construct in this field of research. Before exploring its relevance to this study, an overview of the concept is presented.

What is Self-Efficacy?

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs in their own ability to organise and perform the actions required to achieve results in a given situation (Bandura, 1977, 1995). These beliefs (known as efficacy beliefs) in their own capabilities are integral to understanding human behaviour as they influence how an individual thinks, feels, motivates themselves, executes tasks, and copes in a range of situations (Bandura, 1995). Self-efficacy has been shown to be extremely influential in student performance, where studies have been conducted in a range of academic areas (Usher & Pajares, 2009; McCoy and Bowen, 2014; Usher and Butz, 2015), particularly science and mathematics (Hibbs, 2012; Usher and Pajares, 2009).

Self-efficacy does not refer to the individual's physical or psychological characteristics, as it does not focus on what the individual feels about who they are as a person. Rather, self-efficacy focuses on their beliefs about their capabilities in relation to tasks and performance in a particular area (Zimmerman, 1995). In an educational, learning, or work context, self-efficacy is not the only factor of importance in relation to the learning and development of the individual, and if the prerequisite skills and knowledge are not present, it is unlikely that any 'amount of self-efficacy will produce a competent performance' (Schunk and Meece, 2006: p.73). However, efficacy beliefs are influential in the development of skills and knowledge, as they impact on the choices people make and their *outcome expectations* (Schunk and Meece, 2006). Learners often opt for activities that they feel will bring about their favoured outcomes (Bandura, 1977), which are often linked to their own values and ambitions. This may mean that learners can engage in tasks or events where they do not have a

high level of self-efficacy, but where these tasks are linked to their wider ambitions and values (Schunk and Meece, 2006). Therefore, self-efficacy is one of many important constructs in the field of cognition and human development, which can shed light on human behaviour and its influences.

3.3.2 Sources of Self-Efficacy

There are four main sources of influence on efficacy beliefs presented in Bandura's social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), which are put forward in relation to their strength. These sources are briefly introduced.

I. Mastery experiences

The first source of self-efficacy beliefs which is presented as the most powerful is *mastery experiences* (Bandura, 1995), which refers to an individual's prior experiences and attainment in a given area, or tasks that they have mastered and been successful at. These experiences allow the individual to interpret and review their performance and make conclusions about their capabilities, as they provide them with reliable evidence on their ability to succeed (Bandura, 1995; Usher & Pajares, 2009). Mastery experiences build the cognitive and self-regulatory skills and habits needed to perform in ever-changing circumstances (Bandura, 1995), because they boost the individual's confidence in their ability to perform similar tasks. Task failures can weaken this source of self-efficacy, particularly if they occur before a strong sense of efficacy is established, as they can demoralise and diminish confidence. However, if failures occur infrequently their impact may be minimal (Usher & Pajares, 2009).

As young people progress through the education system, their self-efficacy beliefs usually change in line with their development of skills (Zimmerman, 1995). Those who continuously do well academically in one subject, may come to believe that they are competent in this domain for a sustained period of time. Similarly, those who do not attain well in a given subject may hold the belief that they are not competent in this domain for many years (Zimmerman, 1995). Effort is

closely related to mastery experiences, as people often associate effort with ability and success (Usher & Pajares, 2009). Failing to achieve the desired goal for a task that required a great deal of personal effort may challenge the individual's efficacy beliefs in that area, as their effort did not lead to their desired outcome (Usher & Pajares, 2009; Hibbs, 2012).

Effort from others can also influence the efficacy beliefs derived from mastery experiences, as succeeding at a task that required a great deal of effort from others (such as substantial homework support) may provide a weaker sense of self-efficacy, as this inform the individual's beliefs on succeeding alone (Bandura, 1995; Schunk and Meece, 2006; Usher & Pajares, 2009; Tsang, Hui and Law, 2012). Equally, easy successes may undermine future experiences as the individual may attribute a minimal amount of effort with success, which may be undermined by failure in the future (Bandura, 1977; 1995). Therefore, Bandura argues that people need mastery experiences that require them to overcome obstacles through perseverance and sustained effort in order to establish a resilient sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1995; p.3).

II. Vicarious experiences

Vicarious experiences are those that come from social models, people who one sees as similar to themselves, and these experiences can create and strengthen efficacy beliefs as the individual witnesses these social models achieve success (Bandura, 1995). Observing these people achieve success at tasks or goals through persistent effort can raise the individual's belief in their own capabilities. However, observing failure despite persistent effort can negatively impact the observer's opinion of their own efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1995).

The strength of the relationship between social models and efficacy belief development is heavily reliant on the 'perceived similarity to the models' (Bandura 1995: p. 3). If the social model is seen as very similar to the individual, such as from the same racial or ethnic background, gender, or local neighbourhood, the more likely that their achievements will be able to persuade and enhance

efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995; Usher & Pajares, 2009). Research into the vicarious learning of African American students has highlighted that they often benefit more from social models who are similar in age and background, and who display and openly discuss coping strategies (Hackett and Byars, 1996), rather than older, highly successful models who may appear 'flawless' (Hackett and Byars, 1996: p. 328).

Bandura suggests that social models do not merely provide a benchmark to judge one's own abilities by, rather that people also seek out social models who symbolise aspirations, and capabilities an individual would like to acquire, and/or achievements that they would like to emulate (Bandura, 1977, 1995). In this sense, the coping strategies for dealing with external environmental demands, as well as the attitude of the social model towards tasks, can be highly influential in enabling positive efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995).

III. Social persuasion

Parents, teachers, peers, work colleagues and other trusted members of the ecological environment often encourage individuals in particular areas through verbal persuasion (Usher and Pajares, 2009; Hibbs, 2012). This is referred as social persuasion and is the third source of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1995). Words of encouragement and support can often boost confidence and lead to the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs, especially when they are in tandem with instructions that help bring positive outcomes to the individual (Usher & Pajares, 2009). This is particularly important in early childhood learning and development, where children may not yet have the capacity to appraise their own abilities (Usher & Pajares, 2009; Zimmerman, 1995).

However, Bandura emphasises that it is easier to undermine an individual's efficacy beliefs through this source than it is to enhance them (Bandura, 1995). Those who may have been boosted by unrealistic social persuasion may be easily disappointed by the outcome of their efforts towards a particular task or goal (Bandura, 1995: p. 4). Similarly, those who may have been persuaded that

they are not competent or that they lack capabilities in a particular domain, may opt out of challenging tasks that could in fact develop their capabilities, such as higher education.

Social persuasion has been influential in the development of learning mentors and mentoring in education and youth programmes (Tsang, Hui, and Law, 2012). Social models are from the wider community or the business world have been seen as important for expanding the social capital of young people, as well as supporting their efficacy beliefs (Hibbs, 2012; Tsang, Hui, and Law, 2012).

IV. Physiological and emotional states

The final source of efficacy beliefs presented in Bandura's self-efficacy theory is that of physiological and emotional states, in relation to the individual's judgement of their own abilities (Bandura, 1977, 1995). The stress or other emotions that an individual feels and then subsequently interprets in relation to a particular task can influence their efficacy beliefs and performance relating to that domain. In education, learners often associate emotional reactions to activities with competence, such as anxiety in one class or excitement in another (Usher & Pajares, 2009); and strong emotions can influence beliefs on success or failure (Bandura, 1995). Feeling worried or highly apprehensive in a particular subject may lead the learner to believe that they lack the ability or skills in that subject, and they 'may falsely interpret their anxiety as a sign of incompetence' (Usher & Pajares, 2009: p. 754).

Bandura states that efficacy beliefs can be altered by reducing stress, correcting any misinterpretations of emotional states, promoting positive tendencies and enhancing the individual's physical state which may be caused by issues such as fatigue, or physical disabilities (Bandura, 1995). Therefore, behaviour in a particular area (such as a young person's academic performance) is influenced by the individual's beliefs about their own capabilities, with these beliefs being affected by their prior learning experiences (Bandura, 1977), the experiences of others (Usher & Pajares, 2009), the verbal support they receive from parents, educators and others in the

environment (Tsang, Hui & Law, 2012), and their emotional and physical state at a given point in time (Bandura, 1995). However, the cognitive processes that influence the interpretation of these experiences (such as reasoning, judgement) are crucial, as they illustrate how the individual selects and evaluates information (Bandura, 1995).

Personal, social and environmental factors can influence the interpretations of 'efficacy-relevant experiences' (Bandura, 1995: p. 5) which is of particular relevance to this study. An understanding of the role the Amos Bursary plays (if any) in the development and support of efficacy beliefs in the young men they work with, as well as an understanding of how efficacy-relevant experiences are influenced by the ecological environment surrounding the young men from the bursary is integral to this study.

3.3.3 Applying Self-Efficacy to The Development of Amos Bursary Students

This research study is focused on the educational and career development of young black males involved in the Amos Bursary, who are transitioning from A-Levels through to higher education, and in most instances into graduate careers. During this process of intensive learning and development, the young people involved are also making important decisions about their careers and future ambitions. Theory relating to the construct of self-efficacy has highlighted the importance of efficacy beliefs on the motivations, goals and outcome expectations of individuals (Bandura, 1995), and the literature on self-efficacy has shown its influence in academic achievement and educational development (Bandura, 1995; Hibbs, 2012; Zimmerman, 1995).

As the academic choices made at A-level and undergraduate level are heavily linked to career aspirations and choices, social cognitive theory (Bandura 1977, 1995) and related perspectives such as social cognitive career theory support research into this transitional phase in young people lives, particularly in relation to the processes involved in academic and career related decision-making (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994).

Self-efficacy has been embedded into the theoretical framework to support with the investigation of the lived experiences of young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, and to provide a frame of reference for understanding not only the role of beliefs in their educational and career development, but also the processes that support or hinder the development of belief systems. Consistent with Bronfenbrenner's emphasis on the role of the physical and social environment on development (1979, 1998) Bandura's social cognitive theory and the construct of self-efficacy offers a strong theoretical backdrop for investigation into the individual within the microsystem. It also links clearly with the Person dimension of the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a), specifically the correlation between dispositions, demand characteristics and physical and emotional states (Bandura, 1977, 1995).

Studies that have looked at the role of academic self-efficacy in the development of black men and women have highlighted its importance in relation to developing a positive racial identity (Hackett, & Byars, 1996; Hibbs, 2012; Okech & Harrington, 2002) and 'a strong sense of agency' (Hackett, 1995, p.253) which is pivotal when trying to overcome barriers and obstacles in the environment (Hackett, 1995). This clearly correlates with Bronfenbrenner's theory as he highlights that differences in outcomes and performance of racial and ethnic groups should not be seen as merely attributed to their race or their ethnicity, but in relation to the role of the ecological context in limiting or opening up opportunities for individuals from different racial and ethnic groups to develop and achieve (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states are all closely linked to responses of people in the social environment to the individual, and therefore the educational and career development of young black men in this study may be linked to their regular engagement with people and places in their microsystem (including the semiotic system), which may drive the development of self-efficacy, which could in turn drive their educational and career development and progress.

3.3.4 Self-determination theory (SDT) and motivations

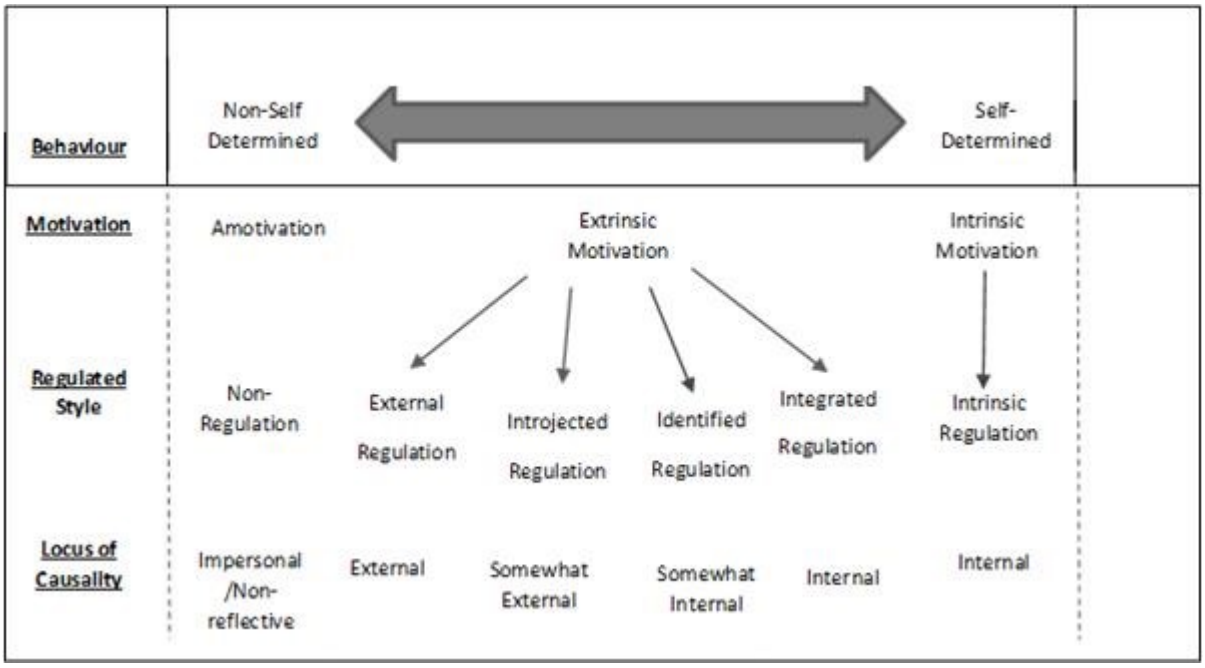
Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human development, motivation and well-being (Deci et al., 1991a), addressing individual's basic needs and requirements to function and live healthy, autonomous lives (Deci & Ryan, 2008). SDT assumes that central to human nature is

> 'the propensity to be curious about one's environment and interested in learning and developing one's own knowledge' (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009: p.133).

This curious and developmental nature is also prevalent in an individual's desire to internalise and absorb the customs, practices and values of their social environment (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

Central to self-determination theory (SDT) is human motivation, and it puts forward the idea of an organismic-dialectal relationship (Ryan, 2009) between the person and the environment, where an individual acts on internal and external forces, but that they are also vulnerable to those external forces (Ryan, 2009). SDT distinguishes between types of motivations related to internal and external forces and goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). As illustrated in figure 3.4, SDT presents a continuum of motivations, in its simplest form it sets intrinsic motivations at one end of the scale, where a person acts on their own innate wants and desire, and interests (Deci & Ryan, 2000). At the opposite end of the continuum is extrinsic motivation where the individual is guided by external forces and outcomes separable from their own wants (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

FIGURE 3:4: SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY CONTINUUM (BASED ON DECI & RYAN, 2000, RYAN & DECI, 2000A; 2000B).



Action based on intrinsic motivations harnesses our natural curiosity and desire to learn particularly in education where it is seen as,

> 'a natural wellspring of learning and achievement that can be systematically catalysed or undermined by parent and teacher practices… Because intrinsic motivation results in high-quality learning and creativity, it is especially important to detail the factors and forces that engender versus undermine it' (Ryan & Deci, 2000a: p. 55).

Students' actions based on extrinsic motivations can result in disinterest or resentment towards the task (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) unless there is 'an attitude of willingness that reflects an inner acceptance of the value or utility of a task' (Ryan & Deci, 2000a: p. 55).

Which results in integrated regulation, the most internal form of extrinsic motivation, where the individual is influenced by external forces but is also pursuing their own interests and accepts the value of the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). For example, the young black men in this study may be pursuing careers based on their own interests, but as a result of their social background and disadvantaged, they may have a strong desire to move out of poverty and therefore pursue a particular career path or opportunity over another that may seem more lucrative or stable (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Basic Psychological Needs

As a macro-theory, SDT also sets out a number of mini-theories and approaches, including the notion of basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). According to Basic Needs Theory (BNT), humans have three basic psychological needs, which are:

1. Autonomy - having the control over your own life in order to make choices for your will, in line with your intrinsic motivations. An Autonomous individual has choice and believes that they can influence their own outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000a).

2. Competence -having the ability to meet environmental demands and understanding of how to achieve internal and external outcomes (Deci et al., 1991). This is closely linked to self-efficacy as it is centred on the individual's beliefs in their ability to perform required tasks (Deci et al., 1991).
3. Relatedness – having secure, positive and satisfying connections with others in your social environment, and as a result feeling a sense of belonging, closeness and connectedness (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000a).

These basic needs are required for positive human development and environments should support the development of these needs rather than discourage them in order to support well-being and positive development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). If an individual is supported to develop these basic needs they are more likely to act in line with their intrinsic motivations (Hui & Tsang, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000b) and as a result take advantage of the full range of learning and development opportunities in the environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

SDT's approach to motivations and basic psychological needs has been discussed in educational development and has been identified as a key factor in the positive development of young people (Hui & Tsang, 2006, 2012; Owens & Finch, n.d.). Linked closely to other theories of self-regulated behaviour such as self-efficacy (Catalano et al., 2004), SDT is useful when exploring the motivations and educational experiences of young people such as those involved in the Amos Bursary, and the ways in which their environment has impacted on their motivations and goals (Deci et al., 1991; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

Relevance for This Study

The developmental construct of self-determination was incorporated into the theoretical framework for three primary reasons. Firstly, the role of the environment on the motivations and behaviour of the individual is acknowledged with SDT and this links closely with Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory (2005) and the focus on the relationship between person and environment. This it was felt would complement the study by providing support when exploring individual behaviour and experiences.

Secondly, it was clear that there are clear links between SDT and self-efficacy theory, with the two coming together through the three basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000a). The idea of competence in SDT links closely with self-efficacy's focus on mastery (Bandura, 1995), as well as relatedness aligning with self-efficacy's focus on vicarious sources of efficacy. Exploring what

relatedness looked and felt like for the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary was seen as important, as the role of a positive black and minority ethnic identity in relation to education and careers has been cited as important for success (Brown & Donnor, 2011; O'Connor, Lewis & Mueller, 2007; Marsh, 2013; Okech & Harrington, 2002; Renn et al*.,* 2003)These similarities it was felt would enhance the theoretical framework's ability to respond to the complex data that would undoubtedly ensue from in-depth case study research (Smith, 2008; Yin, 2009).

Lastly, factors such as beliefs and characteristics of the individual were cited in the literature review as important in the educational achievement of young black men (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012; Tomlin and Olusola, 2006). Yet as with self-efficacy, this has been under-researched in UK studies and this it was felt offered an opportunity to build upon existing knowledge.

3.4 Promoting Positive Development in Youth Programmes

Positive youth development emerged in the United States in the late 20th Century, growing out of a desire by youth and community psychologists and researchers to move away from seeing young people as 'problems to be managed' (Barcelona & Quinn 2011: p21) and to move towards seeing them as 'assets' (Barcelona & Quinn, p.21) who play a vital role in their own development and growth. Youth development is seen as a natural process, where young people grow and develop in a way that allows them to understand their world and manoeuvre effectively in their environment. It is also an applied theoretical approach that focuses on 'active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations, and institutions, particularly at the community level' (Hamilton et al., 2004: p.1). These two elements often come together in the form of positive youth development programmes that try to support a particular area of development through a planned set of activities.

The theoretical approach of positive youth development recognises that the developmental processes young people undergo takes place in a range of environments, and through a range of interactions. While influenced by a range of theorists, most prevalent in this area is the work Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 1998, 2005), and the bioecological model of development, with its focus on the contextual factors of influence around young person, and how these interact with their development.

Within positive youth development (PYD), other prolific theories have been used to support the development and evaluation of programme and initiatives. Catalano et al., (2004) provide useful information for evaluation researchers in their significant work on the evaluation of positive youth development programmes in the US. Following a systematic review of 77 published and unpublished evaluation reports and a literature review spanning 161 programmes, they put forward a set of 'positive youth development constructs' (Catalano et al., 2004: p.101) that underpin positive youth

development programmes and state that programmes should seek to promote one or more of these constructs:

A. Promotes bonding
B. Fosters resilience
C. Promotes social competence
D. Promotes emotional competence
E. Promotes cognitive competence
F. Promotes behavioural competence
G. Promotes moral competence
H. Fosters self-determination
I. Fosters spirituality
J. Fosters self-efficacy
K. Fosters clear and positive identity
L. Fosters belief in the future
M. Provides recognition for positive behaviour
N. Provides opportunities for pro-social involvement (Catalano et al., 2004: p.102)

Each of these positive youth development constructs are underpinned by psychosocial theory on development, academic achievement, and career achievement including Bandura's self-efficacy theory (197. 1995), Erickson's work on the development of a clear and positive identity (1966) as well as self-determination (Deci et al., 1991).

Relevance for this Study

As an approach that is used to support youth programmes (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), PYD provided support for the evaluation piece of the study with its evidenced-based approach (Catalano et al., 2004). Similarly, PYD researchers have set out the ways in which positive development occurs

in line with a range of theories but the most prominent being Bronfenbrenner's bioeological theory and constructs such as self-efficacy and self-determination (Catalano et al., 2004; Larson, 2000; Lerner, 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This clearly aligned with the central theoretical components of this study and it was felt enhanced the research. Lastly, PYD sees young people as assets and rejects the deficit model of youth as problems that need fixing (Larson, 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This aligned with this study's focus on exploring young black men from a positive perspective, rather than as underachievers (Harper, 2012).

4 Design & Methods

4.1 Research Design

Introduction

The aim of the chapter is to provide a detailed explanation of the research study design and the subsequent methods chosen, in line with the study's aims, questions and theoretical framework. This is presented in two sections, the first being the design section which outlines why qualitative case study was chosen as the research methodology, and the epistemological and ontological approach of the study design. This section also explores how the research design correlates with Bronfenbrenner's Process- Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model for research designs adopting the bioecological perspective as a theoretical framework (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a, 2005) and implications of this for data gathering and analysis. The second section of this chapter explores the methods chosen for data gathering and analysis, in line with the research methodology, aims and questions.

Following on from the theoretical framework chapter, it became evident that research using Bronfenbrenner's bioecological perspective as an overarching theory can often struggle with designing a study that allows for the appropriate mix of data gathering on the person and the social environment (Tudge et al., 2009). Bronfenbrenner revised his ecological systems theory (EST) to include the PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994) and created a bioecological theory that focuses on the person in context, ensuring that researchers were applying equal focus to the individual as to the environment and the processes that occur as a result of this interaction (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). When exploring such complexity, Bronfenbrenner commented on the need for flexible, holistic approaches which provide rich descriptions and insights (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a) although he did not prescribe any particular methods. This was taken into

consideration when designing the study to ensure that the research design, methodology and analytical approach chosen were in tandem with the study's theoretical framework.

Study Aims

This research study had two aims. The first and primary aim of the study was to explore the educational development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, which would add to the existing literature on the development, experiences, and achievements of young black students (particularly young black males) in education. As seen in the literature review, there have been issues relating to the educational achievement of young black men in the UK for over 20 years (Arbouin, 2009; Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Mirza-davies, 2014). This has resulted in much focus and attention on the social and political issues that may have resulted in low numbers of young black men attending higher education institutions, and for those that do, their struggles in achieving highly while there (Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014; Gillborn & Mirza, 2000; Law et al., 2012).

This primary aim was facilitated by an evaluation of the Amos Bursary and its development programme, which was the second aim of the study. The Amos Bursary is an organisation that provides financial, educational, and social support to academically able young black men from London. Each year the organisation recruits young black men aged between 16 and 18 years of age to take part in their four and half year programme that supports students to access higher education, particularly top tier institutions (such as the Russell Group) and graduate careers. While these young men are academically able, they come from homes that may put them at a disadvantage in relation to accessing higher education and their chosen careers due to their socioeconomic status, poverty, family status (such as single parent households, living in foster care), and/or lack of higher education experience in their family. As the Amos Bursary has had one cohort of students complete its full programme and has grown into an organisation of approximately 60

students, the aim of the evaluation element of the study was to provide useful information, insights and recommendations for its stakeholders and supporters about its progress, the quality and its programme(s), and any recommendations for future work and development. These aims acted as a guide in the development of the research design and research questions, ensuring that an appropriate strategy was chosen that would allow for this two-fold investigation.

Research Questions

An overarching research question was devised to guide the study in line with the developmental-ecological theoretical approach, with sub-questions also devised to support the overarching questions and ensure that the study met its aims:

The overarching question:

1. What are the developmental changes that young black men experience as a result of their participation in the Amos Bursary?

Guiding sub-questions:

a. What are the issues/barriers facing Amos Bursary young black men on their journey towards a graduate career?
b. How does involvement with the Amos Bursary interact with the individual young man's developmental pathway?
c. How does the Amos Bursary define and measure success?
d. What are the outcomes for the young black men as a result of their engagement with the Amos Bursary?
e. What are the corporate motivations for engaging with the Amos Bursary?

Sub questions (a) and (b) have been written to support the research aims of the study, focusing directly on the experiences of young black men involved the study, with sub questions (c), (d) and (e)

written to help guide the evaluation elements of the study, focusing on the organisation and its stakeholders' role in the development process.

4.2 Using Case Study Methodology

Overview

Case study was chosen as the methodological approach for this study as it allows for in-depth inquiry into a bounded system or systems (Merriam 2009; Yin, 2009). Case study methodology does not focus on the data collection methods employed but rather on providing a holistic view of the organisation, group, people, or person being investigated and all of the complexities within the case(s). Two key writers in the field of case study research, Stake (1995) and Yin (2003, 2009) present approaches that are primarily based on the interpretivist paradigm, focusing on the how the individual or individual's within the case interpret the world around them and construct meaning within it (Baxter & Jack, 2008), which in most instances lends itself to qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995). However, a range of methods can be used within a case study methodology dependent on the question(s) being asked, the aim of the study and the discipline that the research falls into (Stake, 1995).

Case study research is common in the field of educational research and in educational evaluation as it often allows the researcher to focus on a particular organisation, learning site, or group of learners (Bassey, 1999; Stake, 1995), providing researchers with a range of tools for investigating practices, beliefs, values and processes (Yin, 2009). This study could be referred to as instrumental by nature, as the case (the Amos Bursary) was a vehicle for exploring the development of young black men they work with (who were cases within the case) (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995). Case study methodology allowed me to stay focused on the young black men within the Amos Bursary, their learning

experiences on the Bursary programme and their thoughts and opinions about their own educational development prior to joining the Bursary. It ensured that this focus remained throughout the data collection process, as this study could have easily branched into many other areas relating to young black male achievement at higher education level and beyond due to complexity and overlapping nature of this field of research (Arbouin, 2009; Brown & Donnor, 2011; Tomlin & Olusola, 2006).

4.2.1 Interpretivist-Constructivist Paradigm

The interpretivist research paradigm (sometimes referred to as constructivist) is often linked to naturalistic inquiry and is commonly referred to as one of the 'big theories' (O'Donoghue, 2007: p. 7) and as a paradigm incorporates a number of theoretical perspectives. Interpretivism focuses on social beliefs and interactions as the basis for knowledge acquisition and within this paradigm the researcher uses their knowledge and experience as a social actor to try and discover how other social actors understand and relate to their worlds (O'Donoghue, 2007). Ontologically, this paradigm does not seek out one truth or one reality, but rather posits that there are multiple realities that exist, which have been socially constructed by the individuals within the community (Lincoln & Guba, 2007) as a result of their social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds and values (Mertens, 2008). Reality and truth in this sense is relational and Clifford Geertz, a pioneer of interpretivist hermeneutic research and anthropology remarked,

> 'What we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to' (Geertz 1973: p. 9).

In his seminal work *The interpretation of cultures* (1973), Geertz introduced the concept of culture as text, with text referring to,

> ‘The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong.’ (Geertz, 1973: p. 452)

In this form of interpretative research, the researcher moves between insider and outsider more fluidly in order to provide a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973: p.9) or a rich narrative from their analysis of the experience(s) they undergo and observe while in the field. This rich narrative would lead to an understanding of ‘the meaning behind something’ (O’Donoghue, 2007: p. 10), to an understanding of why particular practices or behaviours take place. Language and text are central to this perspective and meaning is seen as being understood and transferred through communication, through written or verbal accounts which are often discussed and negotiated between those speaking, listening, reading or writing (O’ Donoghue, 2007: p. 10).

Within the case study methodology, the idea of interpreting texts created by social actors allows the researcher to study ‘social life in process’ (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997: p.12) and provide insights into the complex, intricate world of their object of study. Case study’s tolerance of complexity is particularly useful in relation to evaluation research, as the communities and programmes being evaluated are often socially and culturally complex (Mertens, 2008). Working within the intepretivist paradigm allows the researcher to work through the messy and unanticipated, often in a way that positivist and experimental approaches cannot (Mertens, 2008; Stake, 1995).

Researcher Position and Reflexivity

For the evaluative nature of this research, interpretivism as a research paradigm was seen as most useful as it allowed me to explore and analyse the Amos Bursary’s programme (both at an organisational level and at a frontline service level) through the ways in which the stakeholders see and experience it. It is acknowledged and accepted in this paradigm that the researcher will move between the emic and etic (Hoffman, 2009); from participant insider to outsider, and that their knowledge and experiences will impact on the research and their interpretation.

> ‘The intersubjective nature of social life means that the researcher and the people being researched have shared meanings and we should seek methods that develop this advantage’ (England, 1994: p.243).

This is particularly relevant in this research as my personal characteristics arguably had an impact on my role as a researcher. As a young black woman from London pursuing a research degree at a highly ranked UK university, I brought insider knowledge and understanding of the social, political, and cultural landscape that the Amos Bursary operates in, which I was aware would be relevant to my interactions with stakeholders and their responses to me. Similarly, I brought insider knowledge and experiences to the research with the young black man, in relation to my racial and ethnic identity, and local identity in some instances.

Within the interpretivist paradigm and case study methodology, this becomes purposeful as generalisability and standardisation are not the main aims nor the sole markers of rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Morrow, 2005). Rather a rich, thorough, descriptive account of the case or cases under investigation is sought, providing interested parties with insights for future development (Kelliher, 2005; Yin, 2009). It should also be said that along with this insider-outsider position, issues of power and prestige were seen as relevant and influential to the data collection process, as I was aware of my position in relation to some of the young people I met and recruited for the study. Some may have wanted to attend Imperial College London, or some of the other institutions I have attended, and I was aware of the need for me to remain critical of my position and potential influence over the students (please refer to section 4.4.3 for more the use of the researcher’s journal as a reflexive tool).

Therefore, while a case study methodology within the interpretivist paradigm ensured that the views and opinions of the participants remained central to the study, and that the methods chosen allowed for these views to come to the forefront, I was aware of the critical/emancipatory approach and its role in research relating to race, ethnicity, gender, and other fields where issues relating to

social justice, prejudice, power and subjugation are part of the history of the research participants (Mertens, 2008; Patton, 2002). This awareness meant that I critically reflected throughout the study and continuously endeavoured to remain sensitive to the past and history of the young black men and their families.

Boundaries of the Case

As this study involved an evaluation of the Amos Bursary, it was clear from the outset that I needed to analyse a programme, which is a phenomenon that is bound within a particular context (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The programme cannot be analysed outside of the context of the organisation and its stakeholders and the study was not focused on the Bursary's programme in relation to other organisations and their programmes. Therefore, a boundary was set around the organisation defining it as a case. However, as the primary aim of this study was to explore the educational development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, it was clear that this was an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995) whereby the case facilitates understanding and provides insights into a topic or issue which is the main interest of the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake 1995). By scrutinising the Amos Bursary and its activities, it allowed me to learn more about the educational needs and experiences of the young black men involved as they transitioned into higher education and graduate employment.

Exploratory, Evaluative Case Study

While the Amos Bursary has been in operation since 2009, the long- term nature of its work has meant that it has had limited numbers of students complete a full programme cycle, and it has not previously had an in-depth evaluation undertaken of its work. Similarly, the Amos Bursary is a small non-profit organisation that has been operating for less than ten years, and has a unique approach to supporting their bursars. Therefore, the literature that existed in the field was not comprehensive

in its relevance to this research and an exploratory approach seemed most relevant in these circumstances (Yin, 2009). This exploratory approach was considered when thinking about the evaluation of the Bursary's development programme and constructing the research questions. As the educational experiences of the young black men involved in the Bursary are equally important to the study, an exploratory focus aligned with the interpretivist paradigm that the study operated within, focusing on exploring their perspectives, experiences, and social reality (O'Donoghue, 1999; Stake, 1995).

However, this was not seen as definitive as elements of this case study incorporate descriptive and explanatory elements (Bassey, 1999; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009), particularly in relation to processes and procedures that may occur within an organisation, learning environment, community or household (Bassey, 1999). However, the evaluative element of the study was not centred on explaining why the Amos Bursary exists or explaining the general educational development of the young black men, but rather to explore what the organisation does and why, and how it affects the development of the young black men it supports.

4.3 Designing an inclusive evaluation approach

Community-based evaluation research is often multi-layered and complex (Douthwaite et al., 2008). The role of the researcher in this form of research is often twofold, as both a researcher exploring contemporary social issues, as well as an evaluator who must shed light on the value or merit of the initiative under investigation (Clarke, 2003). This sometimes difficult task involves the breaking down of layers of complexity in order to discover what the value is, and for some forms of evaluation, how the underlying assumptions or theories of change held by the programme leaders and designers (Chen, 1994) influence the activities and programmes offered to the community. It almost always takes place within a social, cultural, economic and political environment (Sengupta, Hopson, &

Thompson-Robinson, 2004) and at the intersection of research, policy, and practice (Sarantakos, 2005).

Evaluation research as applied form of social research places the researcher in different positions depending on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the paradigm being used (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Morrow, 2005). Post-positivist studies regularly seek objective evaluation outcomes with limited bias, and rigour is seen in the validity and reliability of the data and evidence produced (Creswell, 2003). While methodological rigour in evaluation research has always been seen as important, evaluation taking place within complex community settings requires the researcher to delve into the experiences and perspectives of the stakeholders involved, to ensure that the findings reflect their experiences and are seen as authentic by the community of focus (Mertens, 2008). Authenticity of the evaluation findings not only provide evidence that is reflective of the community, but also enhances the likelihood that stakeholders will receive the findings well and put them to use when the study has concluded (Mertens, 2008; Morrow, 2005). Within the interpretivist-constructivist and emancipatory/participatory paradigms, authenticity and trustworthiness are seen as markers of rigour (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Mertens, 2007; Morrow, 2005), and subjectivity rather than objectivity is embraced as part of the process (Patton, 2002). This is not to say that objectivity does not have its place in community-based evaluation research, however seeking this above all else is likely to render findings that lack sufficient depth to provide a value judgement on the programme, its worth and achievements (Sengupta, Hopson, Thompson-Robinson, 2004).

Cultural Understanding and Cultural Competence

Having a deep understanding of the community or communities you are investigating, and being culturally competent allows the researcher/evaluator to explore the values of the stakeholders, which undoubtedly shaped their beliefs, practices, and perspectives (Mezirow, 1991, 1997; Morrow,

2007). In this study, cultural values and beliefs play a major role as the Amos Bursary's programme and activities have been created based on particular values and beliefs regarding education, career success, and achievement. Understanding the role that these cultural values play in the decision-making processes of programme leaders and other stakeholders was vital to ensuring that the methods chosen for the study were appropriate in their ability to elicit authentic responses from individuals who may have been marginalised or are still experiencing marginalisation, issues relating to poverty, or other social justice issues (Mertens, 2008; Sengupta, Hopson, Thompson-Robinson, 2004).

Power, status and privilege are likely to be at work within the ecological environment of the organisation, at the macrosystem and exosystem levels in particular (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) as ideologies, societal values and political beliefs in the U.K have been built up over centuries, influencing policy making and practices in civil society. Similarly, Britain's colonial past in Africa and the Caribbean will have undoubtedly been influential in the chronosystem of the organisation and its stakeholders, as these socio-historical factors have not only influenced how and when families moved to the U.K, but also how communities were seen and supported post-colonialism (Arbouin, 2009; Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1994, 2005). Therefore, the researcher becomes an instrument through which this rich understanding can be sought, with their participation and experiences in the field playing a crucial role in their ability to interpret the data as fairly as possible (Morrow, 2005).

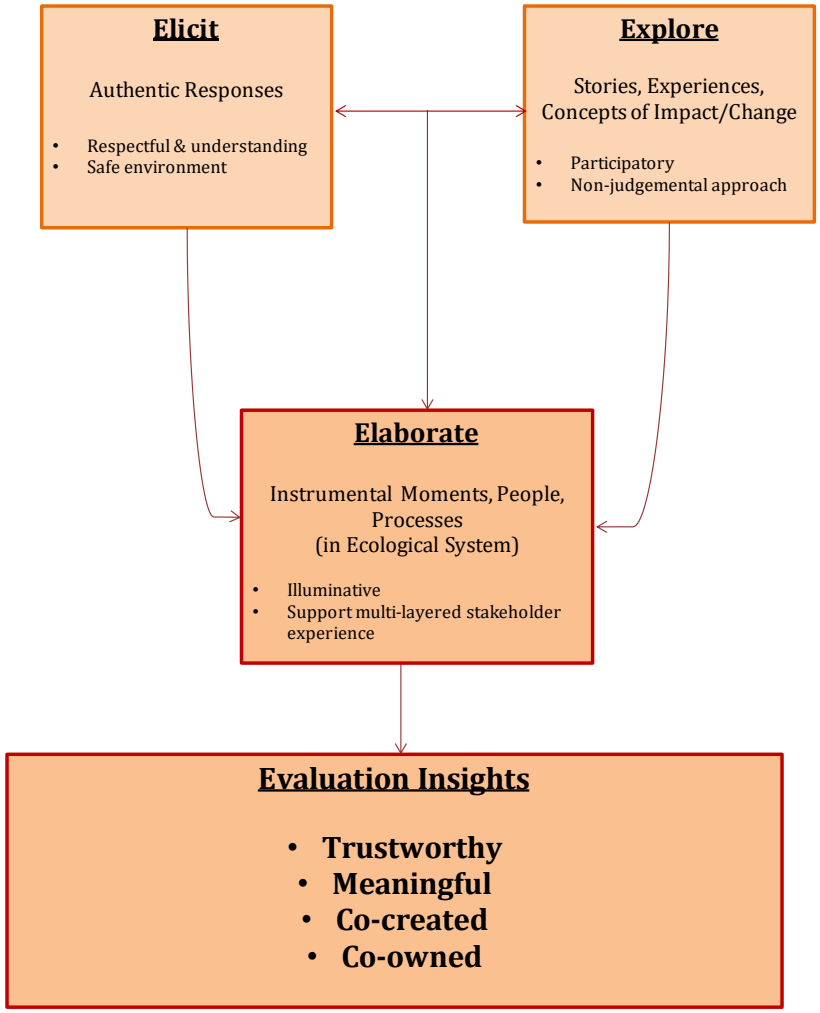
However, in this form of culturally inclusive evaluation research, it is important that the researcher reflects regularly on their experiences and reflexivity is fundamental to the quality of this form of research (Patton, 2002). When time is spent interacting in the field, time for reflection allows the researcher to explore their own reactions to, positions and thoughts about their experiences and where there may be challenges or contentious issues (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Researcher reflexivity was important in this study due to the nature of the community and my own racial, ethnic, and local

similarities to the group, as well as my educational experiences and beliefs (which was noted in the researcher's journal section 4.4.3).

Taking an inclusive approach allowed me to explore the Amos Bursary's work and activities in line with the study's theoretical and methodological frameworks, from the perspective of their multiple stakeholders. Allowing them to share their views and perspectives on the quality of the processes, interactions and practices of the organisation's activities provided the opportunity for me to gather authentic responses that the community would feel part of (Mertens, 2008). The goal here was to ascertain its value and worth in relation to the views, beliefs and experiences of the young people and stakeholders involved, rather than attempting to measure the outcomes in a quantitative fashion which was not in line with the research paradigm for the study.

The 3E Model (figure 4.1) represents this study's evaluation thinking and was used to guide the design process.

FIGURE 4:1 3E MODEL FOR EVALUATION INSIGHTS



In order to create trustworthy, meaningful and valid insights and data, awareness of the culture of the group being studied (both in terms of the organisational culture and the wider black cultural experience) was very important (Mertens, 2008; Saville-Troike, 1982). Much of what is discussed and explored requires 'a deep understanding of the culture' (Saville-Troike, 1982: p. 89) and being a member of that community can provide the researcher with the opportunity to not only gain access but also bring their own knowledge and understanding into the process in a meaningful way, exploring,

'the subtle interconnections of meaning in ways that the outsider could attain only with great difficulty, if at all' (Saville-Troike, 1982: p. 90).

4.4 Developing programme effectiveness criteria using the Positive Youth Development Approach

The field of positive youth development (PYD) as an approach and a set of principles for practice grew out of work in the fields of developmental psychology, youth work practice and life-span human development (Lerner, 2005a). Focusing on successful youth development and what works, PYD rejects the deficit model of a young people at risk or issues relating to problem behaviours and emphasises how capacity and capabilities can be supported and nurtured through interventions and programmes that connect young people with members of their communities, faith organisations, schools, industry and civic society (Catalano et al., 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003;).

> 'The goals of youth development programs is to promote positive development, even when seeking to prevent problem behaviours. Youth development programs help youth navigate adolescence in healthy ways and prepare them for their future by fostering their positive development' (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003: p. 172).

Evaluation research in the field of positive youth development has sought to promote what works in a range of programmes and a number of frameworks and criteria have been developed to support further monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the five Cs approach has been used extensively to review programme goals (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Hamilton, Hamilton & Pitman, 2004; Lerner, 2005a) and is seen as a useful way of conceptualising what positive youth development looks like (Lerner, 2005a). The five Cs can be used as a way of identifying programme goals and assessing their performance against their abilities to support these goals, and as seen in table 4.1, the five Cs connect with concepts such as self-efficacy and competencies such as cognitive and social competence.

Similarly, monitoring and evaluation in the field has used the work of Catalano et al., (2004) as a guide, as this study involved a systematic review of 77 positive youth development programs as well

as an extensive literature of the field. Their study presented clearly what works within the field and set fourth criteria that has been referred to widely in the field (Lerner, 2005a; Morton and Montgomery, 2011).

TABLE 4:1 FIVE C'S OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Five Cs of Positive Youth Development (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003)				
Competence	***Confidence***	***Connections***	***Character***	***Caring***
Enhancing social, cognitive academic and vocational competencies.	Improving self-concepts – such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and beliefs in the future.	Supporting young people to build positive relationships with other people and institutions in society.	Character building activities, promoting self-control and moral development.	Improving caring capacity and empathy for others.

Among the characteristics of effective PYD programmes that they set out, Catalano et al.,(2004) state that all of the effective programmes they reviewed supported at least five positive youth development constructs, and in particular with a focus on self-efficacy, competencies and pro social involvement (Catalano et al., 2004: p.102).

Catalano et al's findings (2004) alongside the five Cs (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) were adapted to create a set of programme effectiveness criteria for this study, which were seen as relevant for the evaluation of the Amos Bursary's work.

TABLE 4:2 PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA (ADAPTED FROM CATALANO ET AL., 2004; FAGAN ET AL., 2008; ROTH & BROOKS-GUNN, 2003)

	Criteria	**Achieved**	**Achieving**	**Not Achieved**
Design and Outcomes	The programme addresses a minimum of five youth development constructs including Self-efficacy, Competence and Pro Social Norms.			
	There is a structured programme of activities which are monitored and reviewed.			
	The programme lasts for at least nine months.			
Implementation	The programme is implemented consistently in order to support the quality of its activities and its evaluation capacity.			
	Within its remit, it serves a range of young people from African and Caribbean backgrounds, of mixed heritage, with disabilities and those with other protected characteristics.			
	The programme takes place in an empowering, engaging atmosphere: • Supportive relationships • Communicates expectations • Empowers and inspires • Provides opportunities for recognition • Provides services that are stable • Engages participants and encourages regular attendance.			

4.4.1 Beyond Evaluation Methods

It is important when designing a research study that has an evaluation element to it, to recognise that evaluation is more than merely a combination of methods (Bezzi, 2006). It is common for case study research to incorporate evaluation (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009), however it was important for me to ensure that the evaluation component of the study used methods that were aligned with the overall study perspective but that they also gave the stakeholders a chance to discuss, explore, elaborate and think about what they do in more detail. This is the first piece of in-depth research conducted on the Amos Bursary and it was clear that with its many stakeholders and strong focus on black young men, multiple beliefs and ideologies lay behind their work, in ways that may not be obvious or clear from the outset.

Understanding Programme Theory

When incorporating the evaluation piece into the research design, it was essential that it allowed the study to explore the underlying beliefs and values of the Amos Bursary and their activities, in order to provide sufficient information to answer the research questions, particularly in relation to how they define and measure success. Discovering why the Bursary does what it does, in the way that it does, was central as the literature on supporting high achieving young black males in the UK was scarce and the Bursary appeared to be operating in a new space. For this, the theory-driven evaluation approach (Weiss, 1972; Chen, 2016) was influential, as this approach to evaluating social programmes works with stakeholders to discover the underlying programme theory, or the rationale behind why a programme was designed in a particular way to meet its intended aims and aims, and how it achieves its goals to better understand its underlying theory (Birckmayer & Weiss, 2000; Chen, 2016). As there are potentially multiple ways of achieving a particular aim or goal, theory-driven evaluation is a perspective that is useful in ascertaining not only what has been achieved but

how, and can provide recommendations for stakeholders on where there may be issues or inconsistences in the programme theory and corresponding processes.

It explores two main areas, descriptive assumptions and prescriptive assumptions, implicitly and explicitly (Chen, 2016). Descriptive assumptions are centred on what causal processes were expected to happen, or the change that was intended to occur during the programme. Prescriptive assumptions support this by focusing on what actions are needed in order to bring the desired change (Chen, 2016).

Within theory-driven evaluations, logic models are often developed to depict the connections between the resources invested in the programme, the activities that occur, and the intended short, medium and longer-term outcomes and impact that is expected as a result (Patton, 2002; Powell, Jones & Henert, 2003). Thinking in terms of the programme theory and logic was particularly helpful in the design process as it ensured that methods chosen would be able to illuminate on the assumptions of the stakeholders and the success/change that they work towards (Patton, 2002). This it was felt, would ensure that the evaluation findings were not only useful for the organisation, but also for my goals in contributing to the academic literature on young black British males in education.

4.4.2 Study Methods

Introduction

As this study took on an instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995), within an interpretivist paradigm (O'Donoghue, 2007), different methods and tools were chosen for the gathering and analysis of data on the young black men involved, in contrast to those chosen to gather and analyse data on the Amos Bursary programme. For the former, methods and tools were identified that were seen as supportive in the endeavour of eliciting authentic responses from the young black men on their lived experiences, in a respectful way. Similarly, methods and tools were identified that aligned theoretically with this study in order to provide data that was capable of answering the research questions as far as possible. These will now be explained and justified in detail. This will then be followed by a detailed exploration of the methods and tools chosen to gather and analyse data on the Amos Bursary programme, in line with the evaluation framework set out in the theory chapter and the inclusive evaluation design approach set out in the design section.

Qualitative Research into Educational Development

When investigating human development in a small number of cases, qualitative case study research methods are often used in education and psychology, as opposed to quantitative methods (Eatough & Smith, 2008). This is due to its idiographic nature, allowing the researcher to explore themes and questions at the individual level, rather than the nomothetic research approach which operates at the group or population level which has been prevalent in educational and developmental psychological research for some time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Eatough & Smith, 2008).

Through its focus on a small number of cases, qualitative approaches do not seek to provide an objective statement or account of a person's development, but rather supports an in-depth

exploration of their lived experiences, allowing the researcher to understand how they make sense of their world, while giving the participants a voice (Larkin et al., 2006). It can provide rich data on the person in-context (Larkin et al., 2006) and can allow the researcher to gain an insider view of the individual's developmental experiences and pathways, which was central aim of this study. Such research also supports the exploration of self-concepts as it allows the researcher to use methods and tools that produce rich data on the individual's thoughts and feelings on themselves, but would not be appropriate to use on a larger scale due to feasibility, such as semi-structured interviews and observations (O' Donoghue, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

This study was guided by the qualitative approach to educational and developmental research when choosing data collection methods and tools as this was seen as most cohesive with the theoretical focus of the study and the nature of the cases. Giving a voice to young black men whose thoughts and opinions were often absent from the literature on their educational and career experiences (Harper, 2012) was a priority, alongside the desire to identify the role that their ecological environment may or may not have played in the development of self-concepts such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1996; Bronfenbrenner, 2001a).

4.4.3 Methods for qualitative case study research

Qualitative case study research is defined by its focus on a bounded system (Bassey, 1999; Creswell, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), but Merriam (2009) presents three features that can also be used to further define and differentiate qualitative case study methodology and methods, as well as promote quality and rigour. Case study research can be seen as particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic (Merriam, 2009: p. 43). It is research that provides readers with insightful information into a particular phenomenon or activity, using a rich descriptive account of what has been explored and interpreted (Bassey, 1999; Geertz, 1973), in a way that allows the reader to almost vicariously experience the phenomena itself (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009). Methods chosen in this form of

research need to support this aim and provide the researcher with the opportunity to explore the phenomenon in depth and breadth.

Case study research can employ multiple methods and data collection tools, but it often utilises three main methods for collecting data: interviewing/question asking, observations, and document reading and analysis (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 2009). Within these three methods, there are nuances and researchers can use various techniques to elucidate information, however, these remain central to qualitative case study research. Table 4.3 shows how this study deployed all three of these methods in ways relevant to the study's aims and the phenomenon under investigation.

TABLE 4:1 DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE STUDY (BASED ON MERRIAM, 2009: P. 43-46)

Distinctive features of Amos Bursary qualitative case study research	
Particularistic	**Focused:** An instrumental case study focused on the Amos Bursary, its programme of activities, and experiences of the young black men they support. **Methods:** Ethnography/Fieldwork – participant observation
	Supports practice: The case has the potential to provide detailed information on the experiences of young black men in higher education, a small group often hard to study on a large scale due to low numbers. This can support policy development and planning. **Methods:** Semi-structured interviews with individual cases; stakeholder interviews and research workshops
Descriptive:	**Expansive, detail-rich account:** The final output will include a detailed, thick description (Geertz, 1973) and findings will draw on a thematic analysis of what was seen and experienced by the researcher. **Methods:** Semi-structured case interviews over an 18-month period including visual methods; observations/fieldwork; research workshops
Heuristic	**Illuminative & insightful:** The study sheds light on the educational and career experiences of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary. **Methods:** Semi-structured case interviews over an 18-month period; research workshop with Amos students.

4.4.4 Sampling & Participant Recruitment Strategy

Sampling

Before the participant recruitment took place, a sampling and recruitment strategy was devised to ensure that those recruited and the methods chosen were in line with the study's aims. A qualitative study, unlike a quantitative study requires more intensive data collection processes such as interviews and observations, and therefore, it was paramount that researcher time and resources were used effectively (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

Wilmot's guide (2005) was used to support the refinement of the sampling and recruitment strategy. In particular, the following questions helped me to focus on who needed to be recruited in order to fulfil the study aims and how to go about the recruitment process:

- Who should be included/ excluded in the study?
- What are the relevant timescales for collecting data?
- What sampling technique(s) should be employed for ensuring a fair and valid process?
- What are the selection criteria for participants?
- What size should the sample be?
- How should potential respondents/participants be recruited?
- What are the key ethical considerations for this study?

The instrumental nature of this case study (Merriam 2009; Yin, 2009) meant that the Amos Bursary organisation was a vehicle for learning more about the educational and career experiences of the young black men involved. Therefore, to fulfil the research aims and questions, cases were sought from among this group of young black men who would be studied in-depth and purposive sampling was used as the primary method used for recruiting them. Purposive sampling allows the researcher

to use their own judgement to ensure that those recruited can provide the best possible information within the time and scope of the study (Kumar, 2005), and will be willing and able to do so (as far as possible).

When recruiting the cases for the in-depth interviews, information on the study aims, criteria, and time commitments were given to all Amos Bursary students. Purposive sampling was then deployed to ensure that there was not too much overlap between participants in terms of their background and age which it was felt would provide some diversity within this small sample of students.

Snowball sampling is a method that allows the researcher to access hard to reach individuals through other members of the study/existing networks (Kumar, 2005). I found this particularly useful in relation to gaining access to funders and corporate supporters, who were less accessible to me and also wanted reassurances from Amos leaders of the nature of the research interviews. Similarly, with the Amos student population (ASP) snowball sampling was useful in particular for engaging with students who were at university and those who have graduated and now in employment.

Based on the questions and aims of the study, a sampling and recruitment strategy was created to support the recruitment process, and five groups were identified which is illustrated in Table4.4.

Recruiting for Credibility and Authenticity

Qualitative research often involves the researcher being engaged in 'sustained and intensive experience with participants' (Creswell 2009, p: 177) with the aim of providing a rich interpretation of what they have seen, experienced and come to understand. This study sought to explore and further understand the educational and career experiences of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, particularly in relation to their development in-context (Bronfenbrenner, 1998; 2001a). It sought to explore their 'perceptions, understandings, feelings, and indeed valuings' (Pring, 2000: p. 32) in a phenomenological sense, in line with its case study methodology. Therefore, it was

concluded that recruiting a small number of participants from the Bursary who would become cases within the case, would be the most effective way of gathering rich authentic data.

This was decided for two main reasons: firstly, the Amos Bursary has approximately 60 students involved in their programme, some of whom are part of the yearly cohorts they recruit, and others who are involved on a more ad-hoc basis. All of these students are involved in education at different levels of the education system or in employment, with varying schedules and are based in different locations. As a result of this, it was felt that coordination and contact would be more feasible with a smaller number of cases, rather than trying to arrange research activities with larger numbers of students which could have been unpredictable and prohibitive to the study's effort to be as consistent and rigorous as possible (Merriam, 2009). Similarly, it was also felt that working with a smaller number of cases over a longer space of time would provide more opportunities to build a rapport with the cases and gather authentic responses from them about their educational experiences, their Bursary experiences, and their wider ecological environment (Donoghue, 2007; Smith & Osborn, 2007), as well as allowing for the inclusion of a range of methods such as visual methods (Bagnioli, 2009).

Credibility with the larger group was built up through a prolonged period of time spent in the field, observation persistently at events and workshops where possible (Saville-Troike, 1982), ensuring that I gained as much understanding of the Amos community as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2007).

Table 4.4 outlines all of the research participants for the study, with table 4.5 illustrating the sampling strategy. Purposeful qualitative sampling was selected as a way of ensuring that the participants recruited would help me to in my endeavour to understand the research problem and answer the research questions (Creswell, 2010).

The Amos Bursary recruits students in years 12 and 13 each year (aged between 16 and 18 years) and supports them for approximately four and a half years until university graduation (this differs slightly for medicine and architecture students). In order to gain a representation of what the programme entails at different stages and to understand how it interacts with individual developmental pathways, I sought to recruit between four and six cases initially from across the Bursary stages (i.e. A-level students, university students), from both African and Caribbean backgrounds, with the aim of interviewing the students three times over a 12-18-month period.

Information on the study and participant recruitment was presented to a large number of students and Amos Bursary members at a quarterly event, and they were given opportunities to come forward to gain more information. Information was also shared on email newsletters that were circulated to all members of the Bursary with contact details given and information on how to get involved and/or ask questions. Ten students made contact initially to gain further information on the study and the time commitments. Of these, six showed an interest in taking part in the study but four committed to being involved.

TABLE 4.2 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Participant Type	No. of Participants	Relationship to Amos Bursary	Method of Data Collection	
Amos Cases	4	Student members	Semi structured interviews; structured final interview	December 201
Amos Graduates	4	Amos alumni	Semi structured interview	2014-2015
Amos Student Population	45	Student members	Research workshop and Questionnaire; Participant observation	2013-2016
Amos Leader	1	Leader of organisation	Two semi-structured interviews ; PIPA workshops; Ongoing conversations; Participant observation	December 201
PIPA participants (Amos Committee members)	12	Leaders of committees and programme activities	PIPA workshops; Participant observation	2014 -2015
Amos mentors and supporters	30+	Supporters of students	Participant observation; informal conversations	December 201
Corporate supporter – Global Law Firm	1	Financial supporters and in-kind supporter	Semi-structured interview	February 2015
Corporate supporter- Financial services	1	Financial supporters and in-kind supporter	Semi-structured interview	March 2015
University Partner	1	Provides undergraduate bursaries for Amos students	Semi-structured interview	March 2015
University partner	1	Supports Amos Bursary with annual conference events and pastoral support	Semi-structured interview	April 2015

Amos Graduates (AG)

The Bursary has a number of students who they refer to as alumni, students who have been through the programme and were part of the early cohorts. I also sought to engage a sample from this group as they were seen as a group with much information and insights into the Bursary programme and have moved from further education through to university graduation. The literature review highlighted that there are few accounts of young black men who have successfully made this journey (Harper, 2012; Rhamie, 2012; Rollock, 2006) and therefore they were seen as a vital group to engage in the study.

TABLE 4:3SAMPLING STRATEGY

Sampling & Recruitment Strategy			
Sampling Strategy	Group Name	Sampling Process	Selection Criteria
Purposive	Amos Cases (AC)	All young people who were members of the Amos Bursary were informed of the study, its aims and were invited to participate. They were informed of the study criteria.	Young men who were part of an Amos cohort from year one to graduates, from African and Caribbean backgrounds. Looked to recruit 4-6 cases in total.
Snowball	Amos Stakeholders – Funders (ASF)	Amos Leaders were asked to make the initial contact with funders, to inform them of the study and their potential participation.	All of the six major funders of Amos Bursary were approached, four agreed to take part.
Snowball	Amos Stakeholders – Committees (ASC)	All committee members were given information at a committee event and emails sent to the committee members on the study and how they could participate. Amos leaders were asked to speak with their fellow committee members and were encouraged to put forward young black men from within the group(s).	Those who had experience of being part of Amos Bursary committees and leadership, including young black men.
Purposive & Snowball	Amos Student Population (ASP)	All students were informed of the research study and how they could participate. Those students who did attend information events were encouraged to pass on information to other students who may not have been in attendance.	All students were encouraged to take part in activities for the wider group.
Snowball	Amos Graduates (AG)	Amos Bursary leaders were asked for the details of members of this group, and to make contact with them where they were difficult to reach.	Those who were part of the first cohort of the Amos Bursary were sought and four out of six agreed to take part.

Amos Student Population (ASP)

Representation from the Amos student population (ASP) was recognised as important for the study and its ability to reflect their views and experiences as much as was possible and feasible. There were approximately 60 members of the Bursary engaging at different levels and the majority of interaction came through the fieldwork and participant observation over approximately a two-year period.

Amos Stakeholders – Funders and Committee Members

As a charitable organisation, the Amos Bursary relies heavily on the support of its funders, both directly through financial support and indirectly through in-kind support such as use of premises for events. It also relies heavily on its committee members, the volunteers who give their time to help run the organisation, and bring a wide range of experience to it. In order to shed light on the social issues that the Bursary is trying to address and learn more about its notions of success and it impact, it was seen as vital to speak with members of these stakeholder groups, who were recognised as being central components of the organisation's network (Alvarez et al., 2010).

General Information Sharing withAmos Members

All members of the Bursary including mentors, volunteers, other students and programme leaders were informed of the study and made aware that I would be conducting participant observation at Amos Bursary events during the study. They were given regular opportunities to ask questions and gain more information on the study and a small number of young men and young women did ask for more information on the study over the course of the data collection period.

Ethics

Taking an ethical approach to educational research is vital as it often involves children, young people, and families who may be facing issues or have previously experienced problems linked to issues of social justice, underachievement, disability, and/or poverty (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). In the case of this study issues relating to race, social disadvantage, and potentially racial prejudice were inextricably linked to the case, and when delving into the depths of individual lives and life-histories, considering how ethical the research practices are during the research planning and recruitment process is paramount (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012; Pring, 2000). Maintaining confidentiality and providing anonymity for participants are both central to this form of research (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012), as well as being aware of the moral commitment that often comes with educational research (Pring, 2000).

Respecting Personal Stories During in Qualitative Interviewing and Data Collection

During in-depth interviews, researchers are asking participants to give up their time and share their personal stories about their lives and experiences, for the purposes of the study (Kumar, 2005). While many will do so because they recognise the importance of the study in addressing a particular issue (Kumar, 2005; Merriam, 2009), researchers must ensure that they respect the time and stories of participants (Pring, 2000; Kumar, 2005). Maintaining confidentiality and following ethical guidelines and protocol are all fundamental parts of social research, but I felt that research that addresses questions relating to issues of equity, with people who are often underrepresented in society, requires an additional layer of ethical consideration into how they can share their stories and the safe space that I wanted to create during the data collection process. Narrative therapy as a practice offers much for anyone listening to and working with stories of marginalised people (Denborough, 2014) and this served as a guide when thinking about creating a safe space during the

qualitative interviewing process. In particular, narrative therapy's 'Storytelling Rights' (Denborough, 2014: p. 8) were taken into consideration and as illustrated in table 4:5, articles 1, 2, and 7 (Denborough, 2014: p. 9) were incorporated into the interview guide.

Safeguarding Young People

The Amos Bursary works with young people aged between 16 and 24, with some coming from home environments with a range of complex needs and issues. It was important for this research to ensure that safeguarding was a priority when interviewing, observing and speaking with young people who may be vulnerable, and impressionable (Shaw et al., 2011). As well as being aware of their vulnerabilities and storytelling rights, it was vital for this study to be aware of its ethical commitments to young people and their families, as well as the safeguarding requirements of Imperial College London. This included seeking ethical approval prior to working with vulnerable groups (such as those under 18), ensuring that the researcher had a valid criminal records check (DBS) allowing them to work alone with young people, and seeking prior consent from parents as well as the young person for those aged under 18 years. Ethical approval was granted on 10th February 2014 by the Imperial College Medical Education Ethics Committee (MEEC) subject to amendments. The committee had a small number of concerns in relation to the anonymity of participants and withdrawal from the study and stated that,

'there should be a line in both the information sheet and consent forms which notes that whilst every effort will be made to anonymise the participants, identifiable images or remarks made by the participants may compromise the degree of anonymity provided'.

Therefore, this was highlighted on all participant information sheets, consent forms, and parent information sheets and consent forms for students under the age of 18. These handouts detailed clearly what the study was and was not, what would happen to their feedback and data, and opportunities to withdraw from the study. Participants were also asked to create a pseudonym and

made aware that any identifiable information would be amended (such as school name, teacher's name).

TABLE 4:4 STORYTELLING RIGHTS AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS (BASED ON NARRATIVE THERAPY STORYTELLING RIGHTS, DENBOROUGH 2014).

Ethical Considerations		
Storytelling right?	Stakeholder group?	Ethical consideration?
Article 1: Everyone has the right to define their experiences and problems in their own words and terms.	Amos Cases (AC) Amos Graduates (AG) Amos Stakeholders –Funders (ASF) Amos Stakeholders – Committees (ASC) Amos Student Population (ASP)	Ensure that all participants are respected and given the time and space to share their views as far as possible, and without fear of reprisal (particularly when in a group environment)
Article 2: Everyone has the right to have their life understood in the context of what they have been through and in the context of their relationships with others.	Amos Cases (AC) Amos Graduates (AG) Amos Stakeholders – Funders (ASF)	During semi-structured interviews, respect and empathy must be given/shown when sensitive information is being shared and informants must be made aware of how this information will be used.
Article 7: Everyone has the right to know and experience that what they have learned through hard times can make a contribution to the lives of others in similar situations.	Amos Cases (AC) Amos Graduates (AG) Amos Stakeholders –Funders (ASF) Amos Stakeholders – Committees (ASC) Amos Student Population (ASP)	Informants must be made aware of the aims and rationale of the study, so that they can make informed choices, but also understand why this form of research is taking place.

Lone Working

The data collection process involved lone working and extensive travelling to different parts of London and the UK to meet with participants and engage with the organisation at key events. With this form of social research it is important to recognise potential safety issues, especially in relation to risks when travelling alone to unfamiliar places such as physical threat or abuse. Therefore, procedures were put in place to ensure that a member of the department was aware of my whereabouts when out in the 'field' and emergency contact procedures were put in place for out of office hours.

Data Storage

Ensuring that the data collected was stored safely and managed appropriately was vital for this study, as with many forms of qualitative research (UK Data Archive, 2011). Nvivo software was used to manage and store interview data and notes collected during the course of study, and this was stored on password protected devices. Memos, notes and interviews were also regularly backed up in line with Imperial College's institutional back-up policy, with interviews also being backed up on an external hard-drive.

4.4.5 Methods for Data Collection

All data collected was from primary sources and were chosen for their ability to shed as much light as possible on the young men, their lived experiences, and their Amos Bursary experience. A pluralistic approach was adopted as this task required the use of methods from a range of social science disciplines.

The Research Setting

This research was conducted in many different settings across England over the course of the data collection period. The Amos Bursary does not have an organisational headquarters and as a result, holds its learning and development, and recruitment events at a range of venues across London. These venues were often linked to corporate supporters but this was not always the case. Therefore, observations and interactions took place at various locations, including Imperial College London. Similarly, my research with the four cases took place in various locations as the young men involved were based in different neighbourhoods within London, with one student studying in the West Midlands, and another who transitioned to university in the south East during the course of our interview period. This required a flexible approach, and interviews took place at times that were convenient for students, including evenings and weekends.

4.4.5.1 Using Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewing is a very common technique in many forms of qualitative research, whether on an individual or group basis (Bagnoli, 2009; Creswell, 2010; Kumar, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Silverman, 2015). Interviews allows social scientists to explore people's pasts as well as areas of their lives that are not always observable, such as their regular school and educational experiences, or their home environment and the social settings they occupy (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 2009). Person-to person,

face-to-face interviews with cases and members of the community under investigation provide an opportunity for the researcher to not only ask questions, but also to listen 'intently to the answers' (Bassey, 1999: p. 81) of the participants, engaging in a sustained conversation, which can be built upon over more than one encounter (Merriam, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews, unlike the structured kind are fairly flexible in their approach and they allowed me to develop an interview guide with a range of structured and less structured questions (Merriam, 2009). They allowed me to develop a number of questions that all respondents were asked to consider, but also gave me scope to explore other areas and engage in a dialogue with the participants rather than fixed structured conversations (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Yin, 2009). Their strength as a data collection method lies in their ability to provide the researcher with the opportunity to analyse how participants make sense of their worlds, providing a window of opportunity through which apportion of the respondent's life can be seen (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Investigating Self-Efficacy and Self-Determination Theory Qualitatively

The investigation of self-efficacy, self-determination, and other social cognitive constructs using qualitative methods is not common (Usher & Pajares, 2009) although the majority of studies have used quantitative methods, often built on the self-efficacy scales developed by Bandura (1992). A limited number of studies have used qualitative methods to explore self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2009; Hibbs, 2012; Butz & Usher, 2015), in particular semi-structured interviews, as a tool for exploring further the sources of self-efficacy beliefs, and the role of the environment in this. Their aim has often been to support teachers, educators and programme planners to further understand what factors contribute to negative and positive self-efficacy beliefs development.

I sought to incorporate questions and topics relating to self-efficacy and self-determination theory in my interview guide with the Amos Cases (AC) group, particularly in relation to the role of the environment in the development of these constructs.

Graphic Elicitation Tools in AC Interviews

Language is a major part of qualitative research (Bezzi, 2006, Silverman, 2015) and often the use of interviewing as a primary data collection tool can lead to an over-reliance on verbal language and communication when we live in a multimodal world (Bagnoli, 2009; Kress, 2011). Including arts based tools into the data collection process can provide the researcher with an opportunity to explore the participant's experiences in a participatory and interactive way (Bagnoli & Clarke, 2010), and can bring rich data into the interview process. Research with children and young people has often utilised visual and graphic tools as a way to engage participants and bring their voice to the fore (Bagnoli, 2009).

The ability to elicit authentic responses was a central element of this study and the incorporation of arts-based methods allowed me to engage with the Amos Cases group, and gain insights into key people and places in their lives without the need to ask them a multitude of questions. It fostered conversation, gave the participant space for reflection and allowed me to stand back and focus more on the participant, not leading the session in the usual fashion.

For this task, I used a tool that originated in the field of narrative therapy called the 'Tree of Life' (Denborough, 2014), which was originally developed by psychologists and therapists working with marginalised children and communities in Africa (Denborough, 2014; Hughes, 2014; Ncube, 2006).

The Tree of Life is a tool that encourages the participant to draw a tree and fill the roots, branches and leaves with information on the significant people in their lives, (teachers, parents, community leaders) both past and present (Denborough, 2014, Ncube, 2006), what they believe their skills are, and their hopes and desires for the future (Denborough, 2014; Hughes, 2014). The purpose of the Tree of Life (ToL) originally was to allow children and families in non-western communities to explore and discuss their experiences of loss and trauma in a non-threatening environment (Hughes,

2014, Ncube, 2006) where they are free to create a personal document that reflects their own thoughts on their life (Hughes, 2014; Ncube, 2006).

As a visual method, the Tree of Life (ToL) allows the researcher to gain immense insight into the experiences of the participant from their own perspective without asking endless questions (Hughes, 2014). As seen in figure three, the ToL explores different elements of a person's background and heritage, as well as their thoughts and opinions on their own skills and abilities (Hughes, 2014, Denborough, 2014) It provides a forum for reflection, and listening, but most importantly for the voice of the participant to come to the fore, which is often facilitated by graphic methods and tools in qualitative research (Bagnoli, 2009).

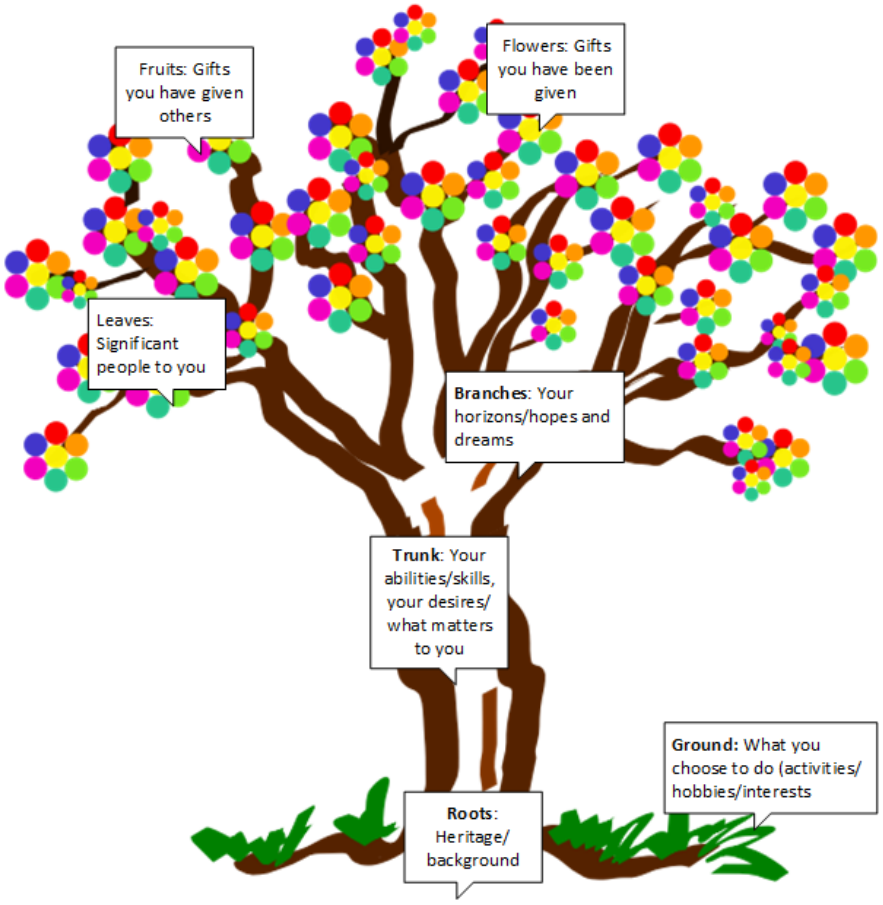


FIGURE 4:2 TREE OF LIFE (BASED ON NCUBE, 2006)

The ToL was used in the case interviews of this study, as a way of exploring the participants' experiences and learning more about the key people in their lives. It also allowed me to gain an insight into how the participant saw themselves particularly in terms of their gifts and talents and the sources of these gifts and talents (Denborough, 2014) which was beneficial in terms of the role of self-efficacy beliefs and self-determination on their educational development.

Observation and Participant Observation

Interpretivist research seeks to understand human actions by observing human behaviour as well as asking questions (Bassey, 1999). Observation is as much a part of qualitative research as interviews (Merriam, 2009), allowing the researcher to gain an insider view of the group's activities in a naturally occurring setting (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Observation can involve being an active participant while simultaneously recording information on the event/practice taking place where possible (Creswell, 2014). However, it can also take the form of being a nonparticipant observer who records notes without engaging in the activities (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). While it could be argued that observations as a research tool is highly subjective and therefore prone to issues of reliability and validity, observing people and practices is an essential tool in the qualitative researcher's arsenal and with preparation and planning it can be immensely insightful (Merriam, 2009; Patton 2002). However, the insider-outsider positioning involved with observation can bring with it issues of consent (Creswell, 2014), and relies quite heavily on the researcher's ability to build a rapport with participants and 'finding some common ground with them' (Merriam, 2009: p. 123).

In this study, I conducted participant observation at Amos Bursary learning and development events over an 18-month period. This allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the learning experiences that were being offered to the young men involved, as well as the different roles and responsibilities of the Bursary volunteers and programme leaders. I was able to gain an insight into

the inner workings of the organisation, becoming aware of the internal political and power dynamics (Saville-Troike, 1982) and observe how the bursary leaders engaged with and supported the young men. However, I had to remain focused on maintaining my position as a researcher/evaluator, as the lines can become blurred in this form of research (Mertens, 2008).

This was aided by my awareness of the potential pitfalls within the use of observation, having spent time beforehand ensuring that I had not only read literature on conducting observations (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009; Saville-Troike, 2008; Silverman, 2015; Yin, 2009) but also ensured that I had a frame of reference and a set of practices for my observations. This included the following:

Researcher's Journal and Field Notes

I kept a journal with my notes on what I saw, experienced and thought of each event/activity I observed throughout the data collection process. This not only allowed me to keep a record of my observations for analysis and future reference, it also provided me with a space to be reflective, to think about my own behaviours and to learn about my observational abilities on an ongoing basis (Merriam, 2009). A written narrative account followed each encounter which as a process allowed me to recount the experience in more detail.

Observing Communicative Events using Hymes' SPEAKING Mnemonic /Model

During development sessions (the planned sessions that primarily made up the Amos curriculum), observing events as communicative events made it particularly useful for ensuring key information was recorded, but also that the subtleties of the practices occurring within the Amos Bursary were also explored (Saville-Troike, 1982; Johnstone & Marcellino, 2010, 2010). A communicative event is a 'bounded entity' (Saville-Troike, 1982, p. 108) that involves a range of rituals and forms of verbal and non-verbal communication within a speech community (Hymes, 1964). Originating from the work of linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes (1964) and his work on the ethnography of speaking (communication), communicative events can involve two people or as many as three hundred

people, it can be brief or extensive, and multiple communicative events can occur within one setting (Johnstone & Marcellino, 2010, 2010; Saville-Troike, 1982). As seen in table 4.6, Hymes created a SPEAKING mnemonic and a set of guidelines to assist the researcher in their observation and analysis of communicative events, (Hymes, 1964, Saville-Troike, 1982).

TABLE 4: 5 SPEAKING MODEL (JOHNSTONE & MARCELLINO, 2010; SAVILLE-TROIKE, 1982)

S	**P**	**E**	**A**	**K**	**I**	**N**	**G**
Setting (and scene)	Participants	Ends (goals)	Act Sequence (order of speech acts, (turn-taking/overlapping)	Key (tone of event – formal, serious, jovial)	Instrumentalities (channel/s) of communication – oral, verbal, written, audio-visual)	Norms (of interaction and interpretation)	Genre (business, social, educational)

I found the SPEAKING mnemonic and the guidance set out in the ethnography of communication very useful when observing and analysing Amos Bursary ambition and development events, as it provided a frame of reference for note taking and understanding what I was seeing, hearing and experiencing (Saville-Troike, 1982). Each event was seen as a communicative event, with the networking post-event event seen as a separate communicative event.

Stakeholder workshops using the PIPA Method

As a charitable organisation, led primarily by trustees and volunteers, the Amos Bursary has a number of stakeholders from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and from different sectors and industries. To explore the inner workings of the organisation and how it was being run, three workshops were held with members of the organisational committees in attendance. Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA) was chosen as a practical method and tool to support these workshops (Alvarez et al., 2010) as it provided extensive guidance on running participatory

evaluation workshops that lead to insightful data on programme theory, networks and notions of success and impact (Alvarez et al., 2010).

What is PIPA?

Developed by evaluation specialists and researchers working in the international development context, PIPA can be used to explore the pathways to impact at the beginning, middle or end of a project cycle (Alvarez et al., 2010). Originally developed to support the practical planning, montoring and evaluation of complex development activities and research, PIPA is a participatory interactive method that engages stakeholders in an action research type fashion, supported by a structured framework (Douthwaite et al., 2008).

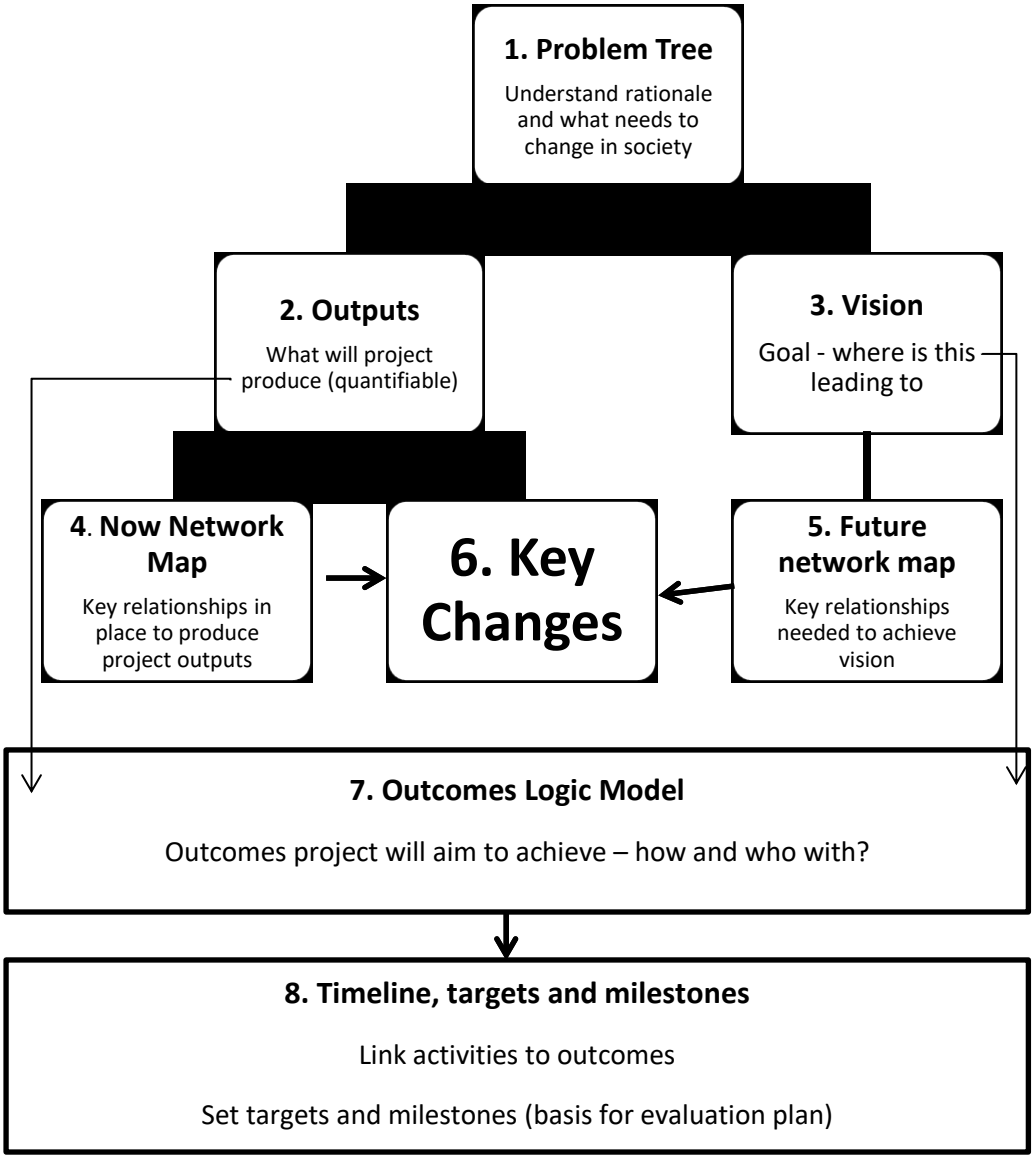
Similar to other work in the area of theory of change (Chen, 2016) and theories of action (Argyris & Schön, 1974), PIPA is based on the premise that people behave on the basis of their knowledge and understanding of how the world works (Alverez et al., 2010). Drawing on past experiences and knowledge gained, people also bring this understanding to their work on programmes and initiatives. As shown in figure 4.3, PIPA uses this as the starting point for its analysis, and follows through with seven key steps that lead to a deeper understanding of the programme aims and achievements. Delivered through a workshop format, PIPA starts with the development of a problem tree, a tool to support the articulation of the problem in society that needs changing/addressing (Alvarez et al., 2010: p. 949), and moves through to the development of an outcome focused logic model and a timeline of targets and key milestones.

Using PIPA to Uncover and Manage Stakeholder Views

This step by step process I found was particularly helpful when working with the Amos Bursary as the range of stakeholders involved in its leadership could pose a potential challenge in a workshop setting. PIPA allows all members of the group to participate and bring their knowledge of their particular area and function to the process (Douthwaite et al., 2008). Notes were taken throughout

the process where possible but the majority were written up immediately after the workshops took place.

FIGURE 4:3 PIPA WORKSHOPS PROCESS (ADAPTED FROM ALVAREZ ET AL., 2010)



Amos Student Research Workshop

Once all interviews were conducted, a research workshop was held with a large group of Amos students (n=45) as a way of cross referencing the opinions and thoughts of the wider student group with the themes that had arisen during the interviews with the Amos cases (AC) and the Amos graduates (AG). This not only provided an opportunity to gather the thoughts of the wider group, but it was also a way of providing evidence that is seen as trustworthy and reflective of the participants' experiences as far as possible (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, 2007).

During a two-hour workshop, students were placed in groups of five students asked to discuss the following question:

What do you feel are the main barriers to success for young black British men?

Images of successful black men were shared with the group as a stimulus to encourage them to think about what a barrier to success could be and elicit responses in a creative way (Bagnoli, 2009). They were also given pens and paper and encouraged to explore their ideas before their thoughts were discussed with the wider group. Everyone was given an opportunity to speak about their personal opinions and my role was to facilitate this discussion to ensure that authentic responses were given by providing an open space for differing opinions, as this can often be difficult when participants know each other (Rabiee, 2004). I took observation notes throughout the session and copies of the group mind maps were taken to support the data analysis process

4.5 Methods for Data Analysis

Overview

Analysing qualitative data involves delving into the large amount of words and other forms of text gathered during the data collection process (Lacey and Luff, 2009) to provide a rich and thick description of what was discovered (Merriam, 2009) and conclusions linked to the study's aims and questions (O'Donoghue, 2007). This analysis can be done using a range of techniques and tools (Silverman, 2015) with the most appropriate method or methods being those that align well with the study's focus and methodology (O'Donoghue, 2007), as well as potentially the background and skills of the researcher (Baxter and Jack, 2006; Lacey & Luff, 2009).

Undertaking this task of analysis and subsequent interpretation is no small endeavour, with the volume of data generated in qualitative research potentially overwhelming the novice researcher (Baxter and Jack, 2006). However, different approaches to qualitative data analysis can provide guidance and support to the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lacey & Luff, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2007) and ensure that this crucial part of the research process is rigorous and credible (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lacey & Luff, 2009).

As a piece of interpretative case study research, data analysis methods were sought that would illuminate the experiences of the young black men involved in the study and those that support them (Larkin et al., 2006), as well as support me as the researcher to make sense of what I have observed and heard, allowing me to provide a rich description that is authentic, credible, and transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

This process was aided by the use of Nvivo, a qualitative software management system. Nvivo was used to organise and manage the large volume of data collected from interviews, field notes and

other forms of textual information. It also supported the analysis process, particularly with the transcription of audio files, and categorising texts into themes (Welsh, 2002).

4.5.1 Using Intepretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to Explore Young Black Male Interviews

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a qualitative method designed to facilitate an 'insider's perspective' (Larkin et al., 2006) and allow for the voices of participants to be heard through the research process (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2007). With roots in qualitative psychology, this method supports the researcher to make sense of the world(s) of the people they are researching, from their perspective, exploring their perosnal experiences and perceptions on key events, people and objects/symbols in their environment (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

With links to phenomeonology and hermeneutic interpretation (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith, 2011), IPA involves understanding and interpretation, but access to the insider's view involves a double hermeneutic (Geertz, 1973), where access is granted through the researcher's interpretation of the participant's interpretation of their social reality (Geertz, 1973; Smith & Osborn , 2007). Often conducted in case study research and through the medium of semi-structured interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Smith 2011), IPA involves more than merely descriptive activity (Larkin et al., 2006). It provides the researcher with a structured but not restrictive step by step process leading to this rich interpretation (Larkin et al., 2006; Smith & Osborn, 2007), starting with the analysis of the first case interviews and moving through to further cases, connecting and clustering themes (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

IPA as an analysis method was used in this study to analyse the interviews conducted with the Amos cases and graduates. Its focus on illuminating the voices of the participants (Larkin et al., 2006), and

its roots in qualitative psychology and interpretative case study research (Smith & Eatough, 2006; Smith, 2011) aligned seamlessly with this study's approach, and its iterative nature provided an organic but thorough process for exploring and analysing individual experiences and stories (Smith & Osborn 2007).

4.5.2 Analysing the Organisation in Society using the Framework Method of Analysis

Framework analysis (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994) is a method that was developed originally to support applied policy research (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Often having specific aims, and the need to provide recommendations for policy and practice, this analytical method provides clear steps and processes for the researcher to follow, providing transparency and credibility for stakeholders (Lacey & Luff, 2009). Framework analysis allows the researcher to analyse data post-collection or during the data collection process (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009) but provides five key steps leading to interpretation. These are:

1. familiarisation;

2. identifying a thematic framework;

3. indexing;

4. charting; and

5. mapping and interpretation (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994: p. 312).

The Amos Bursary is a third sector organisation with a range of stakeholders from funders to beneficiaries, situated within an ecological environment that involves a range of social policy issues relating to education, community development, and equality and diversity. Framework analysis it

was felt provided the appropriate model for analysing the data gathered during the interviews with Amos stakeholders, the PIPA workshops, and my observations and engagement with the wider group. It also takes into account the knowledge gathered from the literature review process which involved policy papers and academic articles written for a policy arena (Gillborn & Mirza, 2000).

4.5.3 Developing an Index

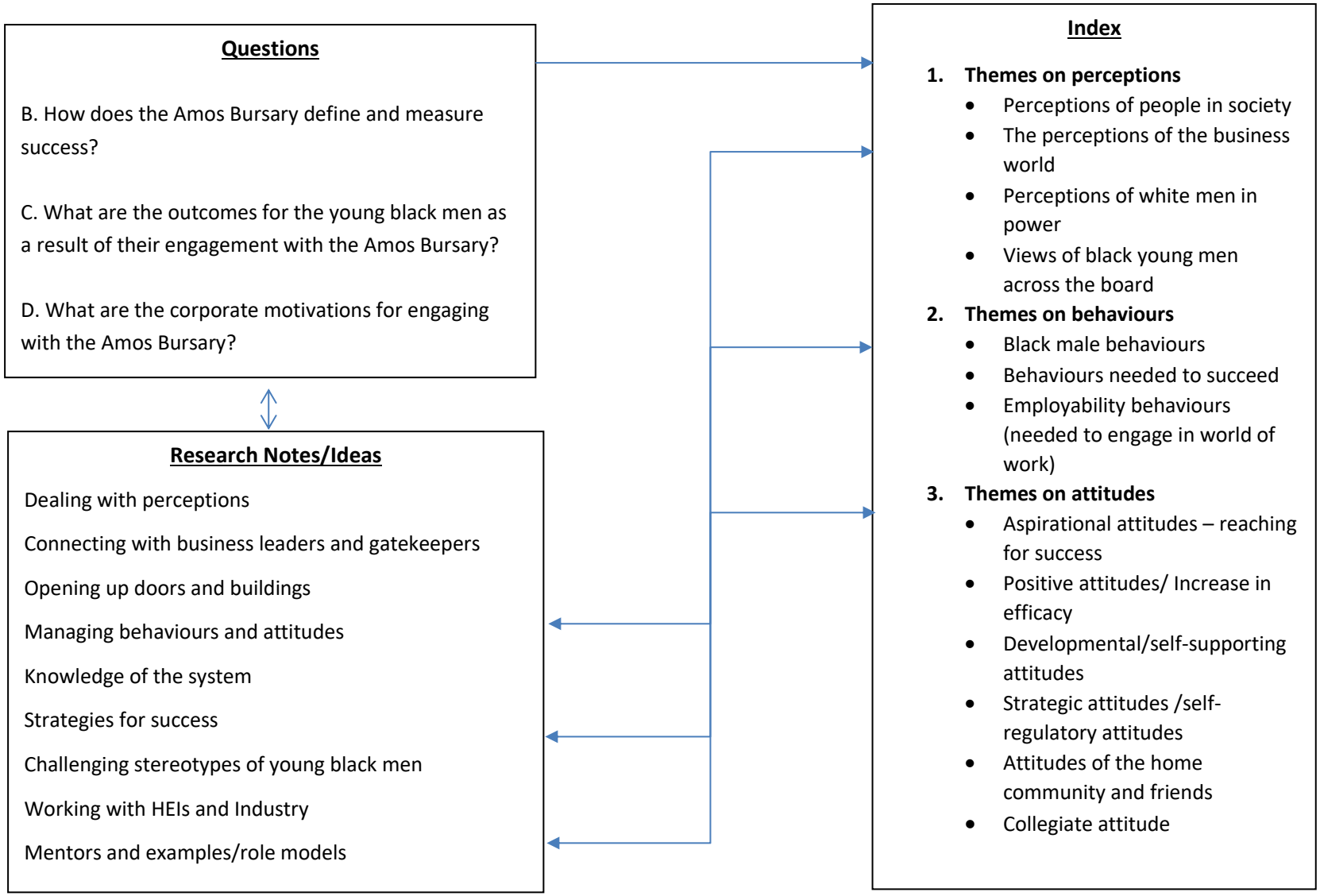
The framework method supports the analysis of qualitative research in a systematic way, and allows the researcher to identify the central themes from the data (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Developed to support qualitative data analysis in the field of applied social and policy research, it allows for the incorporation of a priori knowledge which is often a key part of why a particular social intervention, policy or programme has been created (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In this study, the framework method was used initially as a way of exploring the range of data collected on the Amos Bursary as an organisation, from interviews, discussions, meetings and observations. It was also analysed and interpreted using the theoretical framework for the study.

Creating an Index for Data Analysis

Initially, a process of familiarisation and thematic note taking was undertaken, bringing all of the data together and connecting it together. This was very important as the data collected on the Amos Bursary was collected over a two-year period and due to the exploratory and interpretative nature of the study. Following on from this, a thematic framework was developed identifying the key issues, themes and concepts (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994). Initially, this was somewhat descriptive however, through an iterative process this became more refined and an index was created which was then applied to the data as a whole. This was also cross-referenced with the main research questions in

this area. As seen in figure 4.4, a framework was developed linking the key themes and ideas together with the research questions to produce an index with three central theme areas.

FIGURE 4:4: CREATING AN INDEX FOR ORGANISATIONAL DATA



5 Analysis and Findings 1: The Black Male Experience

Overview

The aim of this chapter to illustrate in detail how the qualitative data gathered during this study was broken down and analysed to create themes, and how these themes were then connected to present the findings. In the last chapter, the data analysis methods were introduced and outlined, and the first part of this chapter will build on this, detailing how the large corpus of data was brought together to create meaning (Silverman, 2015). Following on from this, findings from the research conducted directly with the young black men will be presented (case interviews and research workshop).

Preparing qualitative data for analysis

Generating insights from the raw collection of audio, written notes, images and drawings collected first starts with preparing the data to be analysed. In relation to the qualitative interviews that took place, this involved the transcription of all audio files into a written document, so that they can be analysed and interpreted (Silverman, 2015). This is the most common technique used in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to look at the interview as a whole (Silverman, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2007) and look across a series of interviews. Similarly, reading through all notes taken during observations and any documents produced by participants, provides the opportunity to become familiar with the data once again (Smith & Osborn, 2007). For some this is an ongoing process that occurs throughout the data collection period (Silverman, 2015), however as a lone researcher, this was not always possible (Saldana, 2013) and summative review of the data provided

the opportunity for re-acquaintance with elements of the study which took place earlier in the study (O'Donoghue, 2007).

5.1 Analysis of the Black Male Experience

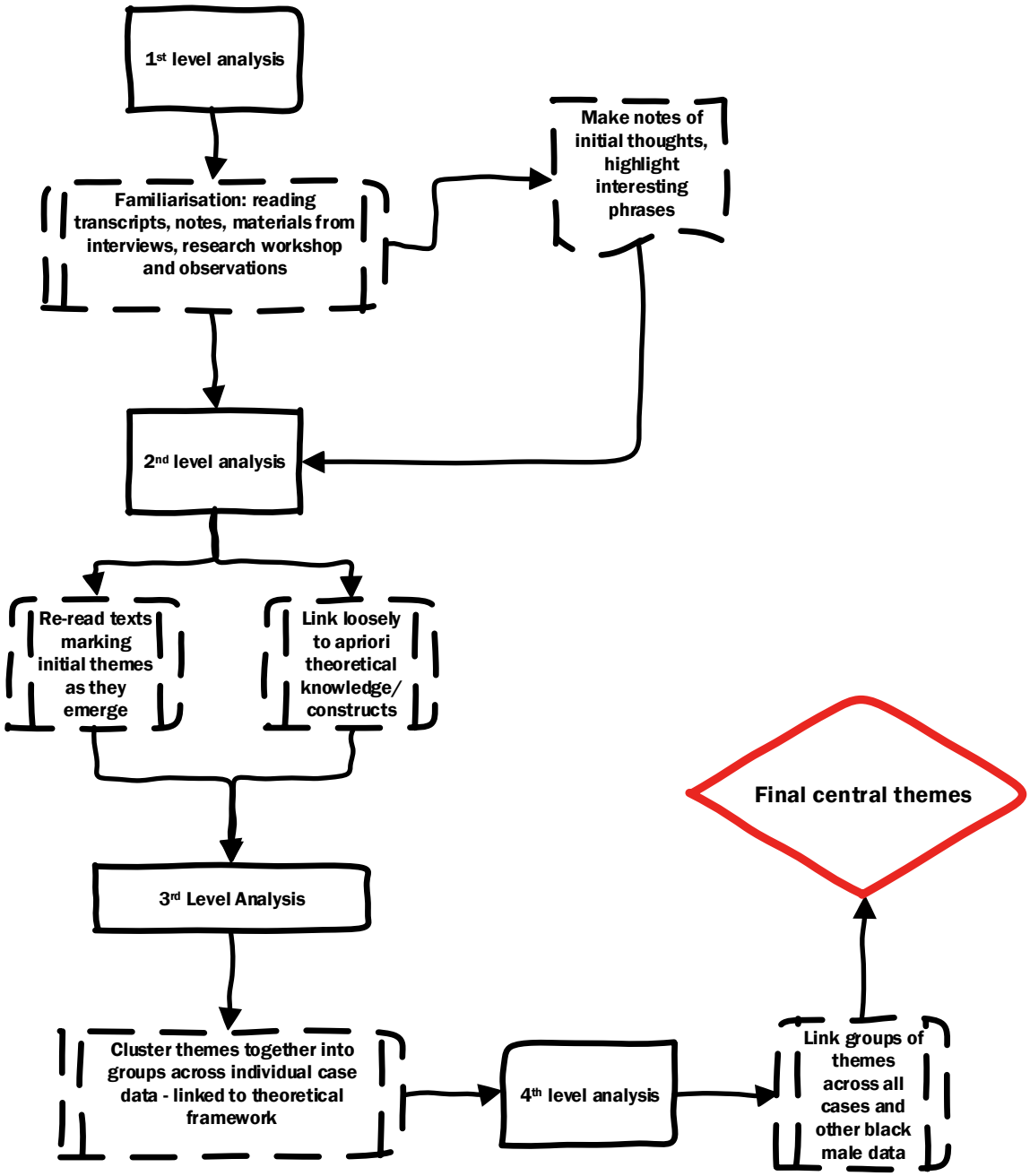
A central tenet of this study was to explore and make sense of the experience young black men have while part of the Amos Bursary and how this interacts with their developmental pathway towards a graduate career. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was the primary method used to analyse the data gathered directly from the young black men, as it was seen as a method that allows the researcher to explore what the world feels like for their participants, what it feels like to be part of it and it not, not necessarily how they see it (Seale, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2007). With a focus on sense-making, IPA recognises a 'chain of connection between people's talk and their thinking and emotional state' (Smith & Osborn, 2007: p. 54) and encourages the researcher to explore cognition and sense-making in an interpretive way (Larkin et al., 2006). Undertaking this form of analysis allowed me to delve deeply into the research data but with the support of a structured process, as uncovering what something feels like to a participant not only takes time and understanding (Larkin et al., 2006), but also requires the researcher to 'interpret people's mental and emotional state from what they say' (Smith & Osborn, 2007: p. 54). This process is facilitated in IPA by encouraging the researcher to read and re-read the interview transcripts and other forms of data collected (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Seale, 2012; Smith & Osborn, 2007), exploring each case in detail before creating overarching themes.

During the first reading/exploration, notes are made (mainly in the margins of the transcripts or in a reflexive diary) highlighting interesting language used or phrases that stand out (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Smith & Osborn 2007), and general thoughts. However, judgements and conclusions are put on hold during this initial stage, with the researcher not engaging critically with

the text (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008), just familiarising themselves with it in the first instance. This is then followed by the re-reading of the text to identify the patterns and themes and to represent the essence of the interview(s) as far as possible (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008; Larkin et al., 2006). Following this, other cases are explored following the same process, with themes connected and woven together following the analysis of all cases.

IPA was incorporated into an analysis framework to explore the data collected from the interviews with the Amos cases (n=4), Amos graduates (n=4) and the research workshop with a larger group of young men (n=45) interviews. I began by reading the transcripts from the interviews with one of the Amos cases, becoming familiar with the transcripts, tree of life diagrams and my reflective journal notes. Following on from this, I then re-read each interview transcript looking for common topics and emerging themes, supported by the study's theoretical framework. As illustrated in figure 5.1, this process was primarily inductive but somewhat deductive (Seale, 2012), as while the data was first looked at openly without pre-determined themes in mind, it was subsequently explored with the theoretical framework as a backdrop, using headers relating to key themes and concepts of the theory to group and refine the themes. While IPA encourages mainly inductive thematic analysis, it was felt that Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) was broad enough to allow for theoretical links and ideas to emerge from the data, without restricting the data analysis process.

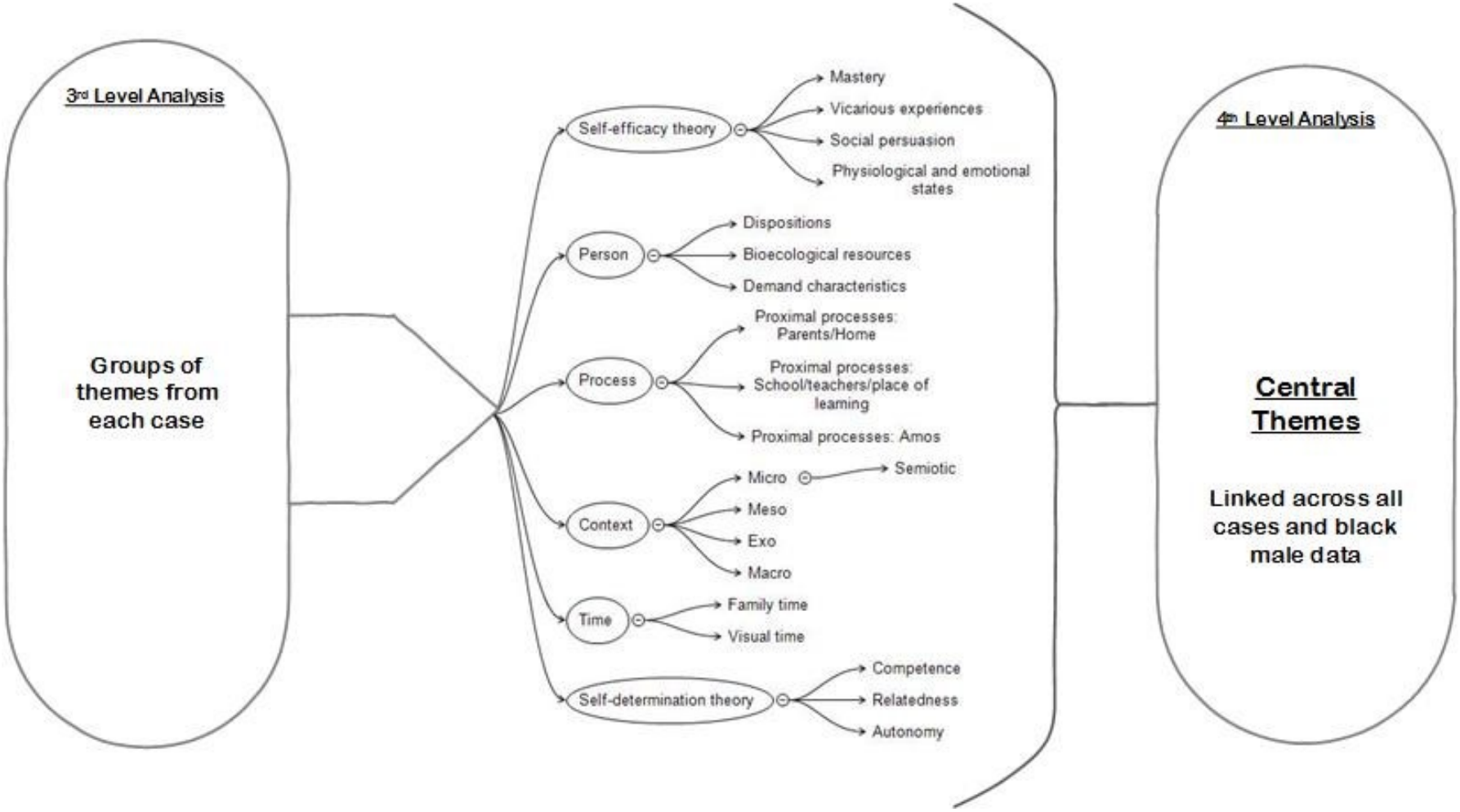
FIGURE 5:1 DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS - BLACK MALE EXPERIENCE



Supporting the Analysis Process with Theory

After the initial familiarisation and re-familiarisation with the data, theory was used to support the development of key themes. As shown in figure 5.2, a model was developed based on Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and incorporated constructs such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995) and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This was used primarily during the third level of the analysis process and provided a backdrop of support for clustering themes and identifying central topics from across the data.

FIGURE 5:2 3RD AND 4TH LEVEL ANALYSIS THEORETICAL CODING MODEL



5.2 Making sense of the black male perspective

Overview

This section puts forward a number of findings relating to the direct experiences of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, which were drawn from the in-depth case interviews, graduate interviews, a research workshop and observations conducted throughout the data collection period. These findings will be presented on relation to the key themes that emerged from the data, in line with the study's theoretical framework. Central to this study was the opportunity to put forward the voices of young black men in relation to their educational experiences and career aspirations, and this section aims to present these perspectives as they were interpreted. As mentioned previously, this process of interpretation is multi-layered (Creswell, 2007; Larkin et al., 2006) and the objective here is not to present their thoughts and ideas verbatim, but rather to present my making sense of their making sense of their world (Geertz, 1973; Smith & Osborn, 2007).

Firstly, a summary of the participants with some background information will be presented, followed by the four major themes that emerged as the most central and relevant to this study. These findings are linked to study's theoretical framework, particularly Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), and the role that the environment played in the development of self-regulated behaviours such as self-efficacy and self-determination. Moving from the external to the internal, the findings will be presented to reflect how the different layers of the ecological system in conjunction with their Amos Bursary experience affected the opportunities, behaviours and attitudes of the young black men involved in this study.

To clarify, this element of the study sought to respond in particular to the following research questions:

The overarching question:

1. What are the developmental changes that young black men experience as a result of their participation in the Amos Bursary?

Guiding sub-questions:

a. What are the issues/barriers facing Amos Bursary young black men on their journey towards a graduate career?
b. How does involvement with the Amos Bursary interact with the individual young man's developmental pathway?

5.2.1 Summary of the Young Black Men involved in the study

Amos Cases and Amos Graduates

Four young men aged between 17 and 20 (at the time of starting the interviews) were recruited to become part of the Amos Cases (AC) sample. Interviewed three times each over a period of 12-18 months, the purpose of recruiting this sample was to allow for the development of a rapport with a smaller number of students who would then provide the researcher with an in-depth understanding of their experiences inside and outside of the Amos Bursary. Similarly, as the Amos Bursary works with approximately 60 students who are aged between 16 and 24 and are working, studying and living across the UK, it was seen as more practical and attainable to keep track with a small cohort of participants than with a larger group.

To allow for as much insight as possible into the role that Bursary plays in the lives of the young men they work with, and what the potential struggles and barriers are for young black men at different points in their educational and career journey, the four cases recruited were of different ages and stages. Linked to this was the recruitment of the Amos Graduates (AG) sample, four participants who were part of the early cohorts of the Bursary. While they have now moved on and are no longer

receiving support from the Bursary, many of them have moved into employment and were seen as a group that could provide great insights not only into the development of the Bursary, but also the ecological career landscape for young black men post-university. Four participants were recruited from this group, and were interviewed once each during a longer two-hour interview session.

As seen in table 5.1, ethnicity was seen as an additional layer that may be influential in the experiences of the young black men, as black African boys attain higher than black Caribbean boys at GCSE (Department for Education, 2013, 2016), and therefore a spread of both ethnicities was sought from the AC and AG participants.

Amos Student Population

In order to gain an insight into the thoughts, views and experiences and the Amos student population (ASP), a research workshop was held with 45 participants. Over the space of two and a half hours, young men were put into groups of seven and asked to discuss what they felt the barriers were for young black men in their position and then this was discussed with the larger group. With the freedom to speak openly, this provided me with an opportunity to hear their views and cross-reference these with the themes and ideas that were emerging from the interview process.

TABLE 5-1 AMOS CASES AND GRADUATE CHARACTERISTICS

Pseudonym	Participant group	Age (at beginning of interview process)	Ethnicity	Education level/status	Neighbourhood/home location	Current location (during research)	Number of years involved with the Amos Bursary
Tim	AC	20	Black British African	2nd year undergraduate	South East London	South East London	2
Ralph	AC	17	Black British Caribbean	A-Level student	North West London	North West London	1
Paul	AC	19	Black British African	2st year undergraduate	North East London	West Midlands	3
Matthew	AC	18	Black British African (born in Nigeria)	1st year undergraduate	South London	Essex	2
Thomas	AG	22	Black British Caribbean	Graduate – in employment	North London	South London	5
Peter	AG	22	Black British African	Graduate – self-employed	North London	North London	5
Joshua	AG	22	Black British African	Graduate – in employment	East London	East London	5
Shaun	AG	22	Black British Caribbean	Graduate – in employment	North West London	Central London	5

Reflections on the Researcher's Role and the Research Environment

Having the opportunity to conduct research with young black men on their educational experiences was both exciting and daunting. As a member of the black British diaspora, I felt well placed to speak with, listen to and learn from young black men about their lives, thoughts and experiences. I also recognised the responsibility that came with this when taking their accounts and presenting them as text. This 'onus on the writer to reliably and authentically represent their subjects' (Seale, 2012: p. 499) presented a challenge when condensing the vast amounts of qualitative data collected into comprehensible findings. However, my focus on reflexivity throughout the process, as well as the influence of literature I had read on storytelling rights (Denborough, 2014) supported me through the process.

This included being reflexive about my potential biases, my role as a woman in relationship to the young men, and the impact of my own educational experiences and my institution on the way the young men interacted with me. As a young black woman from a multi-ethnic family, and a member of the 'black middle class' (Rollock et al., 2012) educational excellence has been highly favoured in my environment and my parents recognised the value of education its role in allowing me to be 'socially mobile and…acting as a possible barrier against racism in their children's future' (Rollock et al., 2012: p. 5). Therefore, when reading through the data, listening to accounts and reflecting on individual experiences, I was aware of my views of education and regularly reflected on my thoughts and conclusions.

While the participant observations took place at locations set out by the Amos Bursary organisation, the interviews conducted took place in a range of settings that were convenient for the participants. This included university campuses, coffee shops and online Skype interviews. The aim was for the interviews to take place in relaxed environments and for the participants to feel comfortable and therefore I allowed them to suggest the location that best suited them. This also provided the

opportunity for me to observe participants in their own contexts as this at times included their local coffee shop, or their university campus.

Throughout the data collection process, I was struck by the willingness to get involved and cooperate by all of the young men I spoke with and dealt with. Sharing their experiences and stories as a way of supporting the research project and potentially helping other young black men seemed to be their main priority and this I felt contributed the quality of the data collected. It is important to recognise that young black men are not a homogenous group, they all have different experiences and desires however, as one of the most stereotyped groups of students (Harper & Nichols, 2008), they recognise the need for their voices to be heard as so few studies have focused on their positive experiences and success (Harper & Nichols, 2008; Harper, 2012).

5.2.2 Arriving at the four central themes

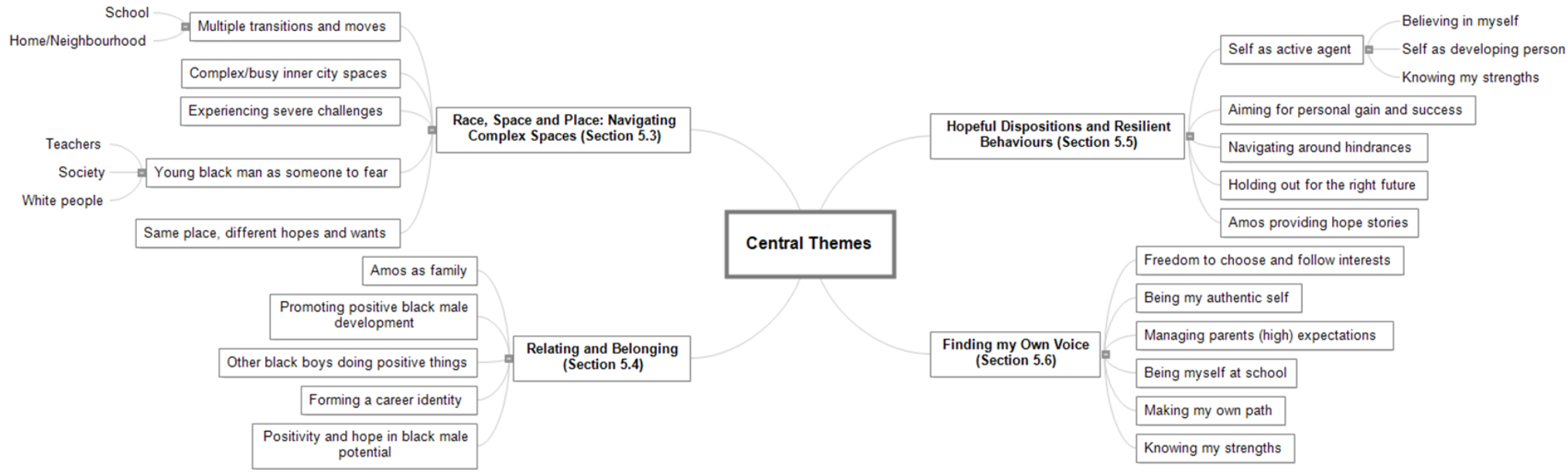
The processes of reading, re-reading, exploring, and listening enabled me to become familiar with the data and aware of the recurring themes and ideas. As shown previously (in figures 5.1 and 5.2), this four-level analysis process was supported by a theoretical coding model, and ensured I was not only familiar with the data but also that this was also analysed through a bioecological lens, as advised by Bronfenbrenner (2005) for ensuring that both person and context are given equal status within the study. Once the final central themes were configured, these were mapped across Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, which supported the analysis further, ensuring that the findings remained focused and within scope. Analysing large amounts of qualitative data on people's lives presents the researcher with large amounts of interesting themes and topics. However, remaining focused on the study's questions and interpreting through the key theoretical lens of the study ensures that the researcher can bring their expert knowledge to the fore, which further supports the development of high quality analysis and findings (Yin, 2009).

As seen in figure 5.3, a central themes map was developed to illustrate how the many themes created during the final levels of the data analysis process (figure 5.2) were grouped into four central themes (all with sub-themes). This map which showcases the core themes that arose from the data collected from the young black men and during participant observation. The four central themes that were identified are:

1. Race, space and place;
2. Hopeful dispositions and resilient behaviours;
3. Relating and belonging;
4. Finding my own voice.

We will now explore the four central themes, beginning with themes most related to the external world around the young black man, and moving through to the internal, exploring individual behaviours, dispositions and experiences. While these themes are distinct, similarities and linkages between themes will become clear as they are explored.

FIGURE 5:3 CENTRAL THEMES MAP



5.3 Race, Space & Place

The young men involved in this study had many different early experiences and for some this involved multiple ecological transitions or environmental transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) which not only impacted on their educational experiences and development but also on their idea of what it is to be a black male (Yull, 2014). Moving schools, local areas, and even countries added to the complexity that already exists for young black men in education, especially for those of black Caribbean backgrounds who are three times more likely to be excluded from school than the whole school population (Department for Education, 2016). Similarly, experiencing the exosystem and the macrosystem as a young black man brought with it a range of feelings, frustrations and anxieties that many of the participants of this study discussed at various points.

> 'researchers inadvertently cast the Black poor as a homogenous social category and overlook the ways in which space, time, and social class moderate the experience of being Black and the consequent norms, values, competencies practices, and subjectivities that derive from that experience' (O'Connor, Lewis & Mueller, 2007: p. 543)

As discussed by O'Connor, Lewis & Mueller above, it is not enough to look at black-working class students as a homogenous racial group but rather to explore the ways in which race, space and place interact with one another alongside other factors to gain a more rounded understanding of their experience. Therefore, this section seeks to explore the role of the ecological environment/context in the development of the young men involved in this study, looking at how the spaces and places around them interacted to influence their understanding of blackness and their black identity.

5.3.1 Multiple changes and transitions – linking the chronosystem and the microsystem

When interviewing the Amos Cases (AC) and Amos Graduates (AG), and listening to the Amos student population (ASP) share their life stories I was struck by the many changes and transitions some had experienced so early on in their lives, along with some of the adversity they had faced at a young age. For some this was a result of family break-up and parents separating, and for others it was a result of dangers in their local neighbourhood. The young men showed a strong sense of resilience in their ability to deal with the changes and issues they faced prior to starting the Amos Bursary, but they also spoke of the benefit they got from the Amos Bursary in terms of opening up their worlds beyond their local environment and supporting them to continue to move forward with their education and career.

Disruption in The Microsystem – Family Separation and Changes

Life events in the external environment such as family separation, illness or death can have an impact on an individual's development through the resulting changes in the relationship between the person and the environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). For some of the young men involved in this study, issues such as parental separation or death of a parent resulted in them moving to a new house, in a new geographical location, mainly from outside of London to London and this had an impact on their social and educational experiences as a young black man. Moving to a new neighbourhood and starting a new school brought with it its own challenges for the students to overcome, alongside the socio-emotional difficulties of dealing with family issues (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1994).

BBW: How were you're school experiences?

'Secondary school was a bit hit and miss because I came back from Nigeria…

BBW: Okay, so did you go to Nigeria when you were younger?

Peter: When I was seven and then I came back from Nigeria when I was 14.

BBW: Okay. So did you go to primary school here?

Peter: I was born here, went to nursery and reception here and then moved to Nigeria and came back here when I was in year nine... My father was travelling a lot at the time and had a job in the Nigeria so the logic was that we would all go to Nigeria so that we could spend more time together a family. I did well at first in primary school and was able to move to senior school at age nine, but I started to struggle a bit as things progressed. And when I got to senior secondary school in Nigeria I was struggling with my grades, and then we came back to London during that summer and it was a big change again because Nigeria was so far ahead but then I started to do better here and breezed through my SATs and to some extent my GCSEs, and I was an A, B, C student. We came back to London because my Dad felt that I wasn't doing so well even though my sister was excelling without any revision. Then we all came back, but he stayed in Nigeria travelling and so it was just us and my mother…

Peter experienced multiple changes and transitions in his ecological system from an early age and had to transition between not only different countries but also different education systems. These changes all had an impact not only on his grades and academic performance but also on his temperament, and later in the interview he referred to himself as an 'angry teenager'. He was still able to achieve in his exams despite these changes but they undoubtedly affected his educational experience.

During an interview with Thomas (AG), we discussed his school experiences and his development so far. He spoke of some of his behavioural issues in school at a young age but did not mention his father much. As the interview drew to a close and we explored the last few questions, I began to

discover more on the impact that his father had on life, not only socially and emotionally but also geographically.

BBW: 'Do you feel that you have had more opportunities than your parents?'

Thomas: 'I would like hope so, that's one of the main reasons why my mum moved to London, cos she grew up in the West Midlands and probably didn't have as many opportunities as she would have liked and probably wanted more for her children. So I hope so, I feel that I have.'

BBW: 'How about your Dad? Did you grow up with your mum and dad together?'

Thomas: 'I grew up with my mum and dad together when I was really, really young, then they split up and my mum came to London for a fresh start, umm new life kind of thing. And, umm my dad passed away when I was in year eight of school.'

BBW: 'Okay (pause). So up until then did you have a relationship with him?'

Thomas: 'Yep every weekend, he'd come and pick me up and watch football and do stuff…'

BBW: 'Your Dad passing away in year eight must have had a big impact on you at that young age…'

Thomas: 'Yea, another knock, I was young and he was young and it was really impactful.'

BBW: 'It must have been really impactful as you were the oldest, did you have anyone to talk to?'

Thomas: 'Not really, I was really angry at the time…'

BBW: 'So this picture makes a lot more sense to me now. So when you were in the Amos Bursary in year 13 and you asked for male role models, was that linked to the fact that the main role model in your life wasn't there?'

Thomas: 'Yea.'

Changes in Thomas's chronosystem meant as result of family separation meant that he had to move house, move school and start again in a new place. Losing his father in early adolescence also meant that he lost his male role model and increased his desire to He also spoke of the behavioural

problems he exhibited when he started school in London and the transition that he had to make to a new system before finding his way.

> **Thomas:** 'And the school system where I lived before was different to London, I didn't know the system in London and my mum didn't know the system in London'

He felt fortunate to have school teachers that wanted to support him during the time of transitioning to a new area and see him succeed;

> **Thomas:** 'My year five and year six teachers called a meeting with me and my mum and sat me down and said that they don't want me to go down the normal path of young black boys in Hackney, I can see that your gifted you just need to listen more.. You're going to secondary school soon and if you continue with this behaviour you could get excluded…'

His teachers made it explicit that they felt that there was a potentially dangerous path for young black boys from his new neighbourhood, where race, gender and place meet at the intersections and can affect a young person's outcomes (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Yull, 2014).

5.3.2 Maintaining high expectations in the face of inner city complexity and adversity

Growing up in inner city London as a young black man can bring its own dangers and challenges (Akinti, 2009), particularly for those from low-income households growing up in areas with increasing levels of violent crime and knife attacks (Office for National Statistics, 2017). However, the young men involved in this study managed to maintain high expectations for themselves and a desire for more in their lives despite the challenges that their local areas presented.

> **'**I guess there are cases because of the areas that black people grow up in which mean that they have issues later in life; but if there's that lucky one opportunity to find something that they're really interested in then nothing regardless of environment can stop them achieving great things I guess' **(Matthew -AC).**

Matthew exhibited his strong belief that people can achieve their goals if they are presented with an opportunity that they can latch on to. Mentioning that he comes from a family of strong people with a motto of 'excuses belittle a man', he was aware of the dangers that can arise from the environments black people live in, but that he took the opportunities that arose through his church involvement in choir and his school's debating society to develop his confidence and grow. He continued this outlook throughout his time on the Amos Bursary, taking opportunities as they presented themselves such as an opportunity to go to the Gambia and take part in a science project.

Accessing opportunities to experience life as a black male outside of their local environment was also seen as important to Peter, who felt that the Amos Bursary presented an opportunity for him and others like him to do this;

> **BBW:** What have you valued the most from your Amos Bursary experience?
> **Peter:** 'Hearing the stories of some of the people they brought in, it opened up my eyes to a world beyond Hackney, umm because obviously Hackney in the 2000s, then again a lot of London was dangerous place to be for youth, you know reckless! But seeing this other side of life that was out there for people it blew my mind but I only heard about it from my mother, but then I could see it and why she was so adamant that I was part of the bursary. And knowing that they had someone from the House of Lords as a founder and the reason why they set it up did so much to my mind it literally made me want to come to the meetings and meet other black boys who were part of the journey; you know you weren't alone, and I guess meeting other guys from Hackney who I had never met before but we lived quite close to each other was nice; people aspiring to be more than their environments.'

Maintaining strong beliefs in the future and a desire to succeed despite environmental challenges was also presented in Law et al., (2012), who found that the young black men they had studied were determined to succeed,

> ‘Even in the face of overt racism and unequal access to the schooling system, this was not entertained as an excuse for low attainment. With the boys placing a firm focus on their own autonomy and ability to take control of their own destiny, through the belief that if they solely worked hard they could achieve’ (Law et al., 2012: p. 19).

5.3.3 Being Black in Different Spaces - Changes in The Semiotic System

The young black men that I met during this research study navigated a range of spaces during their time on the Amos Bursary that challenged their ideas of what it means to be black, and how people from within their community and from outside expect them to act and engage with the world. Making sense of being black in a semiotic world where the visual, material, symbolic representations of being the other (Evans and Hall, 1999) are all around and interacting with you on a daily basis was an area that some students grappled with continuously, whereas others mentioned it briefly. What was clear from them all was that their ecological environment played a significant role in their experiences as young black men, be it how they engaged with settings or how willing they were to engage.

> I’ve had some issues with my friends since I’ve started uni. Like I planned to go to an art gallery with my girlfriend and one of my friends was like why are you going to an art gallery? Black people don’t go to art galleries’ **(Paul –AC).**

Paul’s experiences at university and through his Amos Bursary experience had led him to want to explore a range of cultural activities that his friends from home and other black students on campus at his university felt were culturally inappropriate. The notion of staying black or being true to your racial identity has been discussed by other academics (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Sewell, 1997; Marsh 2013) and the notion of having to act white in order to succeed (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986),

albeit a contentious argument has some bearing here. This could be an example of a fictive-kinship tie (Taylor et al., 2013), where there are no actually family ties but a social/cultural tie that black students are expected to have as members of the same racial community in a predominantly white space.

> 'Yeah like I had an interview for an internship at a top insurance firm and nearly turned it down because it was a predominantly white place and I thought that I wouldn't fit in. But that is not good as it is a great opportunity and they were very encouraging' **(Research workshop participant)**.

For this student, navigating a predominantly white space was something that he would have strayed away from despite his passion to work in the industry and for a successful firm. Feeling a sense of belonging and the ability to fit into the landscape was seen as important and not wanting to be alone (Carter, 2007).

Similarly, Joshua found navigating the corporate world as a working class black man challenging at times, with issues of social and cultural fit in the workplace at the forefront of his working experience:

> **Joshua (AG):** 'From external forces, family, in all honesty, everybody looks at me like I've made it! And personally to me I don't think I've made it, I'm still a very small fish in a huge ocean. It's very apparent when you walk around and see things…When people are sometimes having discussions about TV programmes and what they watch on a Friday night they may watch Jonathan Ross and will have a big conversation about what happened on Jonathan Ross on a Saturday night but I', just sitting there quiet because I don't watch Jonathan Ross.'
>
> **BBW:** How have you found this, how do you find yourself in a mainly white dominated corporate environment and navigating these two worlds?
>
> **Joshua:** I think it's about being true to myself and sadly, there are other black friends that I've found in the City that live a certain lifestyle and are interested in things that there are colleagues and clients are. Now I'm an avid fan of trying different things and explore different boundaries and things than where I'm from, like if you like chicken you only ever go

> to a restaurant and eat chicken but I like to explore different things. That being sad, I'm not gonna go and play Golf all weekend because my boss plays Golf, just to get in his good books. Personally for me there are limits for me to how much I will diverge away and into a different type of lifestyle. I'm happy to try different things and do different things but I still remember where I come from, I have the core values I've learnt from where I come from and some of the beauties of growing up in Hackney, I feel like I can live anywhere, umm I just need learn how to and I have been, if I feel safe maybe around drug dealers or whatever it may be stereotypically in my area why should I feel shy or nervous in front of a corporate? What's more scary somebody who could possibly kill you or somebody who could possibly give you a job? You're smart enough to make those parallels without having to sell out yourself'

Joshua here is speaking very openly about his experiences and feelings navigating his local neighbourhood and the dangers it brings versus navigating the corporate world and its challenges. He refers to staying true to what he sees as important, namely being himself and not trying to act white (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986) but this is not an easy task and his reflections showed that he struggled to feel confident speaking at work with colleagues on social topics.

What to Wear? Clothing and Black Identity

As part of their Amos Bursary experience, the young men were able to meet and build connections with a number of black people who had achieved success in their careers and this encouraged them to strive for their goals. However, for some there seemed to be an image in the back of their minds that they were battling with and that they were constantly aware of. This image or representation of a young black man at times influenced what they did but also how they thought white people saw them, even if they had no evidence of this.

> 'Sometimes I like to dress like I really don't care, and sometimes I try to dress smart but other times I really don't care and then I get those looks… Like if I'm going to the library I might just want to wear a tracksuit, I don't want to have to dress smart' **(Paul – AC).**

Speaking of the way people respond to him based on his attire, Paul spoke of the effort he felt he needed to make in some environments so that people did not judge him and see him in a way he did not want.

> 'I often will come into work, I live in Surrey and I am the only black person on the waiting platform every morning. Most mornings I look professional but sometimes I don't… yesterday I had a training day and I walked in in my jeans, my jacket and my hat and I guarantee that no one thinks that guy is a leading lawyer in London. You know there are plenty of times when the last seat on the train is next to me but people don't sit in it. All these subtle forms of being a black man in the UK which even if you reach the highest points are issues and this is why one of the things I feel so strongly about is visibility point. I want people to see that we're here, I want people to know that I'm here and that I've worked hard to be here, that I want to people to know that I have influence in this organisation…' **(John: Amos Corporate Supporter – Global Law Firm).**

Speaking of the ways in which people see him based on what he wears and the impact this has had on him, John highlights here the impact of the visual image of a black man and how racial stereotyping interact with one's daily experiences (Hall, 2013). In order to counteract this, he has developed a desire to be visible in his corporate work space and open the doors to other people of colour where possible.

5.4 Relating & Belonging

Introduction

> 'Over the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate external environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as proximal processes' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 6)

Proximal processes in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model are centred on the relationship between the developing person and their microsystem and mesosystem, with these processes being generated by the experiences and interactions that occur in their immediate surroundings. In the previous section, the role of the environment, both place and space was explored in relation to its impact on the racial identity and experiences. Similarly, it explored the ability of the young men to stay focused on their own life goals and desires despite the challenges they faced, and how the Amoa Bursary supported them in understanding their choices and abilities. This section will take this further by introducing the processes of relating and belonging to the black male experience, and in particular how the context of the Amos Bursary facilitates these processes supports them to become their 'agentic self' (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006: p. 61). Due to the interpretative nature of the study, some literature will be introduced in this section that may not have been explored previously but that became relevant as the data emerged.

Relating to Others = Sense of Belonging

Human beings possess a range of personalities, temperaments and skills which impacts on their desires and goals for their lives (Deci et al., 1991; McHale et al., 2012). They also have basic innate needs in relation to personal fulfilment and Self-determination theory (SDT) states that these basic needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 1996; Stump et

al., 2010). Following on from the previous section where the individual's voice was discussed, relatedness and its impact on the young black men was identified as an integral part of their Amos Bursary experience and a contributory factor in their educational development.

The need to relate to others and role of developing a sense of belonging has long been discussed as an important factor in relation to human motivation and development (Maslow, 1943; Herzberg, 1966; Bowlby, 1988; Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1996) and this was recognised as particularly relevant for the young black men involved in this study. Being members of a minority community within a mainstream society can bring challenges for young people, especially when these communities have been affected by issues of poverty, crime, violence and ethnic related inequalities such as racial discrimination (Spencer et al., 1993). This can at times create hostile and complex environments where the community members feel that they receive little positive attention or support and only negative media attention linked to psychopathologic behaviours or violence, (Spencer et al., 1993).

The young black men involved in the Amos Bursary come from a range of ethnic backgrounds across the African diaspora and while not all were born in the UK, the vast majority are British citizens who have grown up in the UK, mainly London. Often living in busy inner London areas that are ethnically, socially and culturally diverse, they spoke of the challenges faced in their communities and seeing peers move into paths linked to gang-related behaviour,

> **BBW:** You hear people speak about Peckham, Brixton, Clapham Junction and areas like that and gangs, issues relating to gangs. Is this anything you have experienced or aware of, or have you not experienced anything like that?
>
> **Matthew (AC):** I think it's true to some levels cos I grew up in an estate when I lived in Clapham and there was a bit of gang violence. But I always thought it was weird because the same boys that I grew up with, that I used to play football with, they're different from me. They went down the lines of going into a gang mentality or whatever, and whilst I stood firm and I went and learned and I'm still standing firm, and I'm not sure as some of them had the

same background as me so, they had the same types of families- two parents families, while others may not have had the same so I'm not sure how it was for them. I don't really understand how it works, how some of them fell by the wayside, cos I do remember when I was growing up there were the older boys who were in the gang and they'd still be friendly, they still my friends today but I can see what they're doing is wrong still, but they're not…I don't know it's just…

BBW: I understand what you mean, they're still normal boys even though they're in a gang, it's not like they're these other boys?

Matthew (AC): Yeah, they're normal …they're still the same little boys I used to play with but I can't understand why they've chosen to go down that road, I don't understand how people choose to go down that lifestyle, it's so weird for me, yeah I don't know.

In this extract, Matthew is speaking of his experiences growing up and how he was different to the other young men that he grew up with. He did not understand their choices and while he saw them as young men just like him originally, they had somehow not been able to stand firm and move away from the troubled path that was available in their community.

Being a part of the Amos Bursary supported young men like Matthew who want to be surrounded by positivity and support and it has acted almost as an extended family, providing them with support, advice and a larger group of young black men to tap into whom have had similar experiences and have similar life goals.

'There are feelings of envy from peers due to their own insecurities regarding failing' **(Research Workshop Participant).**

5.4.1 Amos Bursary as Extended Family

'The belongingness hypothesis is that human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships. Satisfying this drive involves two criteria: First, there is a need for frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people, and, second, these interactions must take place in a

context of a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare' (Baumeister & Leary, 1995: p. 497).

Having positive interpersonal relationships with other members of the Bursary and its wider stakeholder group was mentioned by the young men involved in this study as an important part of their Amos Bursary experience. In their seminal paper on the need to belong and its role on motivation, Baumeister & Leary (1995) present the belonging hypothesis, and the importance of positive relationships in a stable context, and this has been influential in other work on social competence and motivation in education and careers (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Stump et al., 2010). While the young men involved in this study come from a range of family backgrounds with varying levels of support, Amos Bursary was often referred to as *family* when I asked about their experience and especially the role the organisation played in providing opportunities to network and connect with positive and encouraging people.

> **BBW:** What do you feel you've learnt the most from your involvement in the Amos Bursary?
>
> **Paul (AC):** Getting a taste of a world you're not part of, it's helped me now, networking, how to conduct myself in an interview, practical speaking sessions, voice projection, job applications.
>
> **BBW:** What does the Bursary mean to you?
>
> **Paul (AC):** Family – surrounded by so many young boys, seen each other progress and grow. If I need help I have contacts, I have a network; what a big network to have!

Here, Paul is discussing how the Amos Bursary has provided him with a network of support as well as opportunities to learn and develop his personal and practical skills. Referring to Amos as family, he talks of being surrounded by other young men and watching them grow and develop similar to what you would expect in a successful family. Self-efficacy theory tells us that vicarious sources of efficacy are the second most powerful source of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1995) and Paul is describing here how he has seen other young black men like him succeed and grow and this has been meaningful for him. This is a stark contrast to his earlier experiences growing up in an area where young black men

engaged in aggressive behavioural activities and he at times followed suit for the status and profile that this brought;

> **Paul (AC):** Everyone wanted to be cool; like the older students a lot of them were involved in stuff, like in school and out of school, they always used to get involved in stuff, getting in trouble;
>
> **BBW:** When you stuff, do you mean gang stuff, or drugs?
>
> **Paul (AC):** Gangs and a bit of drugs as well, yeah they were involved in quite a lot and had a lot of respect, so, like with girls and in school, so I sort of looked at that and thought I could do what they do and in my area a few of them lived in my estate as well, so it just seemed like the norm, and I think I was picked on by an older student when I was in year seven and it kinda got to me so I thought you know what I can't take this anymore so I decided to stand up for myself and for people in my year. So I used to get into fights and a lot of trouble in school but I wasn't bothered, I liked the status of it, being at the forefront of it all…
>
> **BBW:** You liked it?
>
> **Paul (AC):** Yeah I liked it…
>
> **BBW:** So what changed, what stopped you from going further down that road?
>
> **Paul (AC):** My parents really, I knew that I would get in trouble.

Prior to Paul's parents intervening and moving him from his environment, he saw a very different type of black boy every day and as he remarked the negative behaviours seemed like the norm and he related to this. Joining the Amos Bursary allowed him to connect with different young black men with different wants, desires and behaviours and this undoubtedly had an impact on him.

While family and parents played a pivotal role in the development of the young men involved in the study, their lack of social resources or capital (Bourdieu, 1985) was mentioned as a barrier to achievement and success.

> **BBW**: Is there a particular element of the Bursary that you enjoy the most?

Tim (AC): Support network, haven't really needed it yet, but it's there if you need clothes, support, public speaking support, things like that.

BBW: What does the Amos Bursary mean to you?

Tim (AC): Family – I always want to maintain and relationship with them and I always want to give back, I think it's good, I want to get to a place where you can give genuine support.

The Amos Bursary as extended family provided an additional layer of support that at times moved between the microsystem and the mesosystem for the young men and due to the length of the programme, it fulfilled the first and second criteria of the belonging hypothesis (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) by providing regular opportunities for interpersonal interactions in a stable environment with others who cared for the individual's welfare and development. This supports their sense of relatedness and belonging and in turn this sense of relatedness supports them to feel more self-determined and motivated (Deci et al., 1991). This also encourages positive efficacy beliefs which can act as a coping mechanism and support resilience for students who may be at risk of failure due to their context (Hamill, 2003).

5.4.2 Practical support to deal with hurdles and setbacks – mentoring and advice

As discussed earlier, the Amos Bursary provides a family-like network for the young men to get involved with and this supports their sense of relatedness and belonging. This is also occurring during a time when the students are gaining increased autonomy over their lives, and their engagement with the Bursary also supports them to find their own voice and know more about their own life goals and wants. Both autonomy and relatedness are seen as two of the three basic needs for human functioning put forward in Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1995) with the final need being competence. Competence in this sense is similar to efficacy and relates to,

'skills, action, and the ability to master the environment' (Stump et al., 2010).

While it should be said that the majority of young men involved in the Amos Bursary have all achieved well at GCSE, A-Level and degree levels, and have varying degrees of support to from their parents, schools, churches and/or communities to learn and develop, their Amos Bursary experience appears to provide them with real, first hand practical advice and support to develop their understanding and mastery of the environment in relation to the education and careers, as well as provide them with financial support and in-kind support.

During the research workshop, many of the participants spoke of a lack of practical and financial support as potential barriers stopping them achieving the full potential. Here are some quotes that were written down by participants during the workshop which were particularly relevant:

'Lack of funding to sustain an interest in extra- curricular activities'

'Lack of parental engagement due to anxiety regarding income'

'Easily deterred from higher education due to fear of debt'

'Looking for short term ways to earn money (drugs, fraud)'

All of the quotes above refer to money and finance in some way and the impact that a lack of money has on choices and access to opportunities, and the dangers of getting involved in negative behaviours and activities in the pursuit of money. The relationship between poverty, social exclusion and crime amongst young black people has been recognised as an issue (Home Affairs Committee, 2007) and the during the research workshop, the lure of quick financial wins was mentioned as a potential barrier to educational and career success.

While the Amos Bursary provides the students with a Bursary of £500 per year while at university (as well as support to access other financial support), it also provides the young men with the support to develop their competencies and abilities in order that they can master their environment and

achieve their goals despite their lack of financial resources, with a group setting where they feel that they relate and belong. This is done through their mentoring experiences and learning and development events which arguably support the development of positive efficacy beliefs and the cognitive competence to grow and develop in a dynamic and challenging context.

Developing Cognitive Competence through Workshops, Mentoring and Events

Having the ability to understand a range of arguments and make decisions based on reflective thought processes is an important element of cognitive competence (Kuhn and Dean, 2004). The Amos Bursary supported their students to gain an awareness of this through the outward facing work such as workshops, events, networking and mentoring.

> **BBW**: What have you learnt the most from your time with the Amos Bursary?
> **Peter**: I think the importance of a profile – how do you carry yourself in and out of a room, who are you? You know, what kind of a person are you? What are you showing yourself to be? Know what you're about… What you're trying to do, where you're trying to get to. The Bursary has instilled the importance of persona in me, to be the best at whatever I'm doing, present yourself in the best way possible so that people have no choice but to be invested. It promotes self-investment, if you invest in yourself others will invest on you. This is very important for self-confidence, for my self-confidence…

Here, Peter is discussing how his involvement in the Amos Bursary has encouraged him to reflect on his life, his goals and his desires. In his interview, he spoke of becoming more reflective, challenging himself and trying new things as a result of his involvement in the Bursary, and he also spoke of investing in himself so that others would invest in you. This focus on self-development and reflection could be seen as him become more critical in his thinking and developing his cognitive competence.

There are a number of interrelated definitions of cognitive competence, linking it to areas of critical thinking, creative thinking, logical thinking and reasoning and practical intellectual skills (Piaget, 1962; Vygotsky, 1962; Sternberg, 1988; Gardner, 1993; Sun & Hui, 2011). In relation to youth development, cognitive competence has been recognised as an important aspect of their

development (Catalano et al., 2004) and has been closely centred on critical thinking and creative thinking skills (Sun & Hui, 2011). Critical thinking or criticality in this sense refers to,

> 'the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualising, applying, analysing, synthesising, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, or communication, as a guide to belief and action' (Paul, 1993: p. 22)

Critical thinking must be purposeful and goal centred and here the focus is on using these critical skills as strategies to help you reach you desired outcome or goal (Sun & Hui, 2011).

> 'We see it in our recruiting, and when I've unpacked it and it's informed part of our strategy and what we look at, but broadly speaking we have two aspects of getting into our organisation, one is your grades and one is what we call commercial awareness, broadly speaking. People of colour generally do well on the grades, those who apply. Of course, there are grades issues there too but where people of colour typically fall down is on the commercial awareness. And that's all about understanding the world of being a lawyer, the world of business, but also being able to speak about it, being able to synthesise thoughts and articulate in a way that people make cogent arguments and that's the bit where people of colour in my experience internally fall down and going back to our programmes, one of the reasons why I'm so focused on the themes we have is that we build on that… **'(John: Amos Corporate Support – Global Law Firm).**

Creative thinking or creativity involves novel ideas of value and it utilises a range of other thinking styles to allow the autonomous individual to expand their thinking ad identify new ways of problem-solving (Sternberg, 1988; Sun & Hui, 2011). It essence it involves,

> 'stretching one's spectacles, generating and evaluating multiple ideas and alternatives, and generating novel and practical ideas. Similarly, creative thinking entails critical thinking, because adolescents have to be sceptical enough to criticise their own ideas so as to initiate positive changes in their thinking. It is believed that after continuously practicing these thinking styles and skills, adolescents would learn to welcome changes and innovations, to think globally and progressively rather than conservatively, and become habitual in generating novel and realistic ideas that help task completion, problem solving, and decision making' (Sun & Hui, 2011: p. 3).

Sun and Hui (2011) highlight the reciprocal nature of criticality and creativity and the role that they both play on developing skills and behaviours that allow the person to think wider, be open to challenge and change and be capable of applying their intellectual skills in new ways to achieve goals and complete tasks. This is what cognitive competence is centred on within the youth development field and what is seen as a vital ingredient in a successful youth development programme (Catalano et al., 2004).

Bronfenbrenner emphasised that cognitive competence should include a recognition of the role of the ecological environment, highlighting that,

> 'An ecologically valid definition of cognitive competence emphasises the *cultural significance* of the processes and tasks in which mastery can be achieved: that is how these processes and their outcomes are perceived by members of the prevailing culture' (Bronfenbrenner 2005: p. 129).

Within the Amos family, the young men are supported and encouraged to develop their cognitive competence and through their use of intensive learning workshops on exam success, networking on career planning, and activities on using creativity in business, the Amos Bursary provided opportunities for the young men involved to develop their cognitive competence.

Their ability to align their intellectual skills with their life goals was an area that they explored throughout their time on the Bursary and they recognised the importance of thinking differently and being challenged in their development. It also provided them with an opportunity to challenge them and think critically about their careers and developmental pathways, and what was important and fundamental for their lives.

5.5 Hopeful Dispositions and the development of resilient behaviours

Many of the young men presented hopeful beliefs about the future and spoke very little about the disadvantages they had faced in their lives. As they described situations that many would find difficult to navigate past, little acknowledgement was given to how these complexities and difficulties could have thwarted their future lives and opportunities. Bronfenbrenner reminds us that each individual is born with their own disposition but also that the environment has a role to play in the growth of their personality and their outlook on life (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a, 2005).

Being hopeful or having hope could be defined as,

> 'a positive, motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)' (Snyder, Irving and Anderson, 1991: p. 287).

Having the right motivational state to overcome barriers and plan successful pathways through adversity is part of having a hopeful disposition and for the students involved in this study, it appeared to foster a sense of resilience which in turn provided support to the students through times of struggle and feelings of uncertainty. Sources of hope were identified from the analysis of the data collected from the Amos cases, Amos Graduates the Amos student population, these will now be explored in more detail.

5.5.1 Supporting the development of a resilient sense of efficacy

The microsystem is the immediate environment that surrounds the individual, and where proximal processes, the engines of development are harvested and grown (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Despite the difficulties found in the neighbourhoods and homes of the many of the young men I spoke to, they were able to find hope and inspiration from people around them, sometimes through things that people said to them, and other times through the sacrifices made for them, which in turn fuelled their desires for more for their lives. Prior to joining the Amos Bursary, much of this hope was found in their microsystem from family and friends, and at other times from teachers.

Shaun spoke of the support and encouragement he received from home to be a good student but that it was also important for his teachers to also play a role in encouraging and supporting him to make choices and even strive for greatness.

> **Shaun (AG):** Yes, well my Media A level, I did really pretty good in Media Studies, so my Media teacher was like, yes, you should push this one for A-levels because you are quite good at it. I did have an English teacher, who never specifically said I should go for this or that. At the time, it was our English GCSEs and we didn't have a proper English teacher, so it was big English GCSE and we were falling by the wayside because we had so many substitute teachers, and it was an all-boys class, you can imagine a bunch of fifteen year olds without really any teacher, once we got, our form tutor, our part time form tutor, he became our English teacher, it had a massive effect on not just our English but on the rest of our GCSEs, because the thing was, we can actually be special, we can be good or we can be great, we can choose, it's up to us. And I think that was it, that was a moment, I was like yes, this is positive…
>
> **BBW:** So that teacher had a different mindset, is that right, or had an impact on your mindset?
>
> **Shaun (AG):** Yes, I always felt that teachers, it's difficult to criticise teachers because the teacher only gets a day, but they don't really give you that time you need, if someone is doing good, they will focus on them, if you're not doing well, you don't want to try and do well, then you're not going to do it, but at the same time, 15 year olds or 16 year olds, they

> don't really know what's the best for them, they need someone with more experience to kind of help shape their mind-set, put them on a better course, and I think that's the kind of, the teacher I am talking about, clearly he just kind of said you guys can do this, you guys can do better.

For Shaun, education and school was something that his family saw as 'positive' and he was seen as a good at it. However, the experience of a new teacher encouraging him to decide on how good or great he wanted to be resonated well with him and encouraged him to strive for more. This teacher it could be said was supporting the development of a resilient sense of efficacy in the boys in this class, by challenging and encouraging them in difficult circumstances. To remain focused on your goals in the face of difficulty, uncertainty or other environmental demands requires a strong and resilient sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1995).

> 'Those who harbour a low sense of efficacy become more and more erratic in their analytic thinking and lower their aspirations, and the quality of performance deteriorates… In contrast, those who maintain a resilient sense of efficacy set themselves challenging goals and use good analytic thinking which pays off in performance accomplishments (Bandura, 1995: p. 6).

5.5.2 Sacrifice and Change in the Microsystem

Shaun felt that he was able to continue through his A-Levels and on to university partly as a result of his good relationships with some teachers and the support they gave him, with his renewed focus on being great and positive.

However, for some, their relationships with teachers and school were not always positive and in some cases they felt that their race had a major part to play in this. Paul, a final year undergraduate who was a first-year undergraduate when we first spoke, had many transitions in his school life moving from Nigeria to the UK during his early years, and then moving from a secondary school in North London to another secondary school in the North-West of England, and then back to North

London. The first in his family to go to university, he had multiple changes in his microsystem in relation to schooling which had a major impact on his learning and development. His first secondary school experience was a predominantly black one, in a school where the large majority of pupils were young and black, and where 'you could see the teachers fear of you through their eyes'. This context was a stark change to his schooling in North-West England where he was one of two black boys in the school and where he felt that people had an image of him as a young black man from London that was negative.

> **Paul (AC):** So, the teachers were very (pause) they were nice, but not like they pushed you or anything, I pushed myself. It wasn't like Paul you need to do this, I had to push myself, like Paul you need to work. Plus, I was the only black person they saw, so they had like the general stereotypes about London, and they would reference like umm… Kidulthood (slight laugh) …
>
> **BBW:** (slight laugh) Okay.
>
> **Paul (AC):** Like have you ever seen a guy with a shank, blaa blaa blaa, stuff like that. So, stuff like that used to get to me, so I wanted to kinda portray myself as a positive, so I stopped like, cos I used to speak a lot of slang to them, even though they're not from London, so sometimes I changed the way I spoke, and decided to be good, like academically;
>
> **BBW:** So, you felt like you wanted to show them a different image?
>
> **Paul (AC):** yea, yeah,
>
> **BBW:** Okay,
>
> **Paul (AC):** Yea, I wanted to show them that yea I'm smart like, because I might walk this way and talk like that, doesn't mean that I shouldn't be here. So, I started to work hard, started to study, yea. I think that when I started to like, pick up, yeah started to focus more.

This form of stereotype threat, a situation that 'threatens one with being negatively stereotyped, with being judged or treated stereotypically, or with the prospect conforming to the stereotype' (Steele 1997: p. 614) often affects black students and other underrepresented students (Aronson, 2004; Steele, 1997) and can have ramifications for academic performance. In this instance, Paul decided to fight against the stereotype and show that he was a capable student in his new

predominantly white setting. This may have been influenced by the sacrifices his parents had made for him to attend this new school and their attempts to move him away from troublesome factors in his home microsystem;

> **Paul (AC):** 'Since year 7 yea, but they'd had enough then, I wasn't really behaving well. Like middle of year 7, I started to mix with the wrong people, like in and outside school. Cos I used to live in North London and my mum used to work late shifts and when she used to come back it was like 11pm, and Dad used to work on the underground, and would work late and come back like 11pm. So I used to be out late, hanging around with the wrong people, fighting. And obviously I was going through that teenage stage as well, trying to discover who you are, and I was getting into a lot of arguments a lot of fights…'

Paul recognised his parents desire to give him a new experience and change his outlook on life, despite the constraints of their working patterns. One of the central premises of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory was that a parent's occupation and working context can have as much of an impact on their development as the child's actual ability due to the impact that this has on the household (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Paul's parents worked extremely long hours and as he mentions above, this had an impact on his behaviour and how he spent his time after school, prior to his move. However, when he was able to recognise the sacrifices they had made to send him to another school and his behaviour began to change;

> **Paul (AC):** So, I looked around and thought I don't really want to come here, but they kind of convinced me and I didn't really have a choice anyway. So, I didn't want to go there really because I was settled. It was very different, I got into trouble on the first day, I got into a fight on the first day cos a guy spilt milk on my blazer and I didn't really like it, and he was being silly, laughing and he didn't say sorry or anything. But that was like the last day I got into trouble at that school. I had to go and see the headteacher and I thought mum and dad are paying a lot of money for this…

Paul's parents were working around the clock to save money to send him to school out of the area and this change in his microsystem created a turning point in his development trajectory.

5.5.3 Vicarious Sources of Hope and Efficacy through Hope Stories and Narratives of Success

Finding hope through the life stories and narratives of others was a key feature of many of the interviews and the Amos Bursary was often mentioned as the main avenue for hearing these stories.

> **Paul (AC):** After a standard day at school, then go to a bursary event, then like wow! This is what I need to do, a reminder of what I need to do, loved it. Events with esteemed people then you're like damn not far off. Then you realise the privilege of it.

Paul here is describing his reaction to the events and workshops he experienced through the Amos Bursary and how he enjoyed hearing from 'esteemed people'. He comments on feeling that he was not too distant from achieving what some had achieved as he listened to their narratives and this vicarious source of efficacy played a motivational role as 'social models' (Bandura, 1995: p. 3).

Some had seen and been influenced by people prior to joining the Bursary, such as a family member or a member of their church community. For others, they felt that they were being prohibited from hearing stories of successful people who had made it out of poverty and who had navigated barriers to achieve their goals and felt that this was something that was being controlled by 'them'. During the research workshop the following comments were made:

> 'they wouldn't tell us that the Chairman of Microsoft is a black man'

> 'A lack of identity due to a little/no understanding of our history (positive), that we were Nubian kings and queens'

The reference to 'they' came forward throughout the research workshop as a group of people or the powers that be who are controlling the narrative and messages that young black men here and see. This could be a reference to the macro-and exo- systems, where mass media messaging is created and filtered down into the rest of the contextual landscape (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). When thinking about the macrosystem, Bronfenbrenner reminds us that;

> ‘The macrosystem consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso- and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other extended social structure, with particular reference to the development ally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in such overarching systems’ (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 101).

Building on Vygotskian theory, the premise of the macrosystem is that it influences by both defining and limiting/delimiting the opportunities for learning and development in a particular microsystem, as it has an impact on the structures that are embedded within it. From the comments made above, it could be deduced that the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary feel that the macrosystem they are embedded within does not promote and support their identity development in a positive way, and somehow seeks to prohibit them from gaining a positive sense of self. This could be linked to the prevalence of news stories regarding young black men that relate to criminal behaviour and crime (Cushion et al., 2011).

In their study of media representation of young black men, Cushion et al., (2011) found that out of 499 news stories they explored relating to young black men, 66.9% related to crime and of the 13 front page stories from their sample, 12 related to crime (Cushion et al., 2011: p. 43) and the other news story was of a footballer scoring a winning goal. This was comparatively a lot higher than stories relating to all young men (of which 51.4% related to crime). They also found that only across the majority of news stories only five labels were attached to young black men, all relating to negative behaviour with the most used label being ‘gangs’. The large proportion of negative stories undoubtedly correlates to the prevalence of issues relating to crime and gangs facing young black men and black communities (Cushion et al., 2011). However, the dominance of this narrative is arguably having an impact on the way young black men in the Amos Bursary believe they are seen by society at large.

'There's a lack of focus on the positive, only if we're doing some kind of sport' **(Research workshop participant)**

Tim (AC):' I live my whole life trying to break barriers and challenge stereotypes, in society and the media'

In contrast to this, the stories of hope and success that the young men from the many speakers they meet through the Amos Bursary appears to balance out the disheartening stories they are accustomed to hearing in the mass media.

Thomas (AG): When I joined the Amos Bursary, I asked for male role models…

BBW: Was that anything to do with your father passing away when you were in year 8 and that your main male role model wasn't there?

Thomas (AG): Yeah… Whether you look this side of the pond or the other side of the pond, not many positive things are put out there, umm one of the Bursary boys Tim was in the Mirror, that was great, got it and photocopied it… There are positive messages out there but they are probably deep inside and if someone was scanning the paper they probably wouldn't see it. But they'd probably definitely hear about a stabbing or anything negative that's happening.

BBW: Right, I understand. So are there any famous or well-known people that you particularly look up to or admire?

Thomas: Well one of the things about the Amos Bursary are the networking events because you don't necessarily see famous people, well they're probably famous in their sector but probably not famous to any average person growing up my age. And you get to see them and hear them talk, so going through the Amos Bursary, Charles Bradley was one that jumped out to me he grew up in Hackney, went to my school as well and…

BBW: Is Charles the guy that does study skills stuff?

Thomas: Yeah, he's amazing, I enjoy hearing him talk and the stories about how he's gone through his life. And Michael Eboda from the Powerlist, he was one of the first people to do a talk at City Hall. I don't know where he grew up but I've seen him at my local west Indian shop, popping out his BMW and buying Caribbean food,

BBW: Just normal,

Thomas: Yeah.

In this section, Thomas is explaining how listening to the stories of black and minority ethnic men and women, as well as other members of society who have managed to overcome barriers and achieve their ambitions had an impact on him and was what he valued most about the Amos Bursary. The first person he mentioned Mr Bradley was in fact a white working class man from his local neighbourhood who had managed to succeed in his life and he stated that he enjoyed hearing him talk about his life. This form of vicarious hope was referred to regularly during the data collection process by other participants and also identified as one of the most valued elements of the Amos Bursary. This illustrates quite clearly self-efficacy development at work and self-efficacy theory states that seeing those similar to you succeed provides a vicarious source of efficacy beliefs;

> 'The impact of modelling on beliefs of personal efficacy is strongly influenced by the perceived similarity of to the models. The greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive are the models' successes and failures' (Bandura, 1995. P. 3)

The young men can both see that achieving their goals and aspirations are possible, as well as learning 'effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands' (Bandura, 1995: p. 4) when hearing these stories. They exhibit the perseverance and strategies needed to navigate hurdles and this form of modelling can have real impact on individual perceptions of themselves.

5.6 Finding My Own Voice

Overview

> 'The cognitive, physical, and social changes associated with adolescence have important implications for how young people view their capabilities' (Schunk and Meece, 2005: p. 77)

The young men involved in the Amos Bursary are moving through adolescence to early adulthood during their time on the Bursary and as a result are experiencing multiple changes internally and externally. The reference from Schunck and Meece (2005) above highlights that these changes impact on how young people see themselves and their capabilities, which is influenced by a range of factors including their families, schooling, peers and peer networks, and local context (Schunk and Meece, 2005). Moving through this space towards a place where they know themselves more, their capabilities more and their ambitions and goals often involves moving away from their families and parents' desires and wants, towards a place where they are operating as a more autonomous individual.

The young men involved in this study all had different relationships with their parents and I often heard comments along the lines of '*all parents try to do their best for their children, but...*' Teenage angst, development changes and growing into an individual were re-occurring themes in the study and parents' ability to support their young black men through this stage varied depending on their own experiences, capitals, and beliefs (Elder, 1995; Schunck and Meece, 2005). This section seeks to explore issues relating to individual development over time, developing an increase sense of self, and the ability to create your own career path and achieve educational and career goals, and how this experience is influenced by their Amos Bursary experience.

5.6.1 Growing and Knowing

> 'During early and middle adolescence young people are vulnerable to social standards for behaviour…and strongly influenced by cultural stereotypes about the capabilities and traits of different social groups.' (Schunk and Meece, 2005: p. 78)

Growing and developing in a multimodal world is part of adolescence today, where mass media images are all around and information seems to be overflowing from every direction (Kress, 2011). Deciphering these messages and images and deciding on what you want for yourself and your life is no easy task for any young person and the young men involved in this study have done this with the added dimension of being part of a minority group that is often negatively stereotyped (Arbuoin, 2009; Steele, 1997). In the reference above, Schunk and Meece (2005) refer to the influence of cultural opinions and stereotypes about the abilities of different groups in society and this is something that was mentioned during the data collection process.

Adolescent angst and pressures were discussed during the study and as the young men reflected on themselves, some referred to how they used to behave during this phase:

> **BBW:** So you went from all boys to nearly all girls?
>
> **Pete (AG):** Yeah. I wanted to go someone else, but my mum said go to this sixth form as my little sister was at the school and I should take care of her. And then my friend, the same guy from my road got sent to the same school as me, so most friendships were us guys sticking together for our sanity. It was a huge change getting used to talking to females on an everyday basis, the changing and transitions in different behaviours going from guys to men, adolescence you know, the spectrum of all that as well. I'd say that to this day I am probably better at making friends with women, striking conversations and maintaining friendships. So if I was to look at the ratio of friendships in term of gender its 2-1, female to male, definitely. I got used to it, I was an angry kid, I guess being in a male school, it's normal to have male angst, you wouldn't really notice it in an all-male environment and we were surrounded by girls' schools. But in an all-girls school, there's not much to go on, the guys stuck together. I

was a very hostile teenager, only certain people could sit next to me, if I didn't like you I'd tell you.

BBW: So there were a lot of adolescent changes going on?

Pete (AG): very, there were a lot. And sometimes I'm ashamed of myself when I think of myself now, I was very hostile. I'm not the same person I was then. A lot of changes.

In the above extract, Pete was discussing how his transition to a new sixth form college meant not only a change in learning environment but also being in an all-girls context. Reflecting on himself then, he refers to the behaviour he exhibited in a gendered way, talking about what was acceptable in an all-boys context in comparison to an all-girls context, and how this has impacted on his friendships and behaviour today. As mentioned by Schunk and Meece (2005) young people are vulnerable to 'social standards for behaviour' (p. 78) and here he is reflecting on how his angry behaviour was not uncommon in an all-boys context but that as he has grown he has retreated from this. This extract highlights that the young men involved in the study are experiencing life at the intersection of race and gender and that as young men they have experienced developmental changes relating to male growth and development as well as issues relating to blackness and ethnic identity (Rollock 2007; Rhamie, 2012).

Moving past stereotypical opinions of young black men as unsuccessful and not academic was mentioned during the research process, as well as the beliefs and opinions of others within the black community about what young black men should and shouldn't do and the concept of *selling out* was also discussed. These views all served as barriers to finding one's own voice and dealing with this was a major part of the development of the young black men involved in this study, as noted by others in previous studies (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Sewell, 1997). During the research workshop this was brought up by various participants during a discussion about integrating in the workplace,

BBW: Issues relating to cultural differences in the workplace and lack of support networks were mentioned by groups four and five, would anyone like to expand on this?

Group member 1: Well for us, we don't have money and access to take part in certain activities and there aren't many people like us so we won't want to do the same things as them, whereas someone called 'Charles' with his family contacts would fit in more (laughs)

(Group laughter)

BBW: So I assume Charles is white? And what kinds of activities are you talking about? What like playing golf or other social activities?

Group member 1: Yeah, like well, Golf it's sort of a posh white man's sport…

BBW: The best golfer in the world arguably is a half black…

Group member 2: Yeah but you know, we don't have the networks or exposure to these sorts of things…

(Large group discussion continues…)

In the above discussion, we can see that issues relating to cultural differences and experiences mentioned and linked to race and class by one of the group members. Having access to money but also what was seen as part of the black culture was in opposition to white culture which was seen as the dominant workplace culture. This is an area that has been discussed in relation to ethnic minority achievement for some years since Fordham and Ogbu's acting white paper (1986) and has been an area of contention for some academics (Horvat and Lewis, 2003; Tomlin & Olusola, 2006). Deciding on what careers to pursue and opportunities to take were seen within the prism of cultural identity, cultural fit and arguably blackness versus whiteness. Seeing through this and developing a better understanding of what they want for their own lives was important for these students as for many students, but was referred to often with race and cultural fit always in the background.

5.6.2 Becoming What I Want to Be

An ecological perspective recognises that,

> 'Youth make choices about how they want to spend their time for reasons ranging from their interests (in sports; the arts) and goals (to learn skills; to kill time) to their temperamental qualities (activity level; sociability)' (McHale et al., 2012: p. 2)

It also recognises that the context in which a young person lives has an impact on the activities that are available for them to engage in, which in turn impacts on their development as Bronfenbrenner's perspective emphasises the importance of the everyday activity on development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McHale et al., 2012). This is where environmental labels such as social class impact on development as they regulate what the developing person has access to (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

Becoming what they wanted to be manifested in different ways for the young men involved in this study. For some, it was linked to their intrinsic motivations and interests as mentioned by McHale (2012) above, and for others it was impacted by their integrated regulation (Deci et al, 1991) where there was a slight influence of external factors as they had a strong desire to get out of poverty, move out of their area and have a different way of life. What is fundamental in the case of the young men in this study was their ever-increasing autonomy and agency as they moved through adolescence into early adulthood, and their ability to make decisions about their life and goals. Becoming a more autonomous individual is a vital part of becoming self-determined (Deci & Ryan, 1995) and being a part of the Amos Bursary appeared to provide the young men with their first real opportunity to learn more about themselves as young black professional men, and how they want to engage with the world of work.

> 'Sometimes parents put pressure on you to pursue a certain career such as STEM or Law but they may not be what you want and they don't really know about other careers and opportunities out there.' **(Research Workshop Participant)**

Choosing to pursue a particular academic subject at university or career that you would like against a backdrop of parental pressure and doubts was mentioned during the interviews and as seen above, during the research workshop. Participants commented on parents pushing them to pursue subjects that they felt would be safe and lead to a career such as Law or STEM but that this did not always align with what they wanted. While this was not the case for all students, parental pressure and lack of understanding of the individual's wants and needs was commented on as one of the barriers to finding themselves and moving along their path soon. Joining the Amos Bursary provided an opportunity to hear and learn about a range of careers, network with people doing different jobs and learn more about what could be out there for them.

> 'With Anna, I got to sit down and talk about what I liked to do, my likes, dislikes and public affairs came up and PR.' **(Thomas (AG)):**
>
> 'What the Bursary do well is they do several events and they cater it towards different sorts of students, so they do things for students doing A-Levels, they do events for university students and graduates too, always supporting you at different stages.' **(Shaun (AG)).**

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model emphasises the importance of recognising that the individual is 'an active agent who contributes to his or her own development' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 121) and that the effects of developmental changes within the organism (person) over time can have an impact on the existing relationship between the person and their environment. As seen from the data above, their understanding of their desires and goals took place against the backdrop of a growing and developing individual who was moving through adolescence, into early adulthood and becoming a more autonomous agent who can act on their own motivations and interests (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006).

5.7 Summary

In this chapter, we have explored the data collected directly from the young black men involved in the study on their lives and experiences, and the ways in which these have been influenced by their involvement in the Amos Bursary. This was also explored in light of my observations and my interpretation of the data through my theoretical perspective.

This chapter has clearly illustrated that there are a multitude of factors that affect a young black man's ability to engage with education successfully and achieve his desired career, ranging from family issues, risks in their local neighbourhoods, and lack of practical support as a result of economic and social issues. While it is important to say that these are areas that have been highlighted previously by others (Byfield, 2008; Law et al., 2012; Rhamie, 2012), the data presented here illuminated the ways in which the ecological environment was constantly interacting with the individual young man and that it was his reactions and the reactions of key individuals in his life that had a significant impact on his outcomes.

From what has been explored in this chapter, it is evident that the Amos Bursary clearly provides a vehicle for enhancing the sense of relatedness and belonging acting almost as an extended family that encourages the young men to not only pursue their goals but become aware of the broader options they have, not the limited view of options they may have believed they had as a result of their local landscape.

In the next chapter, we will explore the evaluation data and findings relating to the Amos Bursary's organisational practice, setting out how the data was analysed and then the key evaluation findings and conclusions. This will then be followed by a discussion chapter which will bring the findings together before the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

6 Analysis & Findings 2: The Amos Bursary

Introduction

This study sought to provide evaluation insights on the role that the Amos Bursary has played in the development of the young black men they support. Over the period that the study took place, data was collected at events, during interviews and during the PIPA workshops with key stakeholders on the Bursary's activities and practice, as well as on the experiences of the young black men involved which was explored in the previous chapter. In this section, a detailed account of the data analysis process will be outlined, including how the data was first organised with the support of the framework method (Ritchie & Spencer, 1994), a well-known qualitative analysis method that was developed to support studies in the field of applied social policy research. The key findings will also be presented in line with the research questions and aims relevant to this part of the study.

Combining Process and Outcome Evaluation

The Amos Bursary is a grassroots charity that has developed and evolved over time. The organisation has been operating for less than 10 years and originally started with fewer than eight students. Due to the structure of the organisation and that they have grown and operated in an organic fashion, conducting an impact evaluation at this stage of the Bursary's development would have been premature. It does not have a clear end in the same way as other programmes (Clarke, 2003) as the alumni at times continue to receive support depending on their personal circumstances. Combining a process and outcome evaluation allowed for program monitoring and evaluation, exploring what and how initiatives are being implemented, to what end and by whom, as well as exploring how successful the organisation has been in supporting the young men they work with and if they have achieved the intended change they sought (Patton, 2002).

Using tools such as PIPA (Alvarez et al., 2010; Douthwaite et al., 2008) and logic models (Chen, 2016) insights were gained into the design, implementation, outputs and outcomes of the Amos's Bursary's programmes with the aim of responding to the main research question:

1. What are the developmental changes that young black men experience as a result of their participation in the Amos Bursary?

But predominantly to respond to the following sub- questions:

b. How does the Amos Bursary define and measure success?
c. What are the outcomes for the young black men as a result of their engagement with the Amos Bursary?
d. What are the corporate motivations for engaging with the Amos Bursary?

The evaluation was underpinned by the overarching theoretical framework for the study which used to support the analytical process.

6.1 Summary of Amos Bursary's Activities

As set in chapter one (section 1.3), the Amos Bursary is a charitable organisation that supports young people (mainly young men) from African and Caribbean backgrounds to achieve their educational and career goals. Working with young people from London, the Bursary provides financial, developmental and pastoral support to students from under-privileged backgrounds in year 12 through to university graduation (approximately four and a half years).

The Amos Bursary provides a range of support to its students with its main activities being:

- Events – Learning and development; Networking; Career focused
- Mentoring – Professional and peer mentors
- Advice and guidance – Support with choices and career planning
- Annual conference – A three-day residential conference for all students

They also provide financial support to their bursars in the form of a £500 annual grant for bursars while at university and scholarship awards for students who are accepted to two of their partner universities. Through their fundraising activities they provide additional financial support on an ad-hoc basis, such as assistance with attire for interviews and funding to attend external events.

This study explored all of the support that the organisation gave to students across the programme including the support given to students when they have graduated from university.

6.2 Summary of Participants

In order to gain a wide-ranging holistic view of the Amos Bursary, data was collected from a range of stakeholders and partners. Some of the data collected from the young black men involved in this study (set out in chapter five) was also used to support this phase of the study. Documentary analysis of impact reports, publicity materials and Amos Bursary's website was also used during this phase of the study.

The aim of this phase of the study was to gain a detailed understanding of the Amos Bursary's activities and implementation processes to support the process and outcome evaluation, as well as to explore their wider network of partners of supporters to ascertain their motivations and aims in supporting the organisation. Table 6.1 set out in detail which participants were engaged and the methods of data collection used, and it highlights that alongside the interviews and workshops conducted, participant observation was used throughout to support the study. My attendance at network and fundraising events, recruitment days and learning and development sessions allowed me to gain deep insights into the operations and activities of the Amos Bursary as well as build a rapport with its members and supporters. This was crucial in gaining not just the information needed but also developing a good sense of what they do, which is fundamental for this type of evaluation (Fagan et al., 2008).

6.3 Perceptions, Behaviours and Attitudes

As seen previously in chapter four, an index was created to support the analysis of the organisational data gathered from Amos Bursary stakeholders, leaders, supporters and members. Linked to the research questions, this index brought three main areas to the fore: perceptions, behaviours and attitudes which in turn provided a focused lens to interpret the data further.

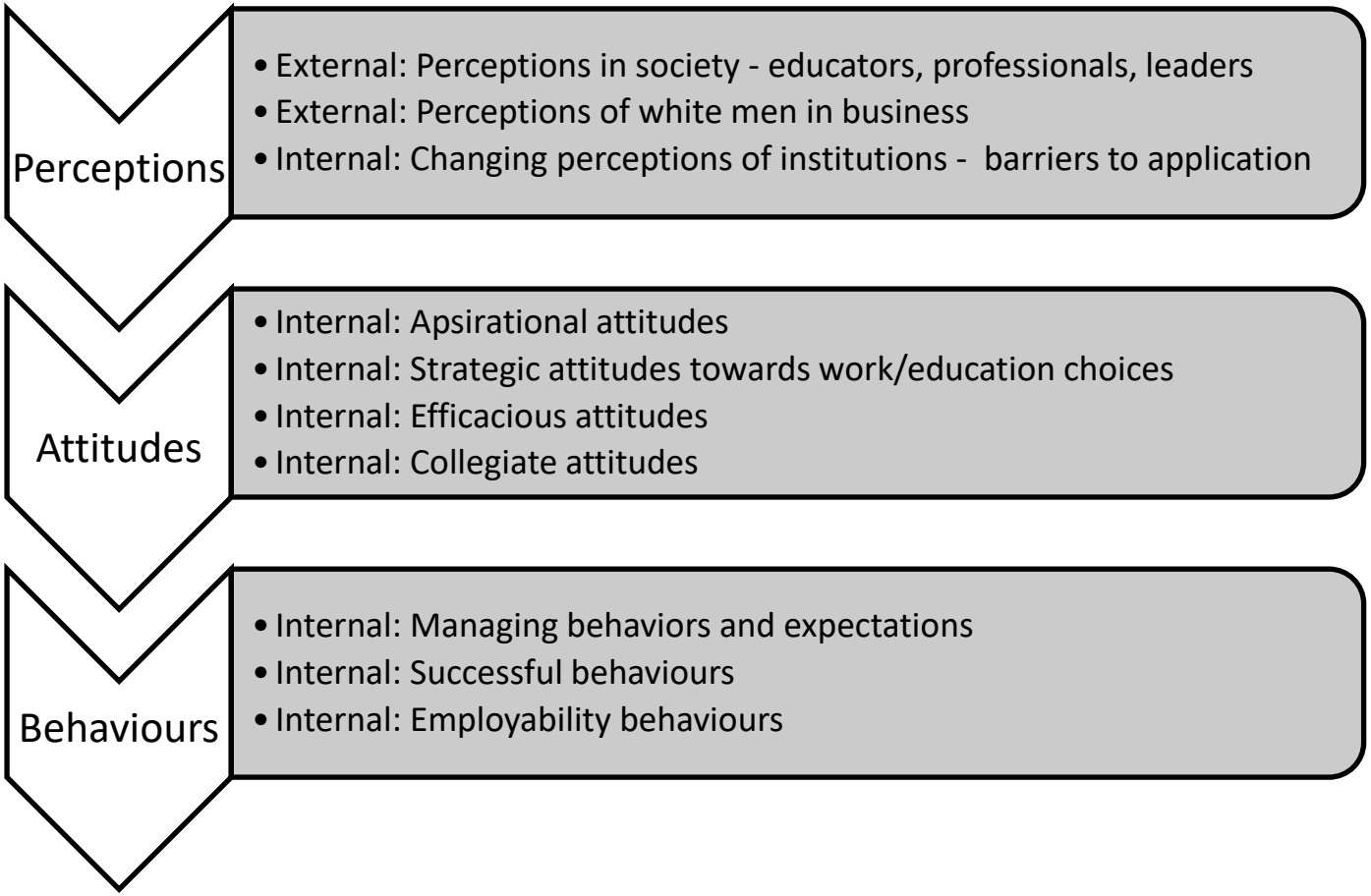
Figure 6.1 illustrates the key areas mentioned in relation to perceptions, behaviours and attitudes from both an internal perspective of the young black men themselves, and from an external perspective of educators and (senior leaders in education), professionals and business leaders was referred to during events, meetings, workshops, and during participant observation by participants. In particular, opening doors and connecting people as a catalyst for change was referred to as an important,

> 'We just need to get some of these young men in the door, then they can help others get in behind them.' (**Amos Bursary Leader)**

Through their own knowledge and experiences Amos Bursary and its supporters appeared focused on the need to provide young black men with more access to opportunities in education and business and they showed much commitment to this aim:

> 'My objective is to actually get more people of colour into a professional life and having that capability through their education, through their access, through their training and development to actually become present on the professional scene, whether that's a doctor, an accountant, a lawyer, a banker, a PhD student, a university professor. That's what my ambition is because the pipeline to law, for example, is a long journey, just like becoming a professor and there are lots of hurdles to that and there are lots of issues within that for people of colour. I want to make sure that I've done as much as I can to increase that pipeline of people who are willing and able to make that choice to come into the career and then, yes, provide them support as much as we can' **(John: Corporate Supporter: Global Law Firm).**

FIGURE 6:1 PERCEPTIONS, BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES ANALYSIS



Doing what they can to provide opportunities for the young men involved in the Bursary appeared to be seen as a way to promote positive behaviours and attitudes among the young men themselves, and this was evident during Amos Ambition events held at corporate locations with successful BME speakers and those who have overcome adversity to succeed in their careers.

> 'We want more young black people to go to Russell Group universities and move into the professions, but they need support to sell themselves, it's sometimes hard for them to show what lies beneath and we are keen to support them to express themselves. That's where the mentoring comes in, and the networking events **(Amos Bursary Leader).**

As highlighted previously, the aim to get more students into the business world and opening doors to professions was clearly recognised by supporters of the bursary and providing the young men with opportunities to network and with a range of people from different sectors was encouraged. From my observations, it seemed that there was a desire to drive change in the perceptions of influencers in the business world, by way of putting more young men into the different environments and supporting them to interact and engage with the corporate world. However, achieving change in the perceptions and views of business managers and leaders may in fact involve a more strategic approach to partnership involving capacity building, and politicisation (Ware, 2013). This resulted in me being confronted from an early stage with the questions of what does success look like for the organisation and how do they hope to move towards it through their activities.

6.4 What Does Success Look Like?

Reflecting on Notions of Success

After initial conversations with Amos Bursary leaders and preliminary research looking at their promotional documents and online material, it became clear that a research question was needed on success, namely what success looked like for the organisation and its stakeholders. This was seen as important for two main reasons: firstly, as a grassroots organisation that has grown and evolved, the Amos Bursary has operated in an organic fashion, similar to many small charitable organisations (Foundation for Social Improvement, 2017). With members of the organisations' leadership team having a background in teaching and social policy, the organisation seemed clear of the reasons why they were supporting young black men and were aware of the evidence on black male achievement and career success. However, it was not entirely clear what the main parameters of success were. While it was clear that the Amos Bursary wanted to support young men into higher education and then a graduate role, it was not as clear as to whether the focus was on accessing higher education more generally, or Russell group institutions? Similarly, did success in employment include entrepreneurship? These questions were seen as vital to conducting an evaluation of the Amos Bursary as they would undoubtedly impact on its outcomes and my understanding of their performance effectiveness.

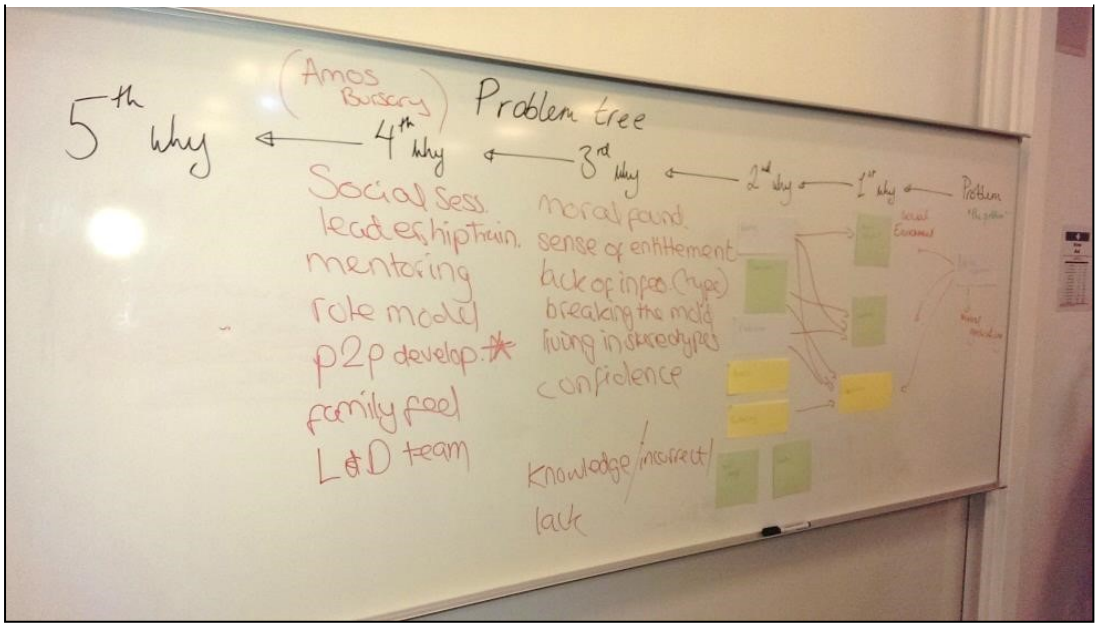
6.4.1 Exploring problems and solutions using the PIPA Problem Tree

The first step in the process of understanding Amos Bursary's notions of success involved exploring what they felt the problem(s) is/are in society they are trying to address, and how they felt they are addressing it. This involved using the PIPA problem tree tool, a participatory tool for working with groups on monitoring and evaluation (Alvarez et al., 2010; Douthwaite et al., 2008). Linked to the

theory of change approach (Chen, 2016), the problem tree is a five-step process and allowed me as well as the group members to explore their processes and practices further.

This workshop was attended by 11 members of Bursary including a mix of alumni, committee members and leaders of the organisation. For this exercise, three groups were created based on their roles within the bursary and they were given an hour each to discuss and explore their thought before sharing with the larger group. As seen in figure 6.2, the problem tree is centred on five whys linking the social, environmental and economic and historic issues and problems facing the target population. This exercise was met with great enthusiasm and an interesting discussion arose from the multiple views of different members of the group.[7]

FIGURE 6:2: PICTURE OF PROBLEM TREE EXERCISE



[7] Three PIPA workshops took place over the course of the study with the same group members.

TABLE 6:1: ROOT PROBLEMS FROM PIPA WORKSHOPS BY GROUP

Group Name	**Root Problem**	**Level of Ecological System**	**Problem Amos Directly Addressing**
Yellow group **(3 people)** (Learning & Development Committee members)	Lack of representation in top and middle management – across professions and industries	Exosystem level	• Lack of self-efficacy/resilience/confidence • Personal and financial development (access to finances) • Knowledge
Red group (4 people) (Black males – alumni and committee members)	Black male underachievement	Individual and microsystem	• (Lack of) Knowledge, lack of information
Green group (4 people) Amos Bursary leaders and committee members	Racism, classism, imperialism, oppression	Macrosystem	• Attitudinal shift (in society, in young men) • Aspirations • Personal development • Levelling the playing field

As seen in table 6.2, all three groups presented different root problems from one another which in turn affected their view on what they thought the Bursary was addressing through its work. It seems clear that their role within the Bursary played a part in their responses as the yellow group made up of learning and development committee members focused more heavily on work and professional development, whereas the green group made up of leaders and committee members focused more broadly on historic social issues affecting the black community in the UK. The red group which was made up of black men focused spoke of black male underachievement in a broader sense and for them, lack of knowledge and information was the key to changing this.

Uncovering the differences in opinions on root problems was interesting and caused much debate among the groups as members felt quite strongly about their conclusions. It allowed the group members to hear each other's views and presented an opportunity for them to be critical and thoughtful about their practice (Douthwaite et al., 2008). However, as these root problems correlated with different layers of the ecological system, it led me to consider whether the organisation's solutions corresponded with this. In order to address these issues, the Amos Bursary would need to be clear about their mission, vision and values as well as an understanding of their capacity to deliver the change they seek (Chen, 2016; Douthwaite et al., 2008). Two sessions followed on from this, where the participants were put into new groups, with a mix of people from different committees. During these sessions the organisation's outputs and activities, their vision and goals, and the organisations that they currently work with to achieve their aims and those they would like to work with in future.

6.4.2 Findings from PIPA Workshops

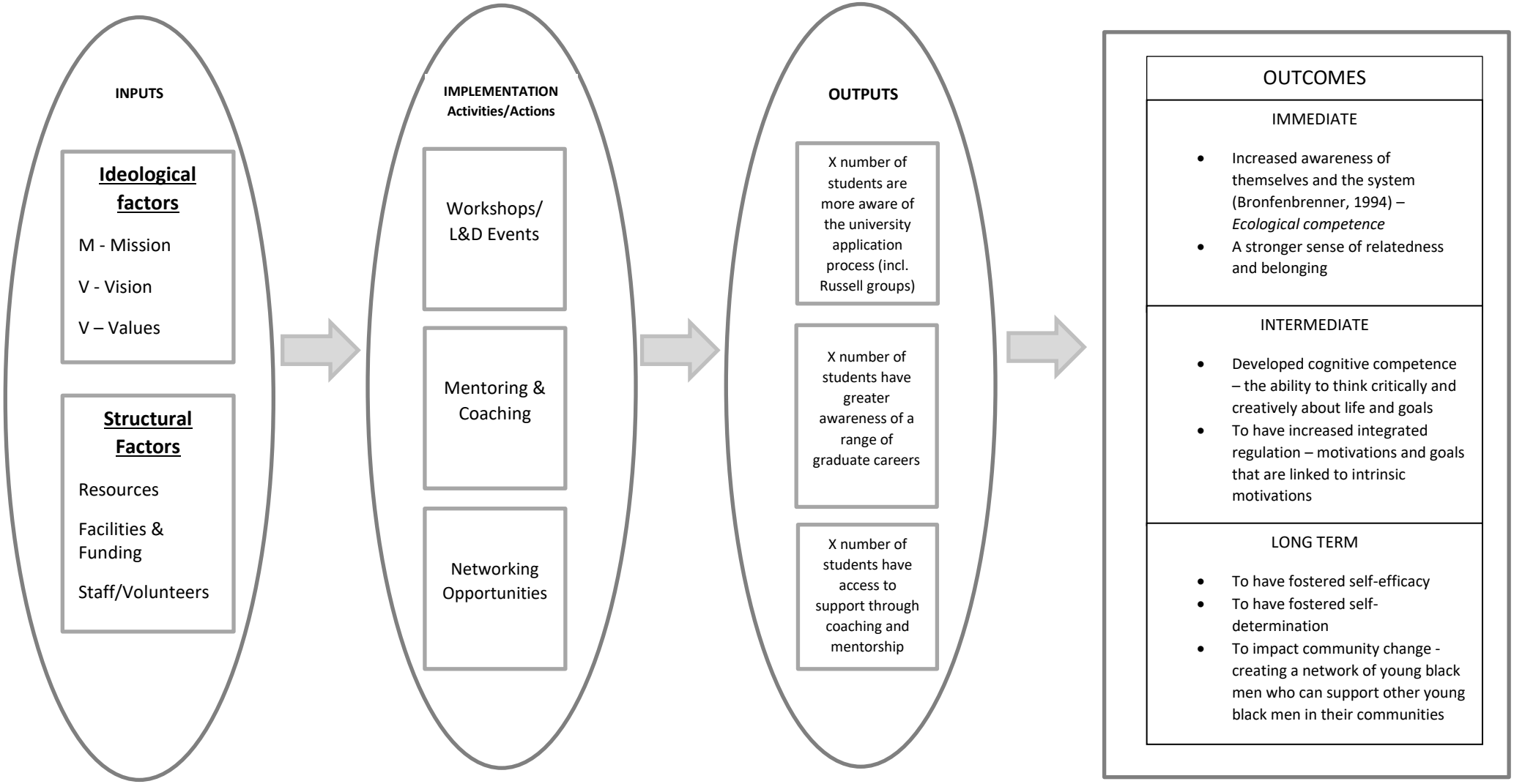
Based on this information gathered from the all of the workshops and data gathered during participant observation and interviews, my first finding was that the Amos Bursary did not have a clear theory of change agreed by all that linked what they felt the main problem or problems were that they are addressing, their activities, and what success in this area would look like. As a result of this, the PIPA sessions acted similar to an action research project (Stringer, 1999), intervening with the research process. Taking the information from the PIPA workshops (the comments and notes), alongside my participant observation throughout the study and documentary analysis of Amos reports, I in turn created a logic model to try and illustrate the organisation's theory of change, which is illustrated in figure 6.3.

This model was developed to represent the Amos Bursary's pathway to change, that the organisation can use going forward as a tool to support with evaluation. Its development involved me bringing together the different views and perspectives shared by the stakeholders during the workshops and linking these to the data found during interviews and ethnographic work, and the central theoretical concepts that the study was exploring. The PIPA process encourages the development of a logic model and a theory of change as an outcome, but in developing this model, it was important to recognise that all of the root problems discussed during the workshops were valid to different group members and that the age and career backgrounds of some of the group members may have contributed to their answers. A large number of the Amos leaders and committee members are senior professionals and may feel differently to the young black men about the root causes as a result of historical issues and past experiences. This is not to say however that these are not valid responses and as seen in figure 6.3, a category for ideological factors was added to the theory of change model in the inputs section, incorporating the organisation's mission, vision and values as a way of recognising that there may be a number of key factors they are trying to address. However, what was fundamental here was to link the inputs and implementation to

outputs and outcomes in order to show the correlation between what the organisation does and what they hope to achieve (Chen, 2016; Douthwaite et al., 2008) and this involved reviewing the data as a whole to see what areas had strong links to their activities.

This model also incorporates the aspirations of the Bursary which came out of the PIPA workshop session on visioning for the future. In particular, the longer-term outcome to support community change, they have already started informally through their focus on a collegiate attitude with alumni supported current members and giving back. What this model does not include is any explicit links to influencing business leaders and industry as it was not clear that their main activities were in fact enabling this to happen. This is not to say that they are not currently working successfully with partner organisations, but that the majority of their activities were focused on developing the young men themselves.

FIGURE 6:3 AMOS BURSARY THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL



6.5 Evaluating Effectiveness: Linking Design to Outcomes

Overview

In line with the programme effectiveness criteria (set out in chapter four), the effectiveness of the Amos Bursary was explored from the data collected. Supported by the findings of Catalano et al., (2004) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) on what an effective positive youth development programme looks like, and Fagan et al., (2008) on quality in the implementation of community youth programmes, these criteria were used to provide an evidenced-based approach to the evaluation. In this section, the findings will be presented and discussed on the key elements of Amos Bursary's programme design and outcomes.

6.5.1 Supportive Programme Design

Positive youth development (PYD) programmes seek to promote positive and healthy development in young people at all times, even when they are addressing problem or negative behaviours (Roth and Brook-Gunn, 2003; Lerner et al., 2005), and this is embedded in programme goals and design. While there may have been a lack of clarity on the fundamental aims of the Bursary's work, their motivations and desires to support the young men they work with to achieve their ambitions was clear. Throughout my observations and engagement with the Amos Bursary, it was very evident that they are focused on providing opportunities for their students to develop themselves further in a supportive environment and they often went above and beyond in this area, being flexible as students moved through the Bursary and giving time to the students outside of the regular timetable where needed.

> 'What the Bursary do well, is they do several events, as it has gotten bigger they do more events, they do several events and they cater it towards the different set of students. So they will do things just for students in A Levels, because they know they're going to be in

> London, because they are still living at home. They will do stuff for everyone, when they say to the university students, we would like you to come but we know that because of deadlines and different things you might not be able to come, but just let us know. Then they obviously do stuff, well at the time they would do stuff for graduates, but now there's stuff for graduates and older students. So it was good, the Bursary was always supportive and there was always something…' **(Amos Graduate)**

Creating A Hopeful Environment

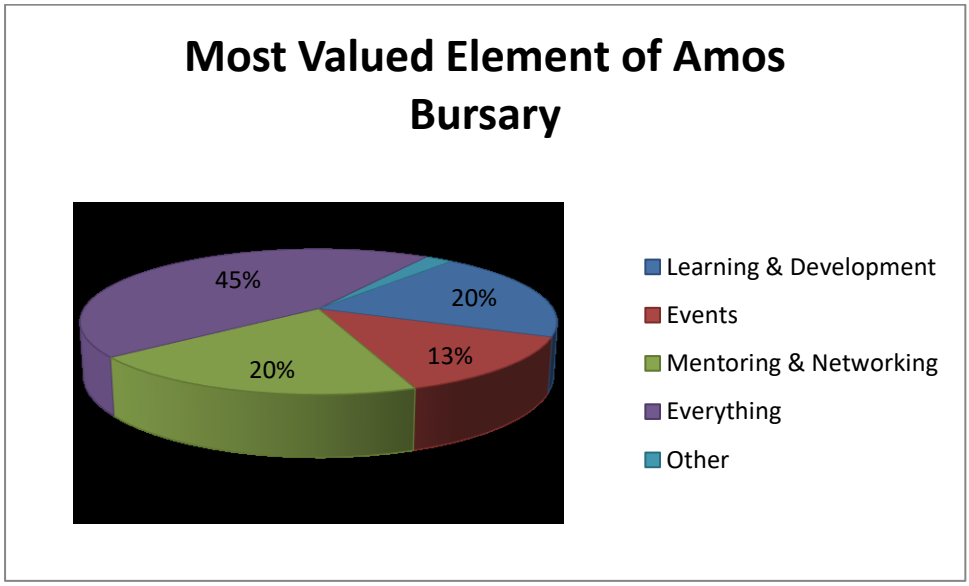
> 'Leaders and staff at youth development programs create and nourish an atmosphere of hope. The positive, youth-centred atmosphere, or tone, conveys the adults' belief in youth as resources to be developed rather than problems to be managed. Individual attention, cultural appropriateness, and the choice and responsibility given to adolescents set a positive youth development tone. The atmosphere in these programs resembles that in a caring family, where knowledgeable and supportive adults empower adolescents to develop their competencies' (Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003: p. 172).

Roth and Brook-Gunn (2003) highlight the importance of a hopeful environment where all young people are empowered to develop and this was evident within the Amos Bursary's work, particularly during the learning and development activities. Amos Bursary provides its main students with access to a full timetable of learning and development activities that cover areas including study skills and exam success, to business communication skills and networking etiquette.[8] Run by volunteers from the business and academic worlds, these workshops offered a chance for students to gain additional skills as well as access to an experienced professional who was willing to be asked questions and give guidance. This is particularly important for young people like those involved in the Amos Bursary who have very little academic support available from family members as they are often the first in their families to access higher education.

[8] The Bursary offers students access to approximately eight learning and development workshops per academic year which are held on weekends and out of term-time.

Throughout the data collection period, it was clear that this environment of hope and success was valued by the young people involved and this was referred to during informal conversations and during interviews. During the research workshop, participants were given a short questionnaire and asked about what they valued the most from their Amos Bursary experience. The positive environment of the Amos Bursary and the support they felt from being a part of it was mentioned along with the value of the access they received to others who want to offer help and support such as mentors and those they meet during networking events. As seen in the pie chart below (figure 6.4) many referred to all of the Bursary's activities being beneficial to their development but it was clear from the workshop and their feedback that the learning and development opportunities were valued most highly, with the events and networking opportunities also valued by students.

FIGURE 6:4: PIE CHART OF MOST VALUED ELEMENTS OF THE BURSARY



6.5.2 Addressing Positive Youth Development Constructs

Catalano et al., (2004) showcased what successful PYD programmes look like and the importance of a supporting the development of PYD constructs.[9] In their systematic review of 77 evaluation studies they found that all of the effective programmes addressed a minimum of five positive youth development constructs with most addressing eight constructs (Catalano et al., 2004). Exploring the programmes that produced positive results and improvements in outcomes for young people, they concluded that,

> 'Three constructs were addressed in all twenty-five well-evaluated programs: competence, self-efficacy, and prosocial norms. Several other constructs were addressed in more than half of the twenty-five programs including opportunities for prosocial involvement (88 per cent), recognition for positive behaviour (88 percent), and bonding (76 per cent); and 50 percent of the well evaluated programs addressed positive identity, self-determination, belief in the future, resiliency and spirituality (Catalano et al., 2004: p. 115-116).

From my observations, interviews and fieldwork, it was evident that the Amos Bursary clearly addresses five positive youth constructs: promoting competence, fostering self-efficacy, promoting bonding, fostering self-determination; fostering a belief in the future. These will now be outlined in more detail.

Promoting Competencies

The Amos Bursary actively supports its students to become more competent in two ways, by developing their cognitive competence and supporting the development of what I refer to as *ecological* competence.

[9] Please refer to chapter three for more details on what positive youth development (PYD) constructs are.

Cognitive Competence – Thinking Differently

Cognitive competence has been recognised as an important aspect of youth development (Catalano et al., 2004) and is centred on the cognitive processes involved in critical and creative thinking skills (Sun & Hui, 2011). Such skills have been recognised as important for developing the thinking skills of students and allow them to participate fully in a multidimensional, democratic society (Kuhn and Dean, 2004).

Amos Bursary's learning and development workshops for A-Level students and undergraduates encourage students to think critically about life and their goals, to think creatively about how to achieve these goals, and to reflect upon how to use these skills can be used in higher education and the workplace. This was especially evident during workshops such as 'Lumina Sparks Goal Setting', 'Critical thinking skills: compare, contrast, evaluate', 'mind planning for exam success', and 'the psychology of being assertive' where student explored their own personalities, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can use their skills to more effectively. I observed students thinking critically about their lives and speaking confidently with each other about their skills and personalities and over the course of the fieldwork (approximately two years) I witnessed individual students becoming more confident in this area.

BBW: Was there an event or experience that you valued the most from your Bursary experience?

Joshua: I would say possibly the networking events at the House of Lords. One because it was the most obscure concept, environment, people, experience that I could have ever fathomed, ever!

BBW: How old were you?

Joshua: I think 19, I think I spoke at 19 or 20. It really, those were the events where I put my dinner etiquette that my parents taught me and things that I learned during the bursary into practice. This really put me in the deep end and I had never done anything like that before.

In this extract, Joshua is discussing how his experience of attending events at the House of Lords really challenged him and got him to think differently and to meet with people he may not have ordinarily met. Exploring new arenas that they may not have ordinarily had access to is a hallmark of the bursary and something that students referred to often.

Ecological Competence

An area of competence that I feel is relevant to this study is what I refer to as *ecological* competence. What I mean by this is an individual's understanding of how the different layers of the ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) work and interplay with one another to affect an individual's access to opportunities for growth.[10] It is centred on the individual being knowledgeable about the ways in which their local and national context functions, and how to navigate the ecological system. In a context such as the UK where young black men are part of a minority community and are underrepresented in the majority of professions (CoDE, 2013) this is particularly important if someone has ambitions of obtaining a graduate career (Rhamie, 2012).

BBW: 'What does the Amos Bursary mean to you?'

Peter: 'Umm, I would say that it means a difference in the lives of people that don't realise there's a whole world out there. Amos Bursary coming to all of these young people, letting them know that regardless of where you're from there's a whole different world out there; we can show it to you, it's up to you if you take it but you owe it to yourself to find out.'

[10] This is not to be confused with ecological competence as referred to in ecology and natural environment studies.

Opening up the world to the students and providing them with the opportunities to engage with people who operate at different levels of the ecological system (i.e. peer mentors, professional mentors, speakers, donors, and government officials) gave the young men the opportunity to develop their ecological competence. Speaking to, networking with, and being mentored by professionals and peers a little older than them allowed them to learn first-hand the ways to access industries and sectors that they may be interested in, as well as those they may never have heard of.

> 'And now you add on the extra aspect that you come from a disadvantaged background where your parents may not be able to tell you the insights on what to do to get into certain groups or arenas, so you're having to find out by yourself so it takes even longer, more energy, more determination, umm, and yes there is an encouraging older generation that will tell you yeah go on you can do it, but there are some aspects that almost literally (pause) there's a glass ceiling and then there's almost like a concrete ceiling, you can see above it but you're almost never going to get there until you learn how to , or manage to adapt to get into some type of social class or you can meet someone who can help you up.' **(Amos Graduate).**

This has been recognised by others as very important for young people from under-privileged backgrounds and in their study of aspirations, poverty and parents in London, Glasgow and Nottingham, St Clair et al., (2011) found that,

> 'Overall, there seemed to be a common lack of understanding of the way in which school, post-school education and vocations were linked' (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011: p. 64)'

And despite high aspirations on the part of young people and some of their parents, they concluded that,

> 'However, it is not enough for young people just to aspire; they also need to be able to navigate the paths to their goals (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011: p. 68).

By working with corporate and HEI partners and professionals as part of organisational corporate social responsibility (CSR) or outreach activities, the Amos Bursary provided opportunities for their students to gain exposure to these organisations, get a sense of what happens within them and see how they could be a part of them.

6.5.2.1 Fostering Self-Efficacy through Career Planning Mastery and Vicarious, Bonding Experiences

Alongside increased competencies and skills in goal planning and critical thinking, the Amos Bursary supports its student to become more efficacious and have stronger beliefs in their abilities to succeed through the career planning mastery and the vicarious experiences they provide to see successful black people which are also bonding experiences.

Career Planning Mastery

Similar to developing cognitive competence, the Amos Bursary provides a space for students to master their skills in career planning such as how to plan and set goals, exam practice for finance and accountancy careers, mock assessment centres, university interview skills, developing business communications skills, and career interviews including how to dress for success. These are all areas that support the students with practical skills on how to prepare for their future careers and were often skills and areas that they did not have the opportunity to explore in such depth before.

> 'When I asked my teacher for more past papers he was like what do you want it for and I said that I am doing a workshop with the Amos Bursary next week on exam preparation. He said that we will be doing last year's past paper in class and that I shouldn't do any more but I said that I want to practice. He didn't want to give them to me even though I asked a few times' **(Year 13 Amos Student speaking to exam success workshop leader).**

For this student, the Amos Bursary workshops on exam success allowed him to practice his skills further and learn in a small group environment with the support of a knowledgeable approachable adult. This was unlike his experience at school where his teacher was less willing to come forward and support his desire to practice further. This may have been for a variety of reasons but lack of support and encouragement from teachers has been cited previously as an issue for some black male students (Rhamie, 2012; Rollock, 2007).

Mastering career planning skills could be referred to as *meta-employability skills*, where the student is actively thinking about their employability and actively engaging with the world of personal development and work to develop and/or enhance their career and employability skills.[11] Similar to metacognition (Kuhn, 1999; Kuhn and Dean, 2004), which the idea of an individual 'thinking about thinking' (Kuhn and Dean, 2004: p. 270), and critical reflecting on their thoughts and opinion, meta-employability skills involves the individual using their cognitive competence to expand their knowledge, but also using their ecological competence. Throughout their time with the Amos Bursary, students moved from a contextual environment where little discussion and emphasis was put on their employability skills, to a context where they constantly explored, discussed and thought about these skills in more detail.

> **BBW:** 'What does the Amos Bursary mean to you?'
>
> **Joshua:** 'Family. And a sense of fulfilment, knowing what fulfilment is, and knowing how to access and utilise fulfilment. Hope as well to be fair, it even makes me sad thinking about it but even though the journey I've taken, you have these reoccurring thoughts that you may never make the grade that you deserve to be, for whatever various reasons, whether that's down to your own laziness, or down to prejudice or racism…'

[11] There are multiple definitions and views of employability skills however employability here is based on the definition provided by Knight and Yorke (2004) which emphasises 'a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes - that make individual's more likely to be gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations' (Knight and Yorke, 2004: p. 5).

Here Joshua is discussing how the Amos Bursary helped him to see what fulfilment was for him and also this notion of how to access and use it. This illustrates his use of meta-employability skills, reflecting deeply on his own career, what success means to him and how to achieve it.

Creating an Empowering Environment that Supports Vicarious Learning

The Amos Bursary provides its students with two mentors, a peer mentor and a professional mentor. The peer mentor is typically a BME student either male or female who is currently is a senior undergraduate, a graduate or a postgraduate and their role is to support the young man specifically with university related queries and general support while being a student. The professional mentor is typically an experienced professional from any ethnic background (male or female) and who works in an area similar to the one the young man is aspiring to. However, the professional mentor is not always working in a similar field and the focus on their role is to support the young man with employability skills, occupation specific knowledge and general understanding of the world of work.

Mentoring was mentioned regularly by the participants of this study as a vital part of the Amos Bursary experience and something that the students valued. Often linked with networking through its ability to give access to a range of environments, mentoring provided the students with positive role models and supported the development of efficacy beliefs through vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1995).

> 'When I joined the Amos Bursary I specifically asked for black male role models. When I was assigned my peer mentor, it was the first time I had met a black male role model outside of my family that I could look up to' **(Amos Bursary Graduate).**

Having positive male role models who have succeeded educationally and in their careers has been cited as key to the success of young black men in particular (Harper, 2012; Wright, 2010), who are often represented negatively in relation to drug related crime and gang culture (Cushion et al., 2011; Wright, 2013) Seeing social models who are similar to yourself succeed educationally and in their

careers despite the adversity they may have faced allows the individual to see that they can succeed (Bandura, 1995).

> 'Modeling influences do more than simply provide a social standard against which to judge one's own capabilities. People seek proficient models who possess the competencies to which they aspire. Through their behaviour and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands' (Bandura, 1995: p. 4)

The Amos Bursary created an environment that was encouraging and empowering for their students, and in most cases the mentors that they provided for the students (along with their volunteers) provided the support and guidance that they were not able to receive at home or within their neighbourhood peer groups.

> 'The Bursary creates a safe place to grow and develop, both physically and emotionally where you feel comfortable to express yourself and learn about yourself more' **(Research Workshop Participant).**

Promoting Bonding

Bonding with peers, mentors and volunteers was central to the Amos Bursary experience and their activities allowed the young black men to develop new friendships with one another. Supported by alumni and male committee leaders, the family environment created by the Bursary allowed the students to develop a sense of belonging in a collegiate atmosphere.

The annual beyond outstanding conference was mentioned regularly by participants as something they enjoyed and valued for bringing all of the students together to learn as well as allowing them to catch up with another and bond. When asked what their favourite workshop or event was, here are some of the responses from the Amos Cases and Amos Graduates:

> 'I enjoy the beyond outstanding event – they have really good speed workshops where you go to a talk in a room and then you move around. I really enjoyed the STEM workshops. I also enjoy the ambitions events as they are really sociable and bring together the bursary brothers with professional people' **(Ralph, Amos Cases)**.
>
> I would say the residential at Imperial the most, beyond outstanding. It's very inspiring, since 2012 I've attended. Being surrounded by everyone, relaxed, hanging, but all together, doesn't happen much but it's good to spend time all together, makes you realise you're part of something' **(Paul, Amos Cases)**.
>
> 'The annual conference, everyone's there and it's 2-3 days of development' **(Tim, Amos Cases).**

The quotes above illustrate the value that the young men got from the beyond outstanding event and that they saw it as an opportunity to bond with their *bursary brothers* as well as a place to learn and develop. Paul refers to feeling like he is part of something and having this sense of belonging is important for a student to function well and be motivated to learn (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Deci et al., 1991).

6.5.2.2 Fostering Self-Determination

Self-determination can be seen as 'the ability to think for oneself and to take action consistent with that thought' (Catalano et al., 2004: p. 105), with self-determination theory based on an understanding that people have three innate psychological needs that influence their goals, motivations and life pursuits (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness and are linked to an individual's psychological growth, their well-being and their integrity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Linked closely to self-efficacy theory, fostering self-determination will most likely lead to an increase in self-efficacy beliefs as they individual has more mastery experiences (and develops their competence), and relates to others who can provide vicarious experiences (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Fostering self-determination also involves supporting the individual

to become more autonomous, to think more for him or herself and to be confident to act on their own wants and desires for their own life (Catalano et al., 2004; Deci & Ryan, 1991).

The Amos Bursary fosters self-determination by providing opportunities for their students to learn more about and explore themselves, who they are and what they want for their lives. They provide workshops and activities that explore personality type and goal planning, and for most of the students this experience with the bursary is the first time that they have had an opportunity to think about this outside of their families. It comes at a time when they are becoming more autonomous, as they move through adolescence into early adulthood and for many as they move away from home. This safe space to think and plan about what they want to achieve educationally and in their careers, is crucial especially for disadvantaged students who may have had less opportunity to do so (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011) and being confident to act upon one's own wants is dependent upon knowing what these are.

Many of the students interviewed and spoken with referred to their parents or their teachers' ideas of what they should do being influential at first, but as they moved through the bursary they appeared clearer on what they wanted and why. This was mentioned during the research workshops and parents' influence was stated as one of the barriers to success for young black men as well as pressure from parents to move into certain careers due to lack of up to date knowledge.

> 'Sometimes you can get pigeon-holed as parents will tell you to go into certain areas because they seem secure and then people don't take risks **(Research workshop participant).**

6.5.2.3 Fostering a Belief in the Future

Believing in the future is centred on internalising hope and optimism in relation to possible future outcomes and being able to take a longer view on personal goals (Catalano et al., 2008). Central to this construct is an individual's belief in higher education and having a positive view of working life.

The Amos Bursary recruits students who already have a desire to attend higher education and move into a graduate career, however not all have a positive belief in the future when they first start. Some expressed their concerns and worries about university funding and tuition fees, and about the likelihood of accessing the graduate job market when they start the bursary but this seems to ease as they move through the bursary. This could be as a result of interventions and support that they receive outside of the bursary but it was clear from this data collected that the bursary also has a role to play here.

> 'Umm if I do go to university, because the tuition fees have been raised, it will be harder for me to go to university because of the prices, and if I don't stay at home in London I will have to find additional costs like for accommodation and things probably have to pick up a job maybe two to keep the costs going. So when I did the interview with the Amos Bursary, that was one of the things I did reiterate often, that the money would go towards helping my living, accommodation, and things like that if I were to go to university away from home. And similarly, even though I did do quite well in my GCSE's, I still showed that there is room for improvement and because I'm capable that means by doing the progression days with the Amos Bursary will help me to reach my full potential' **(Ralph, Amos Cases).**

Speaking during his first interview, Ralph expressed his concerns regarding university costs and how he will put the Amos Bursary money to use. He was also discussing how the progression days will help him to reach his full potential. He exhibits a belief that the development sessions with Amos Bursary will help him to reach his full potential in the future.

Fostering a belief in the future involves having supportive relationships that foster hope and encourage young people to aspire for their future goals (Catalano et al., 2008, Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Conversely non-supportive relationships can have a negative impact on goals and beliefs in the future (Bandura, 1995) and this was mentioned by some of the students as one of the issues they faced in their school environments.

> 'Sometimes the problem is you don't have access to high quality teaching and you have schools that have a culture of low aspirations' **(Research workshop participant)**.

By allowing students to engage with people from a range of professions and backgrounds who are able to share their stories and provide advice and guidance, the bursary is helping young people to see their possible selves (Oyserman, Bybee & Terry, 2006).

6.5.3 Areas to consider

The previous section of this findings chapter highlighted that the Amos Bursary successfully supports its student in a number of areas. However, upon reflection throughout the study, it was clear that there were a number of areas that could be given further consideration in order to improve practice further.

Encouraging Students to Get Involved in The Community

While the Amos Bursary is successful in bringing young black men together and creating a supportive family environment, it could encourage students to get more involved in their own local communities, sharing some of what they have learnt and experienced. Often referred to as prosocial involvement (Catalano et al., 2004), this could be a way for students to help others from their communities who have not been able to access the Amos Bursary but have an interest in pursuing higher education and a graduate career.

BBW: Are there any areas of the Amos Bursary that you feel can be improved?

Paul (AC): Encourage boys to get involved in their local community, be community leaders. Events with community leaders, who can lead sessions or speak to us. Unless you go back to your area, when you're at uni and you go back your like wow! It could be easy to forget what it's like. It's only when you look at pictures and watch Grime Daily and then you realise how things really are. A bit more aware, we have to help people. Put us into perspective of the place we come from. What about others not in the same position as us? Maybe we could go into the community to do work, getting us directly involved. Maybe a community idea, puting things into perspective, good collaboration maybe. Us having an impact, being purposeful.'[12]

Displaying his awareness of the support he has been given and the lack of support others in his community are still faced with, Paul is discussing how he feels that the Amos Bursary could encourage its students to become more involved in their local communities and to help others. This may not be what all students want to get involved in but it could be an opportunity for the Amos Bursary to spread its reach further than the small number of boys they accept each year.

Student Responsiveness

The students that I engaged with throughout the research project appeared engaged and motivated by what they had seen, who they met and the opportunities they were given. Some did however seem overwhelmed at times and perhaps a little intimidated by the setting of a particular event or the corporate nature of the event. This is not to say that these settings do not provide great opportunities for students to experience new worlds and environments but that this may affect the levels of engagement and responsiveness by some students and allow those who are the most

[12] Grime Daily is a Youtube Channel and website that showcases UK Urban and Grime artists as well as discussions on urban culture.

confident to come forward and take full advantage of the opportunities given. Providing opportunities for students to engage with one another in a less formal setting could encourage all students to participate fully (Fagan et al., 2008). This may also encourage students to continue to engage fully while at university.

Engaging with Young Black Women

While it is clear that the Amos Bursary has a clear aim to support young black men and has ambitions to involve young black women in some way, a barrier to this may be their limited resources and a worry of a lack of engagement from the young men if young women were to become a part of the annual cohorts.

> 'When we have previously involved girls in the sessions, unfortunately the boys stopped attending. We have always been focused on supporting black boys so we need to continue to do that but we also need to find ways of involving girls too that works' **(Amos Bursary leader).**

The Amos Bursary currently allows young women to attend some parts of its annual conference and other events and this could potentially be explore further in the future. After all, while the issues facing young black women are different to young black men and more young women from all ethnic backgrounds are succeeding educationally (Department for Education, 2016) and applying to university than young men, young black women are still disadvantaged against their white counterparts (Department for Education, 2016; Rollock, 2007).

7 Discussion of Findings

The chapter brings together both of the findings chapters and puts forward the most relevant elements of what was found in light of the theoretical framework and the literature in the field. This will then be followed by the final chapter which will address the research questions, put forward the key contributions of this research to the field and make recommendations for policy and practice.

7.1 The Mesosystem – Where Education and Career Decisions Live and Grow

The mesosystem is the second layer of the Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory model, and is referred to as,

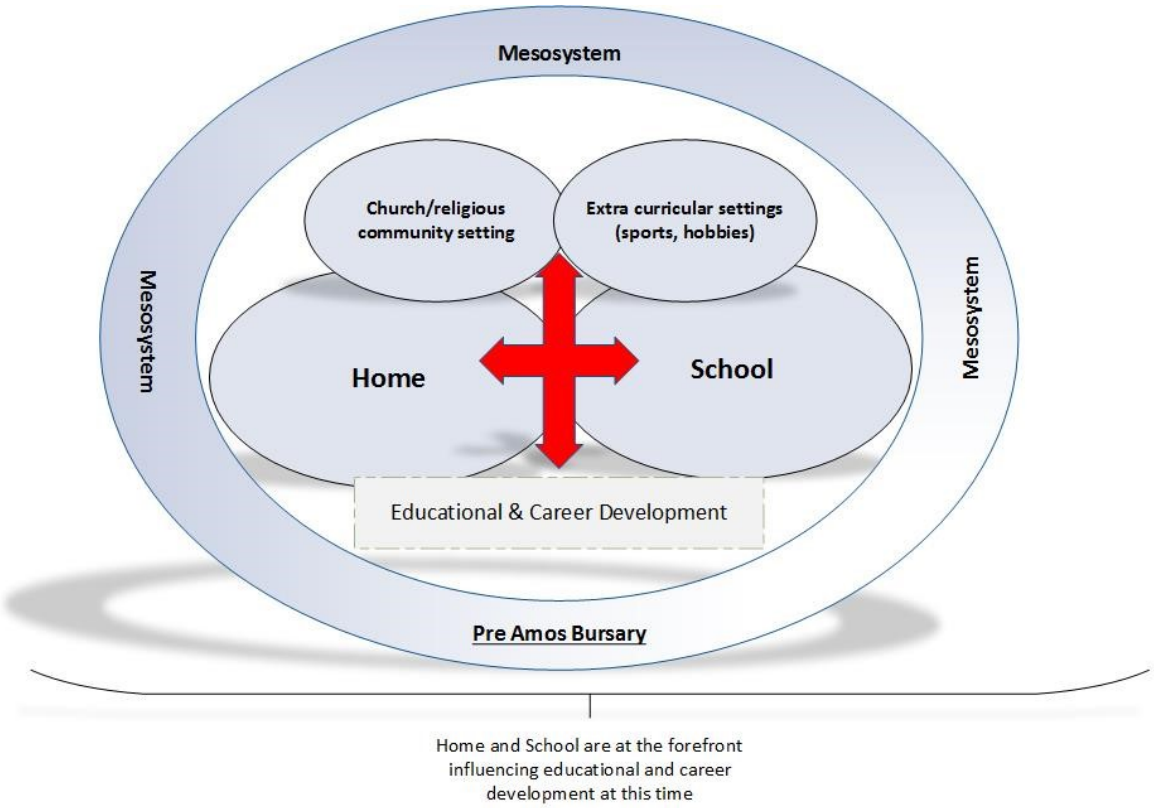
> 'The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school, school and workplace). In other words, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 148).

While it is important to say that all elements of the ecological environment were relevant to the study and are evidenced in the central themes, the mesosystem was particularly relevant and worth highlighting. The young men involved in this study experienced several changes in their mesosystems during the data collection process, as this study took place during a time when they were transitioning from secondary education to higher education, or from higher education into careers. What was clear from the interviews conducted, the research workshop and the participant observation was the importance of the mesosystem for educational and career development. The processes that occur within and across microsystems can influence decision making and choices, such as the influence of the role of parents and teachers in managing expectation and aspirations, and the role of the church and related settings in conjunction with family members in fostering hope.

Home + School

As illustrated in figure 7.1, prior to joining the Amos Bursary the home and school contexts were the environments with the most potential influence on educational and career development. The young men involved in the study have engaged in regular direct interactions with adults in these contexts (Young, 1983) and these settings are where expectations are set and discussed (Young, 1983; Renn & Arnold, 2003). In some cases, these expectations are high and both school and the home encourage and support the students to achieve to their fullest potential.

FIGURE 7:1: MESOSYSTEM MODEL 1 – PRE-AMOS BURSARY



Pete, a member of the AG sample spoke often of the role of his parents and teachers in his development and at times the cohesion between them.

BBW: How did you come to know about the Amos Bursary?

> **Peter:** My mother via the school. I don't know they had a meeting, I must not have been there but it first came through my head of year. Mr Bond told me about the Amos Bursary and my mother jumped at it and said yes apply. It felt like too much things to do to apply, but my mum said just do it so I went for it. That gruesome statement stuff, did it… So she always wanted me to do the best… now I'm seeing how all her pushing make a difference and it did help.'

Peter's mother encouraged him or pushed him as he saw it to achieve well at school and his school also supported him in this;

> **Peter:** My secondary school which was St. Andrew's, my head of year which was my French teacher saw how much I was interested in writing so she actually got me a lot of writing opportunities. So actually through her I won two journalism scholarships at UCL. So she saw what I was about and made sure that every opportunity to do what I wanted to do came towards me, so she tried to encourage that.'

Here we see an example of a school and home environment working together to encourage and support Pete's aspirations and talents and recognising where his abilities were. For him this was positive although he did find his parents ambitions for him stifling at times, and his secondary school played a mediating role, becoming a place where he could explore his interests in writing further. However, what is important to highlight here is that both home and school recognised his ability to attain educationally and encouraged him to do so.

In other cases, the role of the school and the home was to provide safe spaces and encouragement for learning. For Ralph, a member of the AC sample, his home environment encouraged him to learn and pursue his interests at school, although it did not necessarily possess the knowledge and financial support needed for him to learn more about how to navigate the system.

> **Ralph (AC)**: My mum and dad know that I am a pretty intelligent person and that I like to make my own decisions. They know what I'm into and what I like. So when I said that I wanted to study physics and they were fine with that. My younger cousin who is in the year below me cos she shares a common interest in science as well, it's weird but I speak about most of my career goals and stuff with her, and she does the same with me.

For Ralph, his parents supported his choices and encouraged him to learn and achieve, although they were not necessarily able to provide him with knowledge on his chosen career field, which he found elsewhere in the home/family microsystem through his cousin. This bears a similarity to the findings of Law et al., (2012) who found that young black boys in their study reached out to a cousin or close family member who had experience in education for support.

School and teachers can also play an important role as beacons of knowledge and sources of information on the system that their parents and families often do not possess (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011). Many of the students are the first in their family to aim for higher education and school can also provide an avenue for development through activities that the home and neighbourhood cannot give due to financial constraints, if they are supportive and encouraging (Law et al., 2012; Rhamie, 2012).

Home + School + Amos Bursary

In these transition years when career ideas and goals are forming, families and neighbourhoods of origin of working class children and young people are not always able to provide the contextual supports needed to navigate the education system (Kohn, 1963) and the graduate career market (Brody, Stoneman & Flor, 1995). Unlike middle class parents, working class parents and families are less likely to explore a wide range of sources on raising children and join school committees (Kohn, 1963). This is not to say that their parents did not show an interest in their child's learning and development, but that this was often limited due to their social and cultural background. For the young men involved in this study, the Amos Bursary becomes a new family context within the mesosystem during the latter part of their schooling where they find adults who are engaged in the education system, aware of the potential issues as well as areas for opportunity and growth in the business world and wider society. Often introduced to the young black men through their head of

year or head of sixth form, it seems that the Amos Bursary is recognised by teachers as an avenue for students with promise who need both financial support and system knowledge support to achieve beyond the school gates.

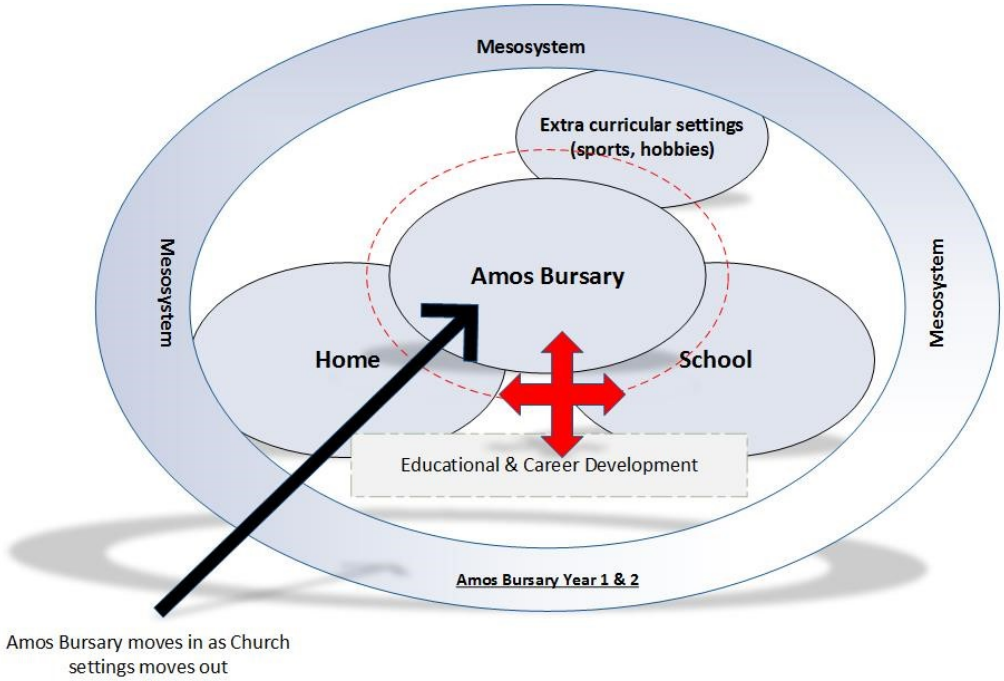
Joshua, an Amos graduate had a turbulent time prior to starting university due to ill health and although he had some support from his parents, he felt that their background as immigrants meant that they were not familiar with the education system in the U.K. and were not able to support him very much with daily educational tasks and plans.

> **Joshua (AG):** Two years after the operation just felt like an uphill struggle and it felt like I was doing it all by myself. Not that my parents weren't involved but they're African parents that generally just let you get on with it, expect high grades from you but in terms of day-to-day support, they aren't from an education system similar to mine so they couldn't have a hands-on, sit down and help me with homework. Which is no fault of their own but it was a case of I felt an uphill battle by myself, so if I got a bad grade it was by myself. If I got a good grade it was by myself for myself. But I did have support from teachers, mentors and the bursary, that sort of thing but I think that Hackney boy lifestyle you do well by yourself, I think it's just a general thing you feel growing up, you do everything by yourself.

Home + Church

Another element of the mesosystem which worked in tandem with one another to positively effect educational and career development was the relationship between the church and the home. All of the AC and AG participants spoke of the Church, often in relationship to their past. From our conversations, my observations and the interviews conducted it is clear that Christianity and church related settings tend to play less of a role in student development as the students move through school towards university and a career. Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 highlight that the Church microsystem moves out of the mesosystem as the young men move away from it and they have more autonomy over their lives and choices away from their parents.

FIGURE 7:2: MESOSYSTEM MODEL 2 – AMOS BURSARY YEAR 1 & 2



The home and church relationship in the mesosystem provided an avenue for development through connection and activities, with full parental support. We know from the work of Byfield (2008), Rhamie (2012) and Rollock (2007) that the Church is influential in mediating negative effects from the wider ecological environment as well as providing a place to build social capital (Byfield, 2008) and this was highlighted in this study. Church leaders and members were referenced in tree of life diagrams in relation to the roots and foundations of the person and referred to in interviews as well.

> **BBW:** 'So, do you feel like church has been a big part of you growing as well as developing?'
>
> **Matthew (AC):** 'It has been a large part of my childhood; not so much now as I have moved more away from it, but… I can say that I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't part of… thanks to the church and its influence on me.'
>
> **BBW:** Is that now you're here? When you were back at home, were you going to church often?

Matthew (AC): I generally have moved away from Christianity, I think. Yes. It's not something I say often, but I think I've moved away from it, but again I can't deny, like the influence it has had on my …

BBW: Just out of interest, do you think that has been influenced by… as you've gotten more into science?

Matthew (AC): Yes. It has generally been influenced by that. It's more… as a scientist myself I can't reconcile having non-evidenced based beliefs I guess.

This extract was from the second interview conducted with Matthew when he was a first-year undergraduate at university, shows him commenting on the role of the church in his development but that it is no longer playing a major role in his life. As seen in figure 7.3, the church microsystem is not part of the mesosystem and career related settings and interests take more of a prominent role in the individual's educational and career development.

FIGURE 7:3: MESOSYSTEM MODEL 3 – AMOS BURSARY YEAR 3 & 4

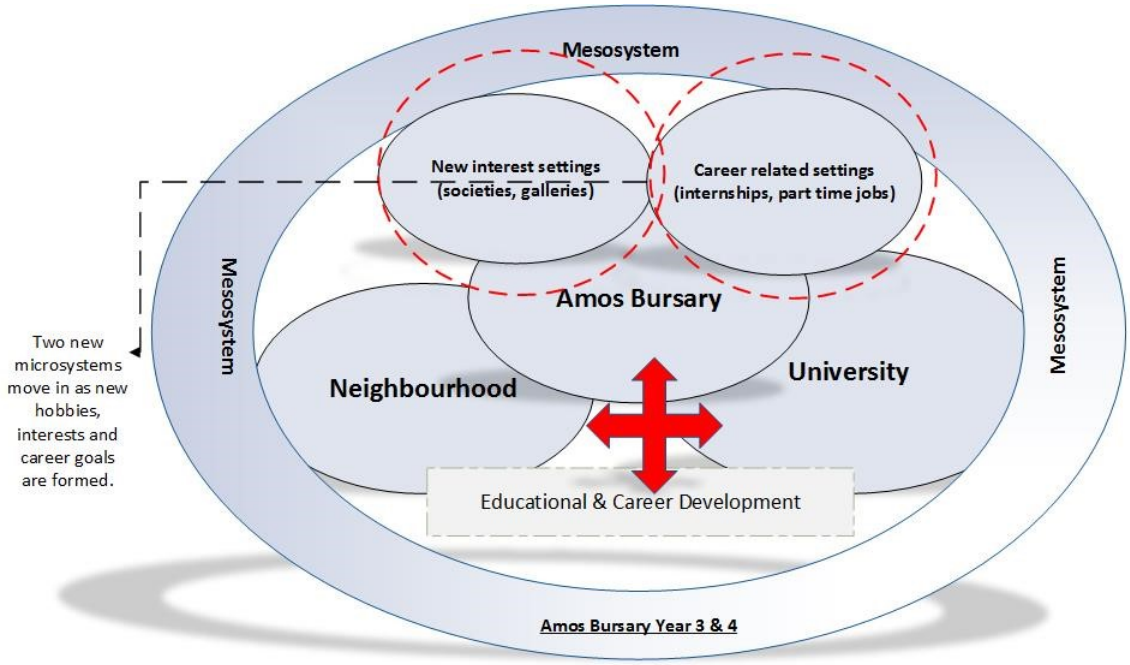
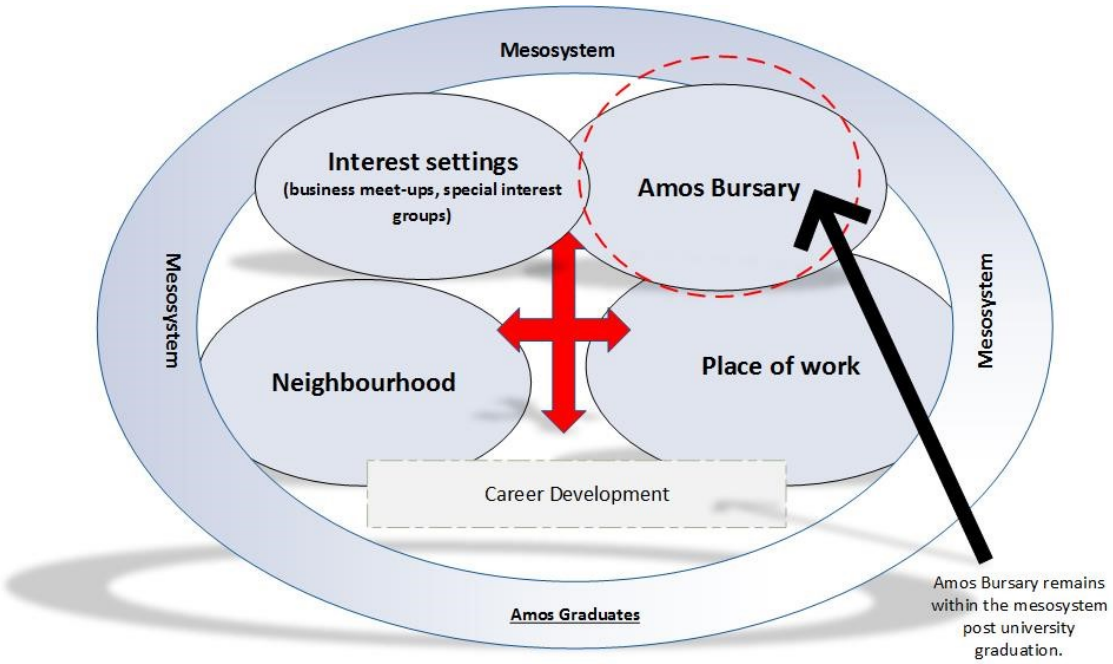


FIGURE 7:4: MESOSYSTEM MODEL 4 – AMOS GRADUATES



Amos+ Career Related Settings

For graduates, the Amos Bursary still plays a role in their mesosystem and all were still involved in the organisation at differing levels. Some as committee members, mentors and other providing support where possible to students. This was often linked to their new career identity and they were now able to provide support as well as still receive support through their continued membership and engagement with the organisation. This was also accompanied by their engagement in interest settings often linked to their developing career. This included other charitable organisations and work-related diversity initiatives, such as employee networks. Finding value in networks that supported their future developmental trajectory was key here and their Amos experience allowed them to develop:

> 'strategies to seek advice from those who had 'lived' and 'relevant' experience of the…system and could therefore be in a position to help them make an informed decision' (Law et al., 2012: p. 13).

7.1.1 The Value of the Mesosystem

> 'Higher education aspirations and college readiness are affected by the intersecting orbits in which students are simultaneously involved. The mesosystem consists of interactions of overlapping relationships, messages, objects, and symbols in students' immediate settings… The mesosystem is a crucial layer of the environment for college readiness because the totality of students' experience determines their educational dispositions and behaviors' (Arnold, Lu and Armstrong, 2012: p. viii).

The mesosystem is valuable in supporting young black men to access higher education and graduate careers as it has the ability to provide positive messages and an image of a black person who can achieve academically and in a graduate career (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012; Young, 1983). As mentioned above, Arnold, Lu and Armstrong (2012) refer to the interactions that occur in the mesosystem between the messages, symbols and physical relationships that take place in the immediate settings that surround the individual. From this study, it became clear that as students move towards higher education, the role of the home environment in their decision-making processes became less significant as they moved towards becoming more autonomous, agentic selves (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006). However, this was related to their ability to form strong bonds with others, develop interests in extra-curricular activities, engage in more challenging and thought-provoking activities (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012) and become more aware of their own wants, goals and desires.

> 'Positive development occurs when individuals encounter increasing complexity within their immediate settings and relationships' (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012: p. viii).

Encountering such opportunities to develop positively is dependent on having more complex and challenging relationships within microsystems and across the mesosystem. The Amos Bursary provided opportunities for this as they supported and encouraged their students during their A-

levels to find their interests, think creatively and critically about their lives and goals, and see themselves as not limited by their background. This helped to create a young person with a strong sense of self efficacy, with a belief in the value of higher education and a positive belief in the future, all vital for becoming autonomous students who succeed educationally (Deci et al., 1991; Law et al., 2012) and are ready for university (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012).

Seeing other students get involved in clubs and societies, running for student union positions and applying for internships encouraged them to also get involved and seize the opportunities that higher education can bring. Without their Amos Bursary experience, it is unlikely that they would have developed the ecological competence to know how to navigate higher education and ensure they were maximising their opportunities. Law et al., (2012) refer to the concepts of 'higher educational capital' and 'aspirational capital' (Law et al., 2012: p. 14) which could be seen as similar to the notion of ecological competence and they comment on the role of inside and outside support networks that support these forms of capital. This draws parallels with my reference to the mesosystem as the place for educational and career understanding and development and illustrates the importance of positive mesosystem relationships.

7.2 Addressing the Key Themes from the Literature Review

The literature review highlighted four key themes in relation to the black male educational experience and their achievement. These were: the role of parents and the community; positive relationships with teachers and schooling; personal characteristics and beliefs; and the influence of identity on educational and career aspirations. Much of the findings presented in the previous two chapters bear similarities with these themes but some key areas of difference were also clear. This will now be discussed further.

7.2.1 Family and community relationships

The themes of the role of parents and the community, and having positive relationships with teachers and schooling became clear from the literature review as important factors in the educational development of young black men. As discussed previously, this research study found that it was important for young black men to have positive relationships in the mesosystem for their educational and career development, which draws parallels with these two themes. The roles of parents and the community (Rhamie, 2012) and schools and teachers (Rollock, 2007) are important in cultivating strong efficacy beliefs in abilities and supporting students to rise above disadvantages that may exist within their microsystem(s) (Elder, 1995).

The Role of Parents and Teachers

The young people involved in the Amos Bursary all had different home lives and relationships with their parents and families, which impacted on their educational development. Whether it was due to the absence of a parent as a result of family separation or death or parental pressures to choose certain careers, as expected they played a major role in their children's lives (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Rhamie, 2012; Rollock, 2007). Law et al., (2012) found in their study with young black male teenagers that,

> 'Parents tended to have very strong ideas about their boy's future and wanted them to be successful in life and achieve well' (Law et al., 2012: p. 15).

This was similar to some of the results found in this study where parents such as Peter's mother had strong ideas of what they wanted for their child, or Paul's parents who were so keen to see him succeed that they did all they could to send him to a school in a different part of the country.

Some parents were not as hands-on like Ralph's mother and Joshua's parents, but still encouraged their children to engage well in school. Law et al., (2012) also found this in their study where some

parents were less involved and the young men turned to them less for support and advice. In study as in theirs, it was clear that this was due to the inability of their parents to provide practical support and advice as a result of their own background and not due to them not caring about their child's progress (Law et al., 2012: p. 17). These students instead turned where possible to a teacher or other member of their microsystem, such as Ralph who turned to his head of sixth form, his science teachers, and his cousin.

The Encouraging Teacher

Teachers did play a significant role in the educational experiences of the young men involved in this study. For some such as Paul and Joshua, their experiences with teachers were not always positive and they felt that the teachers seemed fearful of and negative towards young black students. However, for others such as Shaun, Peter, Ralph, Matthew and Thomas, there was at least one significant teacher who was encouraging and supportive, spotting that they had promise and taking steps to help them develop their academic skills. This has parallels with the findings of Tomiln and Olusola (2006) who found that there were positive teacher-pupil relationships between the black boys and many of the teachers involved in their study.

Encouraging students to apply for the Amos Bursary and recognising the environmental risks for young black men was part of being a supportive teacher. However, in juxtaposition to this, having less than supportive teachers who did not encourage students to strive to do their best was mentioned by some such as Shaun who felt that very few teachers encouraged him and his peers to be great. This was also noted by Rollock (2007) who found that some teachers in her study had low aspirations for black boys in their school and saw them as un-academic, in contrast to black girls who they saw as more academic.

The Church as a Developmental Setting

The church as a place for development was identified in this study as important, particularly in relation to its role in providing opportunities to explore and grow in a safe space. During the tree of life interviews with the AC group, many mentioned the church as part of their foundations and being a contributory factor in their development today. Matthew spoke of his church choir supporting him to develop his confidence speaking in front of crowds and allowing him to travel and engage in a range of events. Similarly, Joshua and Paul spoke of their church's role in encouraging them to believe in their own abilities and providing role models. These findings clearly link with those found by Byfield (2008) in her study of the impact of religion on young black male educational achievement in the UK and USA. Stating the church and Christianity in particular as a pro-education environment and provided opportunities for growth, Byfield concluded that,

> 'It gave them access to positive present and historical black role models, providing them with a strong personal, social and community identity… and gave them a sense of belonging, reassurance and self-validation' (Byfield, 2008: p. 196).

Similarly, Chiang, Hunter and Yeh (2004) found that black students connect to an African worldview as a coping mechanism, which included spirituality and well-being,

> 'Central to culture-specific coping among Blacks is an Africa-centred worldview…which stresses harmony with nature, spirituality, social time perspective, and collective consciousness. It has been suggested that coping strategies that are in line with this worldview may serve as a buffer against anxiety, depression, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity…' (Chiang, Hunter & Yeh, 2004: p. 795).

In this study, it was clear that the Church was an important part of the lives of the students involved in the Amos Bursary but it moved out of the mesosystem as they moved through their education. Its role was of less importance as the student gained more autonomy over their own lives and therefore

while its role should be noted in relation to pre-university experiences, there was little evidence of its continued importance for educational and career development while at university and beyond.

7.2.2 Beliefs and Characteristics

Personal beliefs and characteristics were also identified in the literature review as important areas in the educational development of young black men. Having positive views of the future and seeing their possible selves was referred to by Rhamie (2012) and Law et al., (2012) and this study echoes their findings. Having a strong sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995) and believing in their ability to achieve their goals was important for the students involved in this study. This also led to them having a hopeful disposition where they displayed their resilience in working towards their intrinsic motivations and goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000), despite any setbacks they faced.

The Amos Bursary supported the development of these beliefs as it promoted a positive black male identity and showcased people who had overcome barriers to achieve their goals. Bandura (1997) refers to people as 'contributors to, rather than the sole determiners of, what happens to them' (Bandura 1997: p. 3) and this is important as some of the young men spoke of the environmental barriers that they may face as black men whereas others did not and put the onus for their success or failure on their own shoulders. Law et al., (2012) found similar attitudes in the black boys they worked with, having

> 'no fixation on racism as being a barrier or a problem, even with those that had experienced racism first hand' (Law et al., 2012: p. 18).

While this may highlight the strength of their aspirations and determination to succeed, as Bandura (1997) states the individual is a contributor to what happens to them and not the sole contributor

and as Bronfenbrenner writes, the environment plays a role in delimiting or opening-up opportunities for people to develop themselves (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Being a part of the Amos Bursary taught the young men how to engage with and navigate the world of higher education more successfully, but it was important for the students not to feel the pressure of subscribe to neo-liberal ideas that success and failure are determined by the person alone (Archer, DeWitt & Wong, 2014). After all, the environment can hinder development as a result of macro-level ideologies and a lack of support for family systems and local neighbourhoods (Bronfenbrenner, 1988, 2001a).

7.2.2.1 Supporting young men to be resilient and hopeful through positive ideas of blackness

Receiving negative responses from people in society and being subject to stereotyping was mentioned during this study, with some stating that they felt the clothes that they wore impacted on people's reactions to them. While it is fair to say that all people may perceive different environmental responses depending on what they wear (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a; Hall, 2013), the young men involved in this study appeared to feel that this was an additional issue for young black men, who can be wrongly stereotyped (Steele, 1997). What they signified to those around them depended on what they wore and this was even mentioned during my interview with a senior legal professional who felt that people would not sit next to him at times when he was on the train depending on what he was wearing.

This could be said to be an example of how demand characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a) play a role in the person's development as they create environmental reactions to the individual. Demand characteristics relate to the person's capacity to either discourage or encourage reactions from the social environment, which in turn affect their psychological development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a).

This includes characteristics such as their physical appearance or others relating to their temperament, such as the being passive or energetic. Bronfenbrenner highlighted that demand characteristics influence how others within the individual's immediate environment perceive them, as well as how those within the wider social environment respond to them, which in turn impacts upon how they see themselves within a social context (Bandura, 1995; Bronfenbrenner, 2001a).

The experiences of being stereotyped or seeing fear in the eyes of their teachers affected some more than others and during the research workshop phrases such as self-belief being lost and only negative stereotypes being visible around them were mentioned by some of the participants. However, being a part of the Amos Bursary presented a counter-narrative with new images of black men and women as well as other working-class men and women from other racial backgrounds that were able to overcome barriers to succeed in their careers. This influenced the semiotic system within their microsystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2001a) as they were able to interact with a range of young black men on a regular basis, as well as mentors and supporters who represented being successful and being black in positive ways. These experiences helped to foster a sense of hope (Upton, 2012) as they presented new symbols of blackness.

> 'Hope theory proposes that goals themselves do not produce behaviour, but rather, people's views of themselves as being agents capable of initiating (agency) and implementing (pathways) actions to pursue valued personal goals (i.e. going to college) produce the helpless-or mastery oriented responses' (Snyder et al., 2002: p. 821).

As discussed by Snyder et al., (2002) an individual will either feel helpless in their ability to initiate and implement their goals, or feel that they can master this task dependent on their levels of hope and belief in themselves as active agents. Developing these hopeful pathways was integral to the development of the young men in this study, and they developed these pathways by speaking to others, and feeling comfortable to open-up about their experiences. Amos Bursary meet-ups, events

and student only WhatsApp groups allowed them to operate in a counter-space (Carter, 2007) where,

> 'black students feel that their experiences and racial identity can be affirmed and validated in these contexts where other same-race peers often share similar life experiences' (Carter, 2007: p. 543).

7.2.2.2 Finding Success as a Black Working-Class Male

The Amos Bursary exposed their students to the worlds of business, finance, law and other corporate roles which inspired many of the young men to move towards their goals. The people that the students heard from and engaged with at career ambitions events often had an impact on them and motivated them to succeed. However, as a result of the PIPA sessions, the fieldwork process and the data analysis process it became clear to me that it is important for the young men to see and engage with black people, people of colour and working-class people working in a range of sectors and succeeding in their own way. While many of the committee members and main volunteers involved in the Amos Bursary come from a range of occupational backgrounds including teaching, social policy, learning and development and business, this was not always reflected in the career related events that they organised which were focused on corporate roles. For young people who are impressionable and (at times vulnerable) and have a strong desire to succeed, the danger is that this could manifest negatively and encourage only one view of success.

A strong illustration of this was my interview with Joshua, a graduate of the Bursary who spoke of the challenges he faced feeling comfortable speaking to people in the corporate world and dealing with the differences in cultural understanding, as well as struggling to find what success looks like for him;

Joshua (AG): In this city corporate environment, you can't have a genuine interest in something you like doing, it has to be something that's seen as socially okay, or normal; or this is what we do for leisure, we do Golf for leisure, we watch these programmes for leisure and we don't do anything else for leisure…

BBW: That's really interesting, so in terms of you becoming Joshua, finding who Joshua is, what happens if that doesn't fit in? Obviously culturally you're of the African diaspora, grown up in Britain, so culturally what you're interested in may be different from what other white people in this corporate environment are interested in. How does that connect with you, finding Joshua, who you are?

Joshua: It's a paradigm shift, I think okay Joshua this is a guy who has been sitting here for a few years, try and find some parallels with him, in terms of the economy, or in terms of his background where his family comes from, and hopefully the interests he has you're smart enough to try and make those parallels without trying to sell out yourself. I still feel nervous about pushing myself out there because I know just how uphill the battle can be that it's almost like I don't know anything about my future. Some people have social groups and family like 'my uncle does such and such' so they can view where they can take themselves. I honestly see myself sitting here and it's like a blank canvas. In some respects, that's great, I can set my own pace…

BBW: Does that scare you or excite you?

Joshua: But on the flip side at the moment where my life is, it's slightly more on the scare side. Me not making it quote un quote is failure in my eyes but what is making it? Umm how far do I have to get to before I feel satisfied with where I am? Is it VP or director or managing director in a bank or asset manager before I feel I've made it? I think personally just maybe how I think and so forth, I'll never think that I've made it and I'm worried that I'm always going to want more, and going to want more, I think it's just a hunger of not having anything…

Here Joshua illustrates the difficulties at times young black men can experience in their early careers as they try to navigate their way through a world that it is unfamiliar to them as well as to all of their family and neighbourhood friends (Byfield, 2008; Law et al., 2012). As a graduate of the Amos Bursary trying to access the highly competitive and corporate London City and arguably white middle-class space (Rollock, 2014), he spoke of the implications of having a lack of practical support

in his microsystem (Kintrea, St Clair & Houston, 2011) and a lack of social and cultural capital to leverage (Bourdieu, 1986; Byfield, 2008). Bronfenbrenner (2005) refers to the difficulty of children in deprived households in gaining certain knowledge:

> 'Although most parents have the capacity and the motivation to respond to the immediate physical and psychological needs of their children, the situation is rather different with respect to enabling their children to acquire new knowledge and skills. In these domains, the parents must themselves possess the desired knowledge and skills, or they must have access to resources outside the family that can provide their children with the experiences needed to develop competence' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 190)

For young black men like Joshua, his parents and family support system were not able to provide him with the new knowledge and skills that he needed to navigate a corporate space. He found this in direct contrast to some of his work white colleagues and his account highlights that,

> 'the 'homogeneity of dispositions' associated with position and social hierarchy is remade and reinforced along the axes of both class and race in unspoken acts of cultural distinction that serve, primarily, to advantage the white middle classes and the white elite' (Rollock, 2014: p. 449).

His determination and hunger for more in his life was clear but navigating his way through his working landscape threw many challenges at him. With race and class intertwined here, it was clear that he needed support to follow his intrinsic motivations and to deal with some of the big questions he posed. This is not ultimately to role of the Amos Bursary alone, he like others before him has to navigate the ecological environment and deal with the issues it poses as a member of the black community (Marsh, 2013), however with the Amos Bursary not being entirely clear on what success looks like, it is understandable that students may face the same issue.

Finding ways for the young men to build positive identities could be further supported by encouraging them to be part of their communities and engage in social action projects. As mentioned by Paul during his interviews, this could support the young men as they are in this liminal space where they are in between worlds (Field & Morgan-Klein, 2010) and transitioning in and out of classed spaces (Rollock, 2012).

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview of Chapter

This chapter puts forward the main conclusions from the study, following on from the findings and discussion chapters. It will respond to the research questions and present conclusions that reflect the multi-layered nature of the research. Setting out its key contribution to the field, it will also put forward a theory for underrepresented student development that emerged from the findings in a bid to further support research and practice.

Introduction

This study has explored the educational development of young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, as they moved towards higher education and into graduate careers. Aiming to both evaluate the practices of the Amos Bursary and to identify key issues relating to black males in higher education and graduate careers, this study sought to make sense of the black male experience through an exploration of their educational experiences prior to joining the Amos Bursary and as well as their experiences while part of it.

Taking an exploratory approach to case study evaluation research (Yin, 2009) and incorporating culturally inclusive and sensitive methods and tools (Mertens, 2008), in-depth interviews were conducted with four cases over a 12-18-month period as well as with graduates of the Amos Bursary and some of their supporters. Research workshops were also conducted with members of the Amos student population (n=45) and with Amos Bursary committee members and leaders. Through this I was able to gain deep insights into what life can be like for some young black men as they navigate their way through complex inner-city landscapes, and try to access a new world of (at times elite) higher education and graduate careers.

Achieving academic success as a working-class black male in London with little or no family history of attending university or accessing the graduate world, can bring with it challenges (Rhamie, 2012; Kintrea, St Clair & Houston, 2011) in relation to navigating the ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that functions in the UK. Race and class intersect in a way that can create barriers to development for these young men (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), as combined, they often result in a lack of knowledge on how the ecological environment works in relation to educational and career development. This is undoubtedly linked to the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which operates in this space, one that permeates downwards an ideology that arguably links success in higher education and beyond to whiteness and white middle-class ideals (Rollock, 2014). Similarly, this has clear links to the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) where historically black people and black men have been underrepresented in higher education and the corporate world and have often been seen as underachievers (Gosai, 2009; Rhamie, 2012; Tomlin & Olusola, 2006), problems and dangerous (Connell, Spencer & Aber, 1994; Law et al., 2012).

Exploring the lives of those who have managed to overcome the barriers created by their ecological landscape and move towards their goals of a graduate career in their chosen field, this study hoped to move away from a narrative of underachievement towards a more positive and practice-supporting approach that puts forward stories that others can relate to and learn from (Harper, 2012). In line with this desire, the following conclusions are put forward to address the research questions and present this study's main contribution to the field.

8.1 Limitations and Reflections

This section sets out the limitations of the study which are closely linked to my reflections on my role as a researcher and the impact this had on the study outcomes.

Participant's Accounts

All of the young men I spoke with and engaged with displayed hopeful dreams for their futures. Some of this appeared to be influenced by an increase in self-efficacy beliefs as a result of their Amos Bursary experience, namely through vicarious experiences and social persuasion. Although we spoke of their lives and educational experiences prior to joining the Amos Bursary, this relied on their memories (Willig, 2013) and their willingness to share information (Smith, 2008). However, this was recognised in the study design and the aim of the multiple interviews with Amos cases was to support the building of a rapport with students and an opportunity for them to become more comfortable with me. Using this method helped me to make sense of their thinking when interpreting the data, which may have been more difficult had I conducted one-off interviews with larger group of students (Willig, 2013).

Capacity

As a researcher working alone with the Amos Bursary, my capacity was limited which impacted on my ability to attend all events and meet with all members of the Amos Bursary. Therefore, there will be young men that I did not manage to speak with and/or hear from about their lives. However, across the two years when I conducted fieldwork, I was able to attend a large number of events, engage with a large number of students and observe many interactions.

Capacity is important particularly in evaluation research as having access to more researchers not only allows for a fuller understanding of the programme (Clarke, 2003), but also provides more rigorous data as the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 2007) can be discussed and interrogated across the

research team. Similarly, managing the two aspects of the study, (the research on young black men and the evaluation) meant that I had to make decisions on what I felt was more important as a result of being a solo researcher. However, by using rigorous and well-developed methods and tools such as PIPA (Douthwaite et al., 2008), I was able to develop a research design that others may find useful in the future when in a similar position.

Subjectivity in the Interpretation Process

Although a strength of case study research is that it is rooted in people's lived experiences (Hodgkinson & Hodgkinson, 2001; Smith & Osborn, 2007) this could be seen by some as a limitation with its findings not easily generalisable in an objective, positivist sense (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Small samples sizes such as those in this study mean that the researcher is able to gain an in-depth insight into the lives of the cases, but this limits the ability to generalise findings to a wider population. Similarly, subjectivity is not only present in relation to the focus on individual cases and their experiences, but also on the part of me, the researcher, as the relationship between interactions and interpretations would have influenced my findings in this hermeneutic process (Geertz, 1973). This was not a conscious process however, and I did endeavour to be as rigorous and objective as possible throughout to ensure the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Morrow, 2005; Schwandt, Lincoln & Guba, 2007).

This was accounted for the in the research design as within the interpretivist paradigm, it is acknowledged and accepted that the researcher will move between the emic and etic (Hoffman, 2009); from participant insider to outsider, and that their knowledge and experiences will have an impact on the research. Incorporating theory and methods such as in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), I was supported through this process with guidance on how to conduct interviews and ensure quality in the interpretation process (see chapter four for more detail).

As a young black woman from London pursuing a research degree at a highly ranked UK university, my position in the study allowed to bring insider knowledge and understanding of the social, political, and cultural landscape that the Amos Bursary operates in. Having an awareness of this allowed me to reflect on my interactions with stakeholders and their responses to me throughout the data collection interpretation process.

Within interpretivist case study research, this is purposeful as generalisability and standardisation are not the main aims, rather a rich, thorough account of the cases and their experiences is key. (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Morrow, 2005). However, the insights from this study should be seen through this lens and not as a definitive account that can be applied to the experiences of all young black men or other underrepresented students (Kelliher, 2005; Yin, 2009).

8.1.1 Utility of Theoretical Approach

This study explored the educational experiences of young black men through a developmental lens, supported by theory in human ecology (Bronfenbrenner), social cognitive theories and self-regulation, and positive youth development. One limitation of working within a developmental-ecological framework is that the majority of work in this field is US based (Arnold, Armstrong & Lu, 2012 (Hackett, 1995; Okech & Harrington, 2002; Renn et al., 2003; Renn & Arnold, 2003; Spencer et al., 1993), and therefore some of the context regarding underrepresented students and black students is particular to that context.

Similarly, within the US literature in this field, the positive youth development approach, Bronfenbrenner's human ecology framework and social cognitive theories are often well-integrated, but this is not the case in the UK and therefore, there was little precedent on how to apply this to the UK context, where much of the work in this field was supported by Bourdieu's theories of capital (1986) or Critical Race Theory in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Working at the intersections of

education, psychology and sociology, this led to me to looking across disciplines to find literature and often I found this within UK educational psychology (Rouse, 2011), or work in the fields of qualitative psychology .

However, the utility of this theoretical approach was in its ability to allow me to identify and incorporate multiple factors that were present in the lives of the young black men in this study (Rouse, 2011). Working at different levels of the ecological system, I was able to explore their educational and career experiences in relation to local and national forces, such as parents, families, schools, and religious settings, while remaining focused on the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Working within developmental-ecological theoretical approach provided a new way of looking at the issue of underrepresented student development and further research in the UK could move the field further if it more studies used this perspective.

8.1.2 Reflecting on My Black Experience

> 'The researcher is an instrument in her/his research and despite some commonalities (our education, and in many instances, our "race" and class), geographers are not part of some universal monolith. We are differently positioned subjects with different biographies; we are not dematerialized, disembodied entities' (England, 1994: p. 248).

In her paper on reflexivity and positionality, England (1994) discusses her role as a white heterosexual geographer/researcher exploring lesbianism and sexual identities and the impact this has on the research study. While her work was based in the field of geography and not educational development, I found similarities here as a social scientist conducting fieldwork at the intersections of race, class and gender.

As a black British Londoner, I brought with me knowledge of the English educational system, of local areas and of the African diaspora that allowed me to connect well with the young black men. This connection I felt made the students feel comfortable to speak with me about their experiences and my cultural understanding allowed the conversations to open up and become fruitful in places. My mixed black identity, gender and social class did not appear to be a barrier in my interactions with the young men, however this could be due to the focus of our interactions being on the participant in an interview setting or large research workshop where the contributions were focused on their black male experiences. Many of the students appeared happy to have a platform to speak openly about their experiences as often young black male voices are not heard, especially in relation to their positive development (Harper, 2012).

When engaging with leaders of the Amos Bursary who were often of an older generation, my black cultural understanding was at times challenged and questioned. This was particularly strong during the PIPA workshops where I was confronted with 'don't you get it, you should understand' from a committee member in relation to the root problems in society activity. This came as a result of me asking for clarification on the position being put forward, but instead was seen as asking about things that were obvious. Being a middle-class black woman with mixed heritage, I struggled at times in situations such as this and it challenged me to think about my educational experiences and my racial identity. This has been discussed by white researchers working with black and minority ethnic (BME) participants (Bourke, 2014; Crozier, 2003; Edwards, 1990) or minority-ethnic researchers researching other minority communities (Egharevba, 2001), but not necessarily by black researchers working with black participants.

This experience highlighted to me the importance of all intersections on social research as age was not a factor that I paid as much attention to as race or social-class when planning and thinking about the theory and methodology. Disparity in age between myself and Amos leaders and committee members not only affected my understanding of their black experiences, but also the ways in which

they engaged with me. I was not able to find literature to support me in this area as much of what has been written on researcher position and age focuses on younger people being researched and assumes the researcher will be older. This is an area that warrants further exploration, particularly in relation to black people researching other black people.

8.1.3 Reflecting on the Amos Bursary

This study has allowed me to gain deep insights into the Amos Bursary network, and learn more about their aims, motivations, challenges and successes. What has been clear throughout this study is there willingness to support and help young black male students in a substantive way, and the commitment given by their volunteers and supporters illustrates so clearly why many of the young men see the Bursary as family. The Amos Bursary pulls on a wide network and uses innovative ways to engage funders and supporters, such as crowdfunding, and allows the young men to take the lead in the capacity as well. This is perhaps one of its biggest strengths as for a small organisation they have been able to achieve a great deal and provide a great deal for their students. The Amos Bursary allows the young men to get involved with fundraising efforts, sharing their stories and networking, which provides meaning and context to what they do. This is something they could consider doing in more areas, as the young men have many skills and talents that could help shape the future of the Bursary.

8.2 A Formula for Positive Underrepresented Student Development

This study explored the educational and early career development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary in a bid to identify what developmental changes they experience as a result of their participation. The focus of the main research question, this was recognised as important as ultimately the Amos Bursary is intervening with a young man's developmental trajectory at a crucial point in their learning pathway, when they are moving towards higher education and transitioning into early adulthood. In response to the following question and relevant sub-questions,

1. What are the developmental changes that young black men experience as a result of their participation in the Amos Bursary?
    a. What are the issues/barriers facing Amos Bursary young black men on their journey towards a graduate career?
    b. How does involvement with the Amos Bursary interact with the individual young man's developmental pathway?

I will present my main conclusions.

8.2.1 Growing and Changing Developmentally

During this study, it became clear that the young men involved in the Amos Bursary had experienced a number of developmental changes including psychological and social development while part of the Bursary and had experienced things they may not have if they were not part of it. At a time when they are becoming more autonomous as young people, moving away from home and into new environments, the Amos Bursary provided them with a new system of support to accompany these changes and became a safe space to think, grow and change into a more agentic person (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006).

Becoming an Agentic Self- Finding Your Voice

> 'For actions to be optimally agentic (i.e., to possess a strong sense of personal empowerment), they must be autonomous. In this regard, autonomy is the quality of owning one's actions and making action choices that are integrated with the self and that serve one's needs (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006: p. 10).

Developing an awareness of personal empowerment or knowing what you want and need out of life can be difficult for adolescents and young adults (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Being able to make choices for your own life therefore involves being an autonomous, agentic individual who is aware of their own voice and has integrated this into their decision-making processes (Deci et al., 1991). For many of the young black men I engaged with during this study, their Amos Bursary experience coincided with a time when they were making important decisions on the next phase of the developmental trajectory. Through their engagement in development days and mentoring, they were encouraged to think about what they wanted to study at university level, explore their career options, and think more broadly about their life goals as young adults. This space supported them to find their own voice and be more aware of their choices and the influence they have over their own lives (Bandura, 1977; Deci et al., 1991).

Similarly, having access to a peer support network of young black men provided a sense of relatedness (Hui & Tsang, 2006, 2012) and belonging to an identity of young black male achievers (Gosai, 2009; Rhamie, 2012). Peer support can act as a culturally specific coping mechanism (Chiang, Hunter & Yeh, 2004) where students feel free to be express themselves and discuss the challenges they may face moving between different cultural spaces (Carter, 2007). Discussing success and careers through the frame of a black cultural perspective (linked to an African worldview) provided the space for students to speak through the challenges they faced as black working-class men in

predominantly white middle-class spaces (Carter, 2007; Rollock, 2012), and gave hope to students such as Joshua who found it difficult at times navigating between spaces.

Believing in Themselves and the Future- the Role of Hope Stories

Self-efficacy is vital for educational development as 'efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves and act' (Bandura, 1995: p. 2). Having a strong sense of your ability to succeed at tasks and to exercise control over your life works in tandem with other constructs such as agency (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006), and supports an individual to overcome the obstacles and challenges life can bring (Elder, 1995).

The Amos Bursary's careers sessions and networking opportunities acted as efficacy-building events, creating efficacy beliefs through vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1995). Listening to stories of hope from successful black people, people of colour and working-class people provided the students with the belief that they too could achieve their goals despite the barriers they may have faced or may face in the future as a result of their race and/or class (Bandura, 1995; Elder, 1995). Peer and professional mentoring also supported the cultivation of a strong sense of self-efficacy as it provided social models who themselves had not long gone through a similar journey to the student, often a recent graduate and someone who the student could relate to.

Having access to a large peer support network of other young black men, meant that the students were able to speak freely to one another in counter-spaces (Carter, 2007) on and offline about their experiences as young black men. Learning from more senior students and recent graduates, this supported the young black men to find their voice away from their parents, neighbourhood peers, teachers and others who may have different ideas of what success for them should be. Hope stories supported their understanding of themselves as people who have an impact on their lives as people

with agency and autonomy over their futures (Bandura, 1977; Catalano et al., 2004, Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) and that they can move past the limiting nature of their microsystem. These experiences also fostered a belief in the future (Catalano et al., 2004) which highlighted the importance of higher education and the payoff of pursuing higher education despite concerns over student debt.

8.2.2 Overcoming Barriers: Ecological Competence

> 'achievement of competence requires resources that exist in, and are drawn from, the broader external environment' (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: p. 180).

Throughout this study, it became clear that navigating through the ecological environment (in relation to educational and career development) as a young black working-class male can be difficult, as it is often accompanied by a lack of knowledge on how the environment works (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011), or the ideology that influences how it functions (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and the inability to implement a pathway to success (Snyder et al., 2002). Having an awareness of how to go about planning a graduate career can be difficult for students who are first in their family to take on this journey (Reay, Crozier & Clayton, 2009), with few people in their home environments and neighbourhoods being able to provide relevant knowledge and support (Dennis, Phinney & Chuateco, 2005; Kintrea, St Clair & Houston, 2011). However, this is not to say that they are not encouraged and supported by family, friends, faith leaders and community leaders (Byfield, 2008; Law et al., 2012; Rhamie, 2012), but this cannot always provide the relevant local knowledge and support needed (Kintrea, St Clair & Houston, 2011).

Overcoming these barriers was important as becoming competent in their ability to navigate the ecological environment in line with their chosen career enabled the young men to move forward and helped them to engage with a range of people along this journey. An individual needs support

from their external environment to do this (Bandura, 1995; Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and for the young black men involved in this study, the Amos Bursary provided them with access to people and opportunities that enabled them to develop their ecological competence.

Amos Bursary Supporting Systems Knowledge

The Amos Bursary experience supported the development of system knowledge, or ecological competence in a holistic fashion as well as through direct activities. Peer support, networking and mentoring allowed students to speak informally with others about their hopes and dreams as well as their concerns. Similarly, exam success sessions, mock interviews and assessment days, and talks from admission tutors and recruiters allowed the students to develop insights into the processes that lie behind career decision-making and the practical knowledge needed to plan and prepare for forthcoming applications. Developing their competence in this area fostered self-determination (Deci et al., 1991) and self-efficacy (Spencer et al., 2017), enabling the students to become more skilled in these areas and overcome the barriers presented in their environment due to race and class (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

8.2.3 Overcoming Barriers: Cognitive Competence

As discussed in section 8.1.2, a lack of system knowledge can affect a student's ability to navigate the system and reach their desired goals (Catalano et al., 2004; Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011), which can result in some having low self-efficacy beliefs about their abilities to succeed in the graduate market (Byars-Winston et al., 2010; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994b). Developing their ecological competence allows student to overcome this barrier as it gives them the tools needed to understand how to navigate through the local and national context in order to access higher education and graduate careers and reach their longer-term goals (Renn & Arnold, 2003). Becoming

more cognitively competent complements this as it allows students to think more critically and creatively about their development pathways and develop successful strategies (Sun & Hui, 2012).

The Importance of Thinking Critically and Creatively About Your Future Career

Cognitive competence in relation to the educational and career development of young people involves being able to think critically and creatively about the world, about your place in it and your options (Sun & Hui, 2012). Recognised as an important aspect of youth development (Catalano et al., 2004) cognitive competence is centred on the cognitive processes involved in critical and creative thinking skills (Sun & Hui, 2012). Thinking critically and creatively about their educational and career development allows students to participate fully in a multidimensional, democratic society (Kuhn and Dean, 2004) and supports their decision-making processes on which career path they want to follow.

Being a part of the Amos Bursary supported the young men in this study to develop their cognitive competence as they were encouraged to think critically through direct workshops on in this area, as well as being exposed to a range of people, professions and places that they had not been exposed to before. Meeting people from a range of backgrounds, who have taken various routes on the career journeys illustrated to the students that a career is not necessarily a linear process and can take various twists and turns (Bloch, 2005).

Developing Meta-Employability Skills

As part of their increasing cognitive competence, the students also exhibited the development of meta-employability skills, where they were actively thinking about and reflecting on their employability and engaging regularly in personal development activities. Linked to the idea of meta-cognition (Kuhn & Dean, 2004), these skills involved the recognition and management of their own employability skills. These skills supported the students to develop a new pathway on their career

development trajectory based more closely on their internal goals and desires (Deci et al, 2000) and are more competent in higher order skills.

Summary

Being a part of the Amos Bursary experience supported the young black men involved in this study to overcome barriers in their ecological environment as a result of their social background (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Elder, 1995). Interacting with their developmental pathway in a number of ways, it supported these young people to develop hopeful behaviours and become more connected to a positive representation of a black male. They may have already had goals and ambitions to access graduate careers before they joined the Amos Bursary but what the Bursary added to their lives revolved around them realising that they are autonomous beings who have agency (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006) and that they can influence their own lives in positive ways despite the challenges they may face (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The Amos Bursary provided the young men with tools and strategies to support them to implement their life goals such as being cognitively competent, developing meta-employability skills and developing their ecological competence. This was done in an efficacy building environment (Bandura, 1995) where they felt a sense of belonging and relatedness to their peers and mentors (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) who provided vicarious sources of self-efficacy through these interactions. Their three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000) were met through the Amos Bursary and as they became more self-determined and more hopeful for the future (Catalano et al, 2004; Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006).

8.2.4 Presenting the Formula

In chapter three (section 3.2.2), Bronfenbrenner's development formula was introduced and discussed (Bronfenbrenner, 1978, 1992), a formula that was adapted from Kurt Lewin's original formula on behaviour (Lewin, 1935). In presenting this formula, Bronfenbrenner highlighted the relationship between the person and the environment on their development and the importance of seeing this relationship as integral to one another, one not separable from the other (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

Following this, a formula for underrepresented student development was developed from this study, in line with the key findings and conclusions. This formula for success was devised to illustrate how the different areas of their Amos Bursary experience worked together to support the young black men to move towards their goals.

Hope Stories (HS) + Ecological Competence (EC) + Cognitive Competence (CC) =

Positive Underrepresented Student Development (PUSD)

Hope stories alongside the development of ecological competence and cognitive competence allowed the students to develop positively and move towards higher education and graduate careers more successfully. All of the students involved in this study showed that they were more aware of what life had to offer them as a result of their Amos Bursary experience and were actively engaging in developing themselves. They were able to navigate through the barriers in their ecological environment and were all pursuing their goals and dreams.

While there experiences and issues related to their identity as black young men, some of the barriers and issues they faced were as a result of the social class (Croxford & Raffe, 2014; Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Robinson & Harris, 2013) and being part of an underrepresented group in the higher education and graduate career context. Therefore, it was felt that these conclusions could relate to

other underrepresented students such as other people of colour, and those from working-class backgrounds with little or no family history of university attendance (Byars-Winston et al., 2010; Kinzie et al., 2008).

For all underrepresented students, hope stories alongside the development of competence and meta-employability skills support them to develop positive efficacy beliefs about their ability to succeed academically and professionally (Byars-Winston et al., 2010). However, what is important here is that the hope stories come from close vicarious sources that the students can relate to and identify with (Bandura, 1995), and that they have access to positive counter-spaces where they can speak freely about their experiences (Carter, 2007) .

8.3 Developing a Theory for Research and practice

Building on the formula presented in the previous section, a theory was developed to support research and practice in the field. Building on Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory, a theory was developed to assist researchers, practitioners and policy makers in the field. Case study research often lends itself well to theory building (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) as it involves reconciling data and findings across cases and exploring a range of literature which supports a more 'creative reframing' (Eisenhardt, 1986: p. 546) of the topic. With the theory building process being so closely linked to the evidence, this enhances the possibility of a developing a valid theory consistent with observation (Eisenhardt, 1986; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). However, a challenge when developing theory from case study research is dealing with the volume of rich data available and not creating a theory that is overly complex (Eisenhardt, 1986).

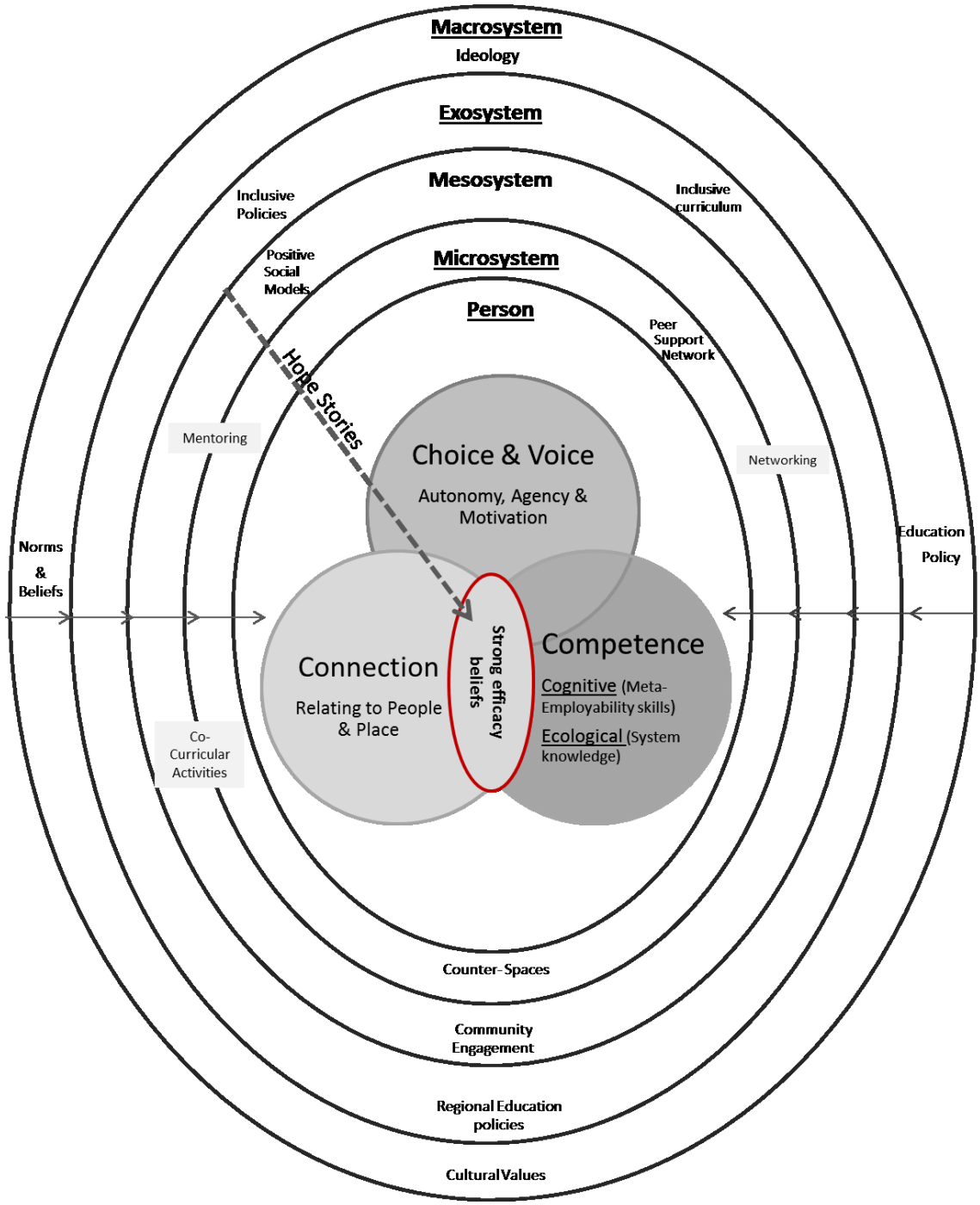
Supporting underrepresented students is a multi-layered process and working within the bioecological perspective allowed me to explore all of these layers and present an approach to understanding student development needs. In the line with the conclusions presented in section 8.1, a theory for underrepresented student development was identified. It is important to state however that this theory may not apply to all underrepresented students in the same way, however it is hoped that it can be used as a tool to support practice and to be developed on further.

8.3.1 Developmental-Ecological Theory for Underrepresented Students (DETUS)

The theory presented in this section builds on Bronfenbrenner's biecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005) and other theoretical perspectives discussed in this thesis, such as self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1997) and self-determination theory (Deci et al., 1991). Continuing with the focus on the individual within the social context, this theory puts the person in the centre, with the four central elements identified in this study as fundamental for the positive development of underrepresented students.

The aim of this theory is to act as a guiding framework, bridging the gap between research and practice and provide support for professionals and practitioners in Higher Education institutions (HEIs) and other educational and charitable settings working with young people in this domain. This study put forward a range of evidence that highlighted the need to take a multi-faceted approach to encouraging positive underrepresented student development (as set out in chapter seven), taking into account the role of different layers of the environment and the person on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005, 2006). However, conveying this to practitioners in a way that is accessible is important for ensuring that it has an impact on practice and outcomes for students (Kuhn and Dean, 2004). This theory aims to bridge this gap, presenting an evidence-based theoretically grounded framework for understanding the experiences and development of underrepresented students such as the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary. In line with Bronfenbrenner's presentation of the concentric circles surrounding the person, figure 8.1 was developed to illustrate how an underrepresented student develops positively, and what a supportive environment for their development looks like.

FIGURE 8:1 VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF DETUS



8.3.1.1 The Developing Student

At the core of the theory is the person, the developing underrepresented student who is navigating their way through the ecological environment to achieve their educational and career goals. Building

on the formula for positive underrepresented student development (presented in section 8.1.4) this theory illustrates the interconnected nature of the relationship between the student beliefs and abilities, and the social context. A positive and facilitative social environment is one where the diversity of needs of underrepresented students are recognised at the different levels of the ecological environment (Renn & Arnold, 2003), and policies, planning and curriculum are developed to encourage students to develop to move successfully towards their educational and career goals (Young, 1983)

Choice & Voice

From the initial literature review, the findings of this study and the conclusions it became clear that for underrepresented students such as the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary, being aware of their increasing autonomy and freedom to choose a career path and ultimately a new life was important. Finding your own voice and choosing what you want to do with your life is however reliant on knowing what your options are (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011) and having hope that you can achieve those goals (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006). The interconnected nature of choice and voice is important here as 'without choice, there would be no agency, and no self-regulation' (Deci 1986: p. 222).

Connection

Having an awareness of the educational and career choices that are available and identifying their own life goals for underrepresented students is linked to them feeling connected to others, to a community, to a space and place, having a sense of relatedness and belonging (Deci et al, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000). As seen in chapter five, the young men in this study felt connected to the Amos Bursary and saw it as family. Through their interactions with other young black men, they were able to form peer support networks and were able to find their voices in counter-spaces (Carter, 2007)

that allowed them to express their feelings openly and safely. This connection supported the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs as the students heard many hope stories on a regular basis from other black men and women, people of colour, and working-class people. These hope stories acted as vicarious sources of self-efficacy as they came from people the students could relate to (Bandura, 1995) and they provided opportunities for students to see positive representations of black people.

Providing underrepresented students with positive connections, to the institution and their peers is fundamental for them to feel a sense of belonging and relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Renn & Arnold, 2003) which is vital for supporting them to become more self-determined and resilient (Deci et al., 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This includes seeing positive visual representations of people like them within the institution as this supports them to feel part of the wider environment and encourages them to get involved more socially (Renn et al., 2003).

Competence - Ecological

Supporting choice and voice, and connection is vital for the development of competence, in particular ecological and cognitive competence. Being able to engage well with the landscape in relation to your educational and career development involves knowing how the system works (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007; Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011) and understanding how to navigate it. For young people from minority backgrounds such as the young men involved in this study, they are often the first in their family to attend higher education and pursue a graduate career and are therefore have limited resources in their microsystem to learn from (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Professionals working in universities and educational settings can support young people to develop their ecological competence by opening doors to professions and connecting them with passionate professionals in industry like those the Amos Bursary work with. Providing information from insiders

can go a long way to support students to become efficacious (Hackett, 1995; Spencer et al., 1993) as long as the social models provided are relatable and not just superstar examples (Bandura, 1995).

Competence - Cognitive

Becoming more cognitively competent in relation to underrepresented student development involves students thinking critically and creatively about their educational and career goals and their life plans. Through this process, students are able to develop meta-employability skills, which involve them actively thinking about and reflecting on their employability and engaging regularly in personal development activities. Similar to meta-cognition (Kuhn & Dean, 2004), this involves recognising and managing one's own employability skills which in turn supports students to develop career pathways that are linked to their agentic selves (Little, Snyder & Weheymer, 2006).

Coupled with ecological competence, cognitive competence and the development of meta-employability skills supports students to evaluate the wider landscape and their place in it, being aware of the different journeys people take can in their career path. These skills can be supported through direct activities on critical thinking and goal planning, as delivered by the Amos Bursary to its students. It can also be supported by allowing young people to hear from a range of speakers from different backgrounds speaking openly and honestly about their career journeys, which is vital for students who have little family or neighbourhood knowledge learn from (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011; Kinzie et al., 2008).

8.4 Improving the Amos Bursary's Practice

This study explored the educational development of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary and has put forward a number of areas where the young men have benefitted from their bursary experience. Responding to sub-questions (c), (d), and (e), conclusions will be put forward on

the evaluation piece of this study which looked at the Amos Bursary's practice as an organisation and it effectiveness. As discussed in chapter six, the evaluation piece of the study took the form of a process/outcome evaluation looking at their theory of change and the problems they are trying to address, alongside their practices and process of implementation (Fagan et al., 2008). It did not take the form of an impact evaluation as it was felt that the nature of the case would have made this impractical.

The two main evaluation questions for the study were;

C. How does the Amos Bursary define and measure success?

D. What are the outcomes for the young black men as a result of their engagement with the Amos Bursary?

With the following question incorporated to support the research with key stakeholders and assess the relevance for the field;

E. What are the corporate motivations for engaging with the Amos Bursary?

This section will present conclusions linked to these questions and explore their relevance Amos Bursary's organisational practice as well as that of similar organisations.

8.4.1 Understanding Success through Theory of Change Development

Responding to Sub-Question (C) – How Does the Amos Bursary Define and Measure Success?

Developing a theory of change can assist organisations in their programme planning and evaluation (W.K. Kellog Foundation, 1998) as it enables development of a clear narrative on how they hope to achieve their goals, and create a pathway to programme success (Chen, 2016). As a small, grassroots organisation the Amos Bursary has evolved organically, in response to the needs of their students and therefore, it was not entirely clear when the research started what success looked like to the organisation. This was highlighted during the Participatory Impact Pathway Analysis (PIPA) workshops where the groups expressed different ideas of what they thought the societal problems were that the organisation was trying to address (Douthwaite et al., 2008).

However, what was clear from the PIPA workshops and interviews is that success for the Amos Bursary involves young black men accessing higher education and moving into graduate careers. Attending higher education has always been important to the organisation alongside the young men realising their own ambitions has been central from their inception, however the lack of clarity on whether they would prefer students to access elite institutions or particular industries needs to be clarified further. This will ultimately support the Bursary's ability to measure success more effectively and develop clearer outcome measures (Chen, 2016; Douthwaite et al., 2008).

The PIPA workshops allowed different members of the Amos Bursary to express their views on the organisation's practices and the root problems in society they believed they were trying to address. This provided the organisation with an opportunity to think about their theory of change narrative (Harries, Hodgson & Noble, 2014) and how this links to their outputs and outcomes (Douthwaite et al., 2008). It could be said that this process in fact acted similar to an action research project

(Stringer, 1999) as following on from these workshops the Amos Bursary produced an impact report (Amos Bursary 2015), which set out their aims, objectives, and achievement more clearly.

8.4.2 Positive outcomes for young black men

Responding to Sub-Question (D) – What are the Outcomes for the Young Black Men as a Result of Their Engagement with the Amos Bursary?

In previous chapters the experiences of the young black men involved in the Amos Bursary were explored and discussed, with chapter six in particular exploring the organisation's practice. A set of programme effectiveness criteria (table 4.1) were developed in line with the positive youth development perspective (Catalano et al., 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003) and previous research on quality and effectiveness of youth programmes (Fagan et al., 2008), and this was used alongside the theory of change logic model (figure 6.3) to explore the outcomes for the young men. The following conclusions will now be presented in response to sub-question (D):

- The Amos Bursary programme is an effective positive youth development programme that supports the development of five positive youth development constructs (Catalano, et al., 2004); promoting competence, fostering self-efficacy, promoting bonding, fostering self-determination, and fostering a belief in the future.
- It does this by providing an empowering environment for the young black men they work with (Fagan et al., 2008), one that supports self-efficacy and self-determination in particular.
- Through networking, mentoring and access to a peer support network, it allows the young men to engage with a range of positive models (black people, people of colour and working-class people) which not only supports their self-efficacy and self-determination, but also

fosters hope and a belief in the future, one where they can see themselves succeeding educationally and in their careers.

- The young men are able to access a range of learning and development opportunities in industry and with higher education institutions that supports their ecological competence (system knowledge) by providing an increase in awareness on how to navigate the landscape in relation to university applications and graduate careers, including internships.

The Amos Bursary does not explicitly address pro-social involvement (community engagement and involvement) but this is an important part of positive youth development (Catalano et al., 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). However, through their development of cognitive competence, some of the young men became more reflective of their position and the opportunities they had received through the Amos Bursary and this made them think about less-fortunate others in their neighbourhoods. The Amos Bursary could support the development of pro-social involvement in the future through community engagement activities or youth leadership training.

Responding to Sub-Question (E) -What Are the Corporate Motivations for Engaging with The Amos Bursary?

As mentioned above, the Amos Bursary provides a range of networking opportunities and events for its students to learn about the world of higher education and careers and it does this by working with a number of partners including corporate firms and higher education institutions. Through interviews with representatives from organisations that they work with and conducting participant observation at events, it was clear that the partner organisations working with the bursary had recognised that young black men were particularly underrepresented within their industries and/or organisations and wanted to impact on young black men's lives now. The issue of representation of young black men (and other BME students) at Russell Group and red brick institutions has become well-known in recent times (Boliver, 2013). The Amos Bursary provides access to young people who are ready to make the journey and for the universities they work with, this allows them to provide immediate support through information and guidance and financial assistance.

Industry partners also recognised issues for black and other BME students and worked with the Amos Bursary as part of their wider corporate responsibility and diversity agendas. For some however, it was more personal due to their own experience as black people in the professions and as result them wanting to support others as much as possible as they make that journey into the world of professional life.

8.5 Contributions to the field

Looking at an Old Problem from a New Perspective

While the educational experiences of black British students has been researched before (Arbouin, 2009; Byfield, 2008; Gosai, 2009; Law et al., 2012; Rhamie, 2012; Rollock, 2006; Tomlin & Olusola, 2006) this study was unique in its approach to the subject coming at the topic from a developmental-ecological standpoint. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of development (2005) was designed to act as an overarching theory that supports the researcher to explore human development in relation to the role of the environment and all of its complexities (Bronfenbrenner, 1999; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Renn et al., 2003; Tudge et al., 2009).

As a result of this, it supports the researcher to integrate other theories as was done in this study where social cognitive theories and the positive youth development approach were integrated to develop a theoretical framework that embraced the multi-faceted nature of the black male educational experience under-investigation. This study serves a first step in developing this theoretical approach to research on underrepresented students in the UK, that other can build upon.

Methodological contributions

By taking risks and incorporating methods and tools from other disciplines such as PIPA (Douthwaite et al., 2008) and the Tree of Life (Ncube, 2006), this study ensured that the voices of the participants were interwoven with the findings as they were encouraged to participate and engage with the research. Others working with marginalised communities and under-heard voices such as underrepresented students could use this study as a starting point for reflecting on their methods and methodology to enable participants voices to come to the fore and allow for cultural sensitivity (Mertens, 2008).

DETUS - Presenting a Theory for Research and Practice

A significant contribution of this study is the development of a theory for research and practice on underrepresented student development, DETUS. DETUS alongside its visual model is the first step in providing a new theoretical approach to researching underrepresented students, particularly for UK research. This development can be used by other working with a range of underrepresented students to robustly scrutinise and improve the theory further.

Supporting Evaluation Research

This study involved evaluation research and as such produced insights for evaluation researchers on engaging with and managing stakeholders, as well as balancing priorities in applied research. Through the production of a theory of change logic model, researchers and evaluators can use this as a way of thinking about the importance of theory-driven evaluation for evidenced-based results (Chen, 2016). Similarly, the effectiveness criteria presented (chapter four) can support others exploring areas of quality, fidelity and implementation processes (Fagan et al., 2008) in evaluation research .

8.6 Recommendations for the Amos Bursary

Following on from the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are put forward for the Amos Bursary and similar organisations working within this space:

- Invite speakers and engage with leaders from a range of sectors including the Media, Charities, Education, Health, and entrepreneurs in order to support students to develop their ecological competence and understanding of a range of industries. This will also support their development of a positive black image, as they see the possibilities for black people in a range of industries.
- Consider encouraging students to get involved in youth leadership and pro-social involvement as a way of facilitating community engagement and community development. This can include localised programmes where students lead sessions with other young people of colour, sharing the knowledge they have developed as a result of their Amos Bursary experience.
- To ensure that an impact evaluation can be conducted in future, link programme activities to outputs and outcomes using tools such as the theory of change model presented in this study.
- The Literature review highlight specific problems for black Caribbean boys in relation to their attainment and behaviour at school (Department for Education, 2016). The Amos Bursary should consider how they can support these students further through actions such as early intervention as this will affect the pipeline of students for their programme.

- The Amos Bursary has been successful in supporting young black men and could consider extending their work to young black women who also have needs in relation to their educational and career development (Rollock, 2007). Thought and consideration should be put into the form of this support to ensure the specific needs of young black women are met without affecting the existing provision for young black men. The theory presented in this study - DETUS could be used to further support this.

8.7 Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

> 'Because place matters so much in the formation of an individual's aspirations, policies to address aspirations must be local. A universal approach is likely to be less effective because of the distinctive nature of aspirational formation in different types of social setting' (Kintrea, St. Clair & Houston, 2011: p. 68)

It is important for researchers and practitioners in higher education to ensure that their policies and practices have a local focus, identifying the best ways to approach different underrepresented student needs. They are not a homogenous even within racial groups (England, 1994) and therefore, should The following acronym LIVES sets out how this can be done:

Listen – Listen to the views of underrepresented students inside your institution to enable you to gain insights into their positive and negatives experiences. This will provide a good point of departure when planning interventions and provision (Harper, 2012). Theories such the developmental-ecological theory of underrepresented students (DETUS) presented in this study can provide support when doing this.

Invest – Invest in research in this field as a way of improving practice and creating a scholarly approach to work in this domain.

Value - Value the responses of students and participants in this form of research, as they are not always presented with an opportunity to express their views on their own lives and deserve to be heard.

Evaluate – Evaluate practice wherever possible to ensure an evidence-based approach to your work on underrepresented student development.

Share - Share your practice and evaluation findings with other institutions to ensure best practice across the field.

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Appendix 1 – Participant Information Sheet

Imperial College London

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET.

Rising to the Top: An Evaluation of the Amos Bursary Scheme focusing on Contextual Factors of Influence on the Positive Development of Black Young Men.

We would like to invite you to participate in this research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way.

Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Introduction

This evaluation project will be researching the Amos Bursary to look at how the scheme is supporting and developing the young men involved, what progress the young men make while on the programme, and what, if any, areas can be improved to better support the young men in the future. This project is a piece of independent research and will be conducted as part of a PhD at Imperial College London.

Recruitment

As part of this research, we are looking for 6 participants at different stages of the Amos Bursary programme (i.e. first year, second year) to be interviewed. We are interested in participants from African and Caribbean backgrounds, studying a range of different subjects and from different parts of London.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to do the following:

- Sign a consent form, and if you are under 18 we will also need a parent/guardian to sign a consent form.
- To be interviewed every 3 months for a period of 12-18 months. The interviews will take place at your convenience (i.e. your college, university) and will last for approximately 45 minutes. During the interviews you will be encouraged to discuss a range of topics relating to your experiences on the Amos Bursary programme, and your educational experiences. What you discuss will be treated as confidential and will not be discussed with outsiders. Taking part in these interviews will not affect your participation on the Amos Bursary Scheme in any way. Interviews will be audio recorded (with your permission) for transcription purposes, and notes will be taken. This data will be handled safely and securely.

- As part of the interviews, you will also be asked to take and/or share photographs of things/places/events that are significant to you and that you would like to discuss during the interviews. These photographs will be treated confidentially and will not be published or shared without consent.
- At the end of the research project, your interviews will become part of the final report, and will be anonymous. They may also become part of articles and presentations, and again all information will be anonymised. You will be able to receive copies of these publications if you wish.

What are the benefits of taking part?

This research project will hopefully help inform the work of the Amos Bursary so that it can grow and develop on what it already does. Hopefully it will also help those working on similar programmes and in related fields so that they can better support young black men and other young people in the future.

Are there any risks?

There are no significant risks to taking part in this research study, and all interviews will be conducted in line with Imperial College child protection and health and safety guidelines. The principal researcher has a current criminal record check and has extensive experience of working with children and young people. At times, you may discuss your emotions which can cause distress, however, all care and consideration will be taken in this instance to support you as far as possible. All discussions will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed, unless in circumstances where it is thought that you may cause harm to yourself of others.

Maintaining safety and confidentiality

All participants will be invited to choose pseudonyms (alternative names) to protect their identity and maintain confidentiality. Any personal data (real name, contact details) will be stored on a password protected database and will not be shared with external agencies. This information will be published.

Withdrawal

It is your choice whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw from the study at any time and without giving a reason. You may also withdraw any data/information you have already provided up until it is transcribed for use in the final report.

Further Information

If you have any questions or require more information about this study, please contact the researcher using the following contact details:

Principal Researcher: Bianca Bailey Wilson– Educational Development Unit

Address: Level 2, Faculty Building, South Kensington Campus, London SW7 2AZ

Email: b.bailey13@imperial.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this information.

Appendix 2 – Informed Consent Form (Under 18)

Imperial College London

INFORMED CONSENT FORM UNDER 18

Title of Project: Rising to the Top: An Evaluation of the Amos Bursary Scheme

Name of researcher: Bianca Bailey Wilson

Please tick box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the subject information sheet dated *18/02/2014, version 2* for the above study. I may keep this information sheet for my records and I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered fully.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw, without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.	☐
3. I understand that sections of my recorded comments and transcript text may be looked at by responsible individuals from Imperial College London within the research team. I give permission for these individuals to access this data as relevant to this and future research.	☐
4. I am willing to have these interviews audio recorded.	☐
5. I understand that this consent form will be kept separate from the data and that the researchers will maintain my anonymity throughout the project, including in publication.	☐
6. I understand that whilst every effort will be made to anonymise participants, identifiable images or remarks made may compromise the degree of anonymity provided.	☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐
8. As a parent/guardian, I understand what the project entails and I agree to my child taking part.	☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant (Printed)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Name of parent/guardian (Printed)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher (Printed)	**Date**	**Signature**

1 copy for subject; 1 copy for researcher

Appendix 3 – Informed Consent Form (Over 18)

Imperial College London

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Rising to the Top: An Evaluation of the Amos Bursary Scheme focusing on Contextual Factors of Influence on the Positive Development of Black Young Men.

Name of researcher: Bianca Bailey

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the subject information sheet dated 13/01/2014, version 1 for the above study. I may keep this information sheet for my records and I have had the opportunity to ask questions which have been answered fully.	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw, without giving any reason and without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.	☐
3. I understand that sections of my recorded comments and transcript text may be looked at by responsible individuals from Imperial College London within the research team. I give permission for these individuals to access this data as relevant to this and future research.	☐
4. I am willing to have these interviews audio recorded and transcribed.	☐
5. I understand that this consent form will be kept separate from the data and that the researchers will maintain my anonymity throughout the project, including in publication.	☐
6. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant (Printed)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Name of parent/guardian (If under 18)	**Date**	**Signature**
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher (Printed)	**Date**	**Signature**

1 copy for subject; 1 copy for researcher

Appendix 4: GCSE Attainment Data by Ethnicity 2014/15

(Department for Education, 2016)

Table CH2a: GCSE and equivalent entries and achievements of pupils[1] at the end of key stage 4 by ethnicity, free school meal eligibility and gender

Year: 2014/15 (revised)[2,3]

Coverage: England, state-funded schools (including Academies and CTCs)

Please select criteria below:
Achievements: 5+ A*-C grades inc. English & mathematics GCSEs

	Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals						All other pupils[4]						All pupils[5]					
	Number of eligible pupils[1]			Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C grades inc. English & mathematics GCSEs			Number of eligible pupils[1]			Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C grades inc. English & mathematics GCSEs			Number of eligible pupils[1]			Percentage achieving 5+ A*-C grades inc. English & mathematics GCSEs		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
All pupils[5]	**39,101**	**37,365**	**76,466**	**29.3**	**37.2**	**33.1**	**243,176**	**233,577**	**476,753**	**56.2**	**65.8**	**60.9**	**282,394**	**271,075**	**553,469**	**52.5**	**61.8**	**57.1**
White	**26,804**	**25,754**	**52,558**	**24.3**	**32.3**	**28.3**	**197,015**	**189,003**	**386,018**	**55.9**	**65.7**	**60.7**	**223,819**	**214,757**	**438,576**	**52.2**	**61.7**	**56.8**
white British	25,049	24,082	49,131	24.0	32.0	27.9	185,812	178,117	363,929	56.3	66.1	61.1	210,861	202,199	413,060	52.4	62.1	57.1
Irish	116	130	246	25.9	37.7	32.1	822	814	1,636	72.1	75.1	73.6	938	944	1,882	66.4	69.9	68.2
traveller of Irish heritage	51	42	93	11.8	14.3	12.9	24	25	49	20.8	32.0	26.5	75	67	142	14.7	20.9	17.6
Gypsy / Roma	201	207	408	5.5	5.3	5.4	342	305	647	9.1	12.5	10.7	543	512	1,055	7.7	9.6	8.6
any other white background	1,387	1,293	2,680	33.4	42.8	37.9	10,015	9,742	19,757	50.4	59.0	54.6	11,402	11,035	22,437	48.3	57.1	52.6
Mixed	**2,199**	**2,211**	**4,410**	**34.5**	**40.6**	**37.5**	**9,076**	**9,027**	**18,103**	**58.9**	**67.2**	**63.1**	**11,275**	**11,238**	**22,513**	**54.2**	**62.0**	**58.1**
white and black Caribbean	847	859	1,706	26.9	35.2	31.1	2,759	2,835	5,594	48.7	59.3	54.1	3,606	3,694	7,300	43.6	53.7	48.7
white and black African	259	293	552	37.5	47.4	42.8	953	1,013	1,966	58.4	67.9	63.3	1,212	1,306	2,518	54.0	63.3	58.8
white and Asian	375	366	741	42.4	41.5	42.0	2,085	2,031	4,116	67.4	75.0	71.2	2,460	2,397	4,857	63.6	69.9	66.7
any other mixed background	718	693	1,411	38.2	43.9	41.0	3,279	3,148	6,427	62.3	69.1	65.6	3,997	3,841	7,838	58.0	64.5	61.2
Asian	**4,956**	**4,538**	**9,494**	**45.0**	**51.6**	**48.2**	**20,590**	**19,327**	**39,917**	**60.4**	**68.2**	**64.2**	**25,546**	**23,865**	**49,411**	**57.4**	**65.1**	**61.1**
Indian	572	493	1,065	52.8	58.2	55.3	6,377	5,887	12,264	70.5	77.0	73.6	6,949	6,380	13,329	69.0	75.5	72.1
Pakistani	2,500	2,339	4,839	38.5	45.8	42.0	7,753	7,349	15,102	50.8	58.9	54.7	10,253	9,688	19,941	47.8	55.7	51.6
Bangladeshi	1,276	1,240	2,516	53.0	59.6	56.2	2,772	2,684	5,456	60.8	69.4	65.0	4,048	3,924	7,972	58.3	66.3	62.2
any other Asian background	608	466	1,074	47.7	52.8	49.9	3,688	3,407	7,095	62.9	72.4	67.5	4,296	3,873	8,169	60.7	70.1	65.1
Black	**3,466**	**3,436**	**6,902**	**35.6**	**46.8**	**41.2**	**10,081**	**10,261**	**20,342**	**50.1**	**61.2**	**55.7**	**13,547**	**13,697**	**27,244**	**46.4**	**57.6**	**52.0**
black Caribbean	857	817	1,674	24.4	40.9	32.4	2,772	2,868	5,640	44.0	55.7	49.9	3,629	3,685	7,314	39.3	52.4	45.9
black African	2,215	2,177	4,392	41.8	50.8	46.2	6,069	6,216	12,285	53.8	64.4	59.1	8,284	8,393	16,677	50.6	60.8	55.7
any other black background	394	442	836	25.4	38.0	32.1	1,240	1,177	2,417	45.9	58.0	51.8	1,634	1,619	3,253	40.9	52.6	46.7
Chinese	**74**	**72**	**146**	**67.6**	**80.6**	**74.0**	**974**	**947**	**1,921**	**70.6**	**83.1**	**76.8**	**1,048**	**1,019**	**2,067**	**70.4**	**82.9**	**76.6**
any other ethnic group	1,110	950	2,060	46.1	52.4	49.0	3,009	2,691	5,700	54.9	65.5	59.9	4,119	3,641	7,760	52.5	62.1	57.0

Source: key stage 4 attainment data

1. Pupils at the end of key stage 4 in each academic year.

2. Figures are based on revised data.

3. In 2014/15, early entry policy, under which only a pupil's first attempt at a qualification is counted in performance measures, is extended to all subjects (see SFR main text).

4. Includes pupils not eligible for free school meals and for whom free school meal eligibility was unclassified or could not be determined.

5. Includes pupils for whom ethnicity was not obtained, refused or could not be determined or for whom free school meal eligibility was unclassified or could not be determined. This figure also includes pupils at further education colleges: as FE colleges do not complete the school census, we do not have matched pupil characteristics data of pupils in FE colleges and therefore these pupils are not included in characteristics breakdowns. This means that there are some cases where the individual characteristics breakdowns will not add up to the all pupils figure.

. = Not applicable.

x = Figures not shown in order to protect confidentiality. See 'confidentiality' within the SFR text for information on data suppression.

Appendix 5: Topic Guide: Interviews with Amos Bursary Students

Interviews are guided by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model with a particular focus on the micro and mesosytems.

Cohort information

Cohort 1 Year 12 of school

Cohort 2 Year 13 of school

Cohort 3 first or second year university

Cohort 4 second or third year university

Graduate Alumnus of Amos Bursary and graduated university

Interview 1

Overview of session:

- To baseline, find out more about the individual's aspirations, their families' aspirations, and their community relationships before they began engaging with the Amos Bursary.
- To find out about how the individual discovered the Amos Bursary and their motivations for applying.

Opening:

Thank you again for your participation. Just to remind you, your responses are confidential and the interview is semi-structured, more like a discussion. We may also discuss some photographs and going forward I may ask you to share photographs as well. The approximate length of this interview is 45 minutes, please let me know if you need a comfort break at any point. Just to remind you, I will be audio-recording this interview to help me when writing up. (Re-introduce myself and remind the participant that what they say will not affect their involvement in the Amos Bursary in any way).

Questions for all participants (including graduates)

Pre-bursary aspirations

1. What age were you when you started with the Amos Bursary?
2. Thinking back before you started the Amos Bursary, what were your aspirations for yourself, in terms of your education and career? Go back as far as you can remember.
3. What were your family aspirations for you before you started the bursary? (parents grandparents, close relatives).
4. How about teachers, were you aware of any teacher aspirations or ambitions for you to pursue a particular subject or career?

Pre-bursary community relationships

5. What were your relationships like at school (before you started the bursary)? (prompt to talk about teachers and peers if needed).
6. Were you involved in any community groups or other local activities before you started the bursary? Were any of these linked to a particular faith or religion?

Pre-bursary academic choices

7. Thinking back to the start of year 12, how did you decide upon your A-level subjects?
8. Was this linked to any specific career choice that you have/had in mind?
9. Optional: Was anyone else influential in decision-making process for your A-Levels? (This question depends on the answers to aspirations questions).

Applying for the Amos Bursary

10. How did you come to know about the Amos Bursary?
11. What made you apply for the Amos Bursary/What were your motivations for getting involved?
12. Did any of your schoolmates or friends apply for the Bursary?

Next session prep

13. For next session, please could you share images with me of people and places that are important to you and are influential in your life?

Interview 2: Tree of Life (not applicable for graduates)

Overview of session:

- The Tree of Life is a graphic elicitation tool that will allow me to discover more about the individual, their microsystem and possibly their exosystem.
- This will also serve as a reference tool for further discussions, working on what the participant has produced about their own life.

Tree of life is a method used to encourage (vulnerable) individuals to find their voice and explore their individual lives and journeys (Denborough, 2014).

Ground = where you are now, activities you enjoy, where you live

Roots= heritage, family, culture, faith, favourite childhood activities, significant teachers/educators

Trunk= your skills and abilities

Leaves = significant people/figures both past and present (can be fictional or real)

Fruit = gifts you have been given by others (material and non-material)

Flowers= Gifts you have given others

Questions

1. Here is a template of what is called a Tree of Life. It is a tool that is used to explore individual lives and journeys. Are you happy to create one here with me that we will use in our discussions together?
2. If you have any images with you relating to people or places, we can use these when building your tree.

Interview 3: Tree of Life part two (not applicable for graduates)

Overview of session:

- Exploring topics that emerged from the tree of life created last session, in particular the roots, leaves and fruits.
- Focusing on the mesosystem – the interrelationships that occur between elements of the individual's microsystem (people, objects, symbols).

Questions (these will emerge upon reflection from the tree of life session)

Interview 4

Overview of session:

- Your Amos Bursary experience - exploring the individual's feelings regarding their time on the Amos Bursary, how they feel they have developed.
- Where you are now (aspirations, motivations) - exploring the individual's current goals (chronosystem dimension, snapshot in time)

Questions

Amos Bursary experience

1. How often do you attend Amos Bursary events?
2. Is there a particular workshop or event that you have enjoyed the most? Why?
3. Is there a particular element of the bursary that you enjoy the most?
4. How have you found the mentoring experience?
5. What do you feel you've learnt the most from your involvement in the Amos Bursary?
6. Are you involved in any other activities similar to the Amos Bursary?
7. What does the Amos Bursary mean to you?
8. Are there any areas of the bursary that you feel could be improved?

Where you are now

1. What are your current educational aspirations?
2. What are your current career aspirations?
3. How do you feel about where you are now?

4. Do you feel that you have more opportunities now/today than your parents had when they were a similar age to you?
5. Are you hoping to attend university (cohort 1)? If yes, have you chosen a particular subject and/institution(s)? If no, do you have something else planned?
6. Tell me about your university experience right now (cohort 2, 3).
7. Tell me about your career experience(s) at the moment (graduates).

Other Data to Collect

Demographic data

- Name
- Age
- Ethnicity/racial heritage
- Health related issues (incl. learning difficulties)

Questions that could be asked at an appropriate time:

Family change (divorce/family breakdown, family growth)

1. Has your family set-up changed since you were a child?
2. If yes, how do you feel about this change?

Mass media

1. How do you feel young black males are portrayed in the media?
2. Are there any particular black people who are famous that are significant to you?
3. Are there any other individuals (no particular race) that are significant to you?

Appendix 6: Research Workshop Task

Imperial College London

Research Workshop - Bianca Bailey Wilson

July 2015

Group Task

In groups of no more than 10, please think about the following question:

What do you think are the biggest barriers facing young black men in your position?

Discuss and then pick your group's top three to feedback to the whole group for wider discussion. You should think about why these are barriers, and explain your rationale for picking the top three.

Time: 30 minutes (group work), 5 minutes feedback per group, 15 minutes discussion