research article

Making diversity visible in often unrecognised family practices

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This article makes a small contribution to *Families, Relationships and Societies'* knowledge production. It addresses racialised and ethnicised inequalities experienced in the everyday lives of a family constituted through serial migration, where the adult interviewed ('Lizzie') reflected on her childhood experience of leaving the Caribbean to join parents she did not remember and siblings she had never met. It reuses material from a larger study of the retrospective narratives of adults who had been childhood serial migrants. A major finding is that Lizzie's experience of serial migration was intersectional, linked to her social positioning and her experiences of racism at school and felt outsiderness at home in contrast to feelings of belonging and being valued at the Black-led church she attended. The article argues that, while such family experiences are frequently unrecognised, they pattern children's experiences, their adult relationships and identities and contribute to, and arise from, historical and sociostructural constructions of society.

Making unrecognised family practices visible: intersectionality in process

The world into which the first volume of *Families, Relationships and Societies* was born was one in which family forms and practices had long been the subject of debate and contestation. In the UK, the legacy of Margaret Thatcher's premiership (1979–90) was one of moralising about normative ideals of nuclear families and births within marriage and enshrining those norms into welfare legislation and financial arrangements such as pensions. Responsibilities for care and provision for all family members was considered the duty of individual families with state intervention reserved for those who had failed

to meet normative expectations. Increasing inequalities in society and within households was frequently blamed on families themselves. As Ruth Davidson (2020: 213) put it:

> Thatcher's rhetoric was uncompromising: 'Welfare benefits, distributed with little or no consideration of their effects on behaviour encouraged illegitimacy, facilitated the breakdown of families, and replaced incentives favouring work and self-reliance with perverse encouragement for idleness and cheating.'

As many feminist theorists had carefully documented, the nuclear family both enshrined and privatised inequities including gender and economic resources (Oakley, 1974; Brannen and Wilson, 1987). The development of feminist family studies was one attempt to understand and foreground the contradictions and differential power relations within families (Few-Demo et al, 2014). Yet, families and relationships have always been in the process of change and social scientists are continually attempting to broaden their understandings of families and relationships in the societal contexts in which they are located.

Given this background of complications and contradictions in theorising and researching families, the aims of *Families, Relationships and Societies* were exciting:

> The journal aims to stimulate and inform debate and issues will include articles that advance theoretical insight into families and relationships across the life course and historical time and geo-political and virtual spaces. We encourage methodological innovation and welcome diverse methodological approaches, especially those that advance the design and practice of family relationships research and provide new forms of producing and presenting evidence for policy and practice. Evidence that contributes to wider theoretical debates about families and relationships in their social, cultural and historical contexts will be welcomed. (Ridge and Featherstone, 2012: 3)

The editorial aims were in keeping with the title of the journal, which foregrounds the plurality of families, relationships and societies. The promise to consider geographical, historical, generational differences and methodological and disciplinary pluralism as well as to stimulate and inform debate were certainly met in the first volume. It was particularly fitting that the volume included a provocation by Edwards and Gillies (2012a) to retain the notion of 'family', rather than focusing only on 'personal life' or intimacy given that 'family' remains institutionalised and influential in most people's lives (for good or ill). The robust responses invited by the editors argued that it is essential to broaden social scientific engagement to intimate life (Wilkinson and Bell, 2012) and showed why intimacy (as theorised by Lynn Jamieson, 2011), personal life (Carol Smart, 2007) and family all need to be studied (May 2012). These responses, together with Edwards and Gillies' (2012b) riposte set the tone for the critical debate the editors wished to encourage. A founder member of the editorial board, David Morgan, also influenced publications in the journal through the popularisation of his notion that families need to be understood through 'family practices' (Morgan, 2011) and the employment of Janet Finch's (2007) notion of 'family display'. All these conceptualisations have served to keep the three elements of the journal title, families, relationships and societies in play over the last ten years.

Throughout the decade in which *Families, Relationships and Societies* has published it has included articles on many different kinds of family lives. However, the unexpected

transformational conjunctions of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019 onwards and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter following the murder of George Floyd in the US (on 25 May 2020), illuminated how little many people knew about the racialised and ethnicised inequalities experienced in everyday family lives and relationships across societies. The outpouring of personal testimonies that attended both sets of issues showed the historical pervasiveness of racism that impinges on Asian and Black family lives and how those histories are part of contemporary relationships and family lives (Rose, 2020; Tsjeng, 2021). One of the issues that such testimonies illuminate is that, while there is a plethora of writing and research on racism and inequalities, little continues to be known about the family practices of minoritised ethnic groups. As Stevi Jackson (2012) argued in the first volume of *Families, Relationships and Societies*, while it is crucial to conduct research with families from different backgrounds, ethnicities, nations and so on, some of the research done on minoritised ethnic families reproduces ethnocentrism. There are some notable exceptions to this in work, for example, on transnational families and migrant families (for example. Reynolds, 2005; Goulbourne et al, 2010; Reynolds and Erel, 2018; Zontini and Reynolds, 2018). Pioneering research is also increasingly considering the family practices of groups who have been under-researched. Examples include mothers with No Recourse to Public Funds because the UK government has determined that their migration status warrants exclusion from employment and welfare benefits (Benchekroun, 2021; Dickson, 2022), the negotiation of colourism within families (Phoenix and Craddock, 2022), the ways in which Black parents try to prepare their children to negotiate racism and stay safe (Threlfall, 2018; Anderson et al, 2022; Aral et al, 2022) and, increasingly, research on families of mixed ethnicity (Tizard and Phoenix, 2002; Caballero and Aspinall, 2018; Song, 2019; Lewis, 2021).

The sections below address family practices that continue to receive little attention in the families, relationships and personal lives literature. They aim to do so without reproducing the normalised absence/pathologised presence couplet that has often characterised how mothers and families from minoritised ethnic groups are made visible in academic work (CCCS, 1982; Phoenix, 1998). The article discusses a study of adults retrospectively considering their family lives and childhoods, conducted at the time that *Families, Relationships and Societies* was launched. The sections below first briefly discuss the methodology of reuse of qualitative research material that informs the article then focuses on a study of adults looking back on their experiences of serial migration from the Caribbean to join their parents in the UK when they were children. The article argues that histories, personal and societal, haunt the present and thus also haunt contemporary family practices and broader social relations. It suggests that this is one reason it is crucial that *Families, Relationships and Societies* continues to broaden the range of families, relationships and everyday practices that grace its pages over the next decade.

Reuse of qualitative data

It is increasingly common for research funders to encourage the archiving and sharing of data from research projects they have funded to facilitate data reuse and secondary analyses that can enable researchers to build on, or question, understandings already produced in the literature. Encouraging data reuse gives recognition to the economic, social and emotional costs of conducting research projects, including the time and effort required on the part of participants as well as researchers. Socially, it is often difficult to recruit samples and there are advantages to sharing material, rather than

collecting similar data in further studies. Equally, data reuse allows the possibility of building incrementally on analyses that have already been done. While secondary analysis is more common for quantitative researchers, data reuse is now a feature of some qualitative research (Heaton, 2008; Corti et al, 2019).

Since secondary qualitative analysis is the reuse of existing data collected for other, earlier purposes, it is important to devise clear new questions or to apply a new perspective to an 'old' question to confirm, challenge, augment or comment on the original primary analysis (Heaton, 2004). It is worth noting, however, that the distinction between primary and secondary analysis is not necessarily as dichotomous as is often assumed (Bishop and Kuula–Luumi, 2017) since analysis is not always conducted by those who collected the data (Bishop, 2007; Brannen et al, 2021). For most qualitative research projects, it is not possible to conduct all the analyses that would be fruitful in primary qualitative research projects. In addition, when teams conduct the research, it is common that some researchers working on the analysis will not have carried out the empirical work. Furthermore, all interpretation is partial, provisional, anchored on shifting ground and open to reinterpretation (Riessman, 2008; Andrews, 2014). This makes the reuse of qualitative material methodologically productive.

The analyses below reuse material from one case in an earlier study of 'serial migration' to address the question of how family practices are retrospectively evaluated and affect contemporary family lives.

The Serial Migration study

The Serial Migration study from which the interview analysed below comes was part of a professorial fellowship funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, with the author as principal investigator. It was one of three projects in a larger study called Transforming Experiences, which addressed the question of how adults from different 'non-normative' family backgrounds (re)evaluate earlier experiences. 'Serial migration' encompasses both repeated migrations and time-staggered migrations of different family members. It is this second definition which applies to the study that informs this article. Where family members migrate at different times, children frequently remain in the country in which they were born when their parents leave and join them later in the new country (although some never do). Serial migration has a long history and is current in and from many countries. In many societies, it occurs in contexts where grandparents, particularly grandmothers, are highly involved with their grandchildren and frequently look after them. This is the case in the Caribbean where grandparents have been central to many children's lives (Plaza, 2000).

Extended periods of separation have been reported to disrupt parent-child bonding and sometimes to have deleterious effects on children's self-esteem, education and behaviour (Pottinger and Brown, 2006) although there is no inevitable link between length of separation and psychological outcomes (Suárez-Orozco and Qin, 2006). Parent-child reunions have been found to be less successful if separations are extended for children in 'global care chains' (Parreñas, 2005) and if other children have been born to their parents in the interim (Smith et al, 2004). The impact of serial migration is, for the most part, still poorly understood, but is repeatedly found to have marked (often negative) impacts on children and their family relationships (Arnold, 2006; 2011; Chamberlain, 2011; Venta and Cuervo, 2022).

The Transforming Experiences project consists of interview studies with adults who had various 'non-normative' childhood experiences. The analysis reported here comes from a subsample of 53 participants (38 women and 13 men) who, as children, were serial migrants, and ten further participants who took part in a pilot study. Each participant came from a Caribbean island to join their parents who had previously migrated to the UK. They came from a variety of educational and employment backgrounds and were recruited through a combination of advertising, contact with community organisations, electronic and physical notice boards and snowballing. This article focuses on one woman's narrative account of the disjunction she experienced in coming from the Caribbean to the UK. It shows how she managed to transform the negative effects she experienced from her 'non-normative' experiences of joining parents she could not remember into 'liveable (future) lives' (Butler, 2004). Pen portrait summaries were prepared as a first stage of analysis (c.f. Hollway and Jefferson, 2012), followed by thematic analysis and narrative analysis focusing on temporality and the participants' 'small stories' (Phoenix, 2013).

All the participants had parents who left the Caribbean between the 1950s and 1970s, at a time when their labour was solicited in the UK and the US (Bauer and Thompson, 2006). They hoped to be able to make more prosperous lives, with better opportunities for their children. The children left behind knew many others whose parents had also gone abroad. They were, therefore, not 'non-normative' in the countries in which they had been born, or in their social circles, but were so in the UK, where their family practices were not generally discussed or recognised. The age at which they were left behind ranged from eight months to seven years, and they rejoined their parents in the UK between the early 1960s and mid-1970s, when they were between the ages of 15 months and 17 years. The period of separation ranged between six months and 14 years. At the time of the interview (at the end of the first decade of the 21st century), the mean age of these men and women was 50 years.

The participant discussed below is pseudonymised as 'Lizzie' and was interviewed by the author. Her parents left Jamaica to come to the UK when she was a year old and she lived with her grandparents until she was six years old, at which point she travelled on her own to the UK to join her parents and meet her siblings. I interviewed Lizzie in her home on one occasion, for just over two hours. The article focuses on how she retrospectively evaluates the family practices of serial migration that brought her to the UK and what she considers the impact on her to have been. The section below first considers how Lizzie narrates her memories of leaving the Caribbean, her journey and arrival in the UK. It then discusses how she reports experiencing her new home in the UK and finally reflects on her response when directly asked what she considers the impact on her of serial migration to have been. Lizzie's own words are presented at greater length than is often common in qualitative research reports since it is difficult to get a good sense of her narratives in short bursts (Thimm, 2022).

Reconstructed memories of leaving the Caribbean and coming to the UK

It is now widely accepted that memory does not simply replay past events, but is constructed in ways that simultaneously construct identities. What is remembered is thus dependent on how events fit with experiences and life stories (Antze and Lambek, 1996; Mulinari and Räthzel, 2007; Fivush, 2019). Not surprisingly, then, memories

change over time. Nelson (2013) suggests that, to maintain long-term memories, it is necessary to 'revisit' them periodically. This means that some (but by no means all) memories that lie dormant fade or change over time. 'The past is a reconstruction rather than a recovery' (Bruner, 2003).

McLean and Thorne (2006: 111) suggest that, 'Stories about trouble are the centrepiece of narrative studies of self and identity … studies of older adults have yielded an especially enriched view of how identities become transformed through grappling with the meaning of difficult life experiences'. It is not surprising, then, that serial migration is a pivotal process for many of those who experienced it, involving as it does, children's migration to new caregivers, a new society and a new life. It might, therefore, be expected that the events surrounding serial migration would be replayed regularly and discussed by parents in ways that would affect how children construct their memories. Both memory and the construction of family stories (or myths) are, however, more complex than this. Research on adults remembering and narrating their histories suggests that what is remembered, how it is remembered and what is forgotten gives insights into how consciousness changes over time and with current preoccupations (Thompson and Bauer, 2002).

Narrative theorists have long established that narratives (and hence remembering) are told in the present, about past experiences, in anticipation of imagined futures (Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008; Andrews et al, 2013; Andrews, 2014). Schiff (2012) suggests that one of the main functions of narrating is to 'make present' life experience and interpret the narrator's life in particular times and places and for particular audiences (Riessman, 2008). Hindsight is, therefore, central to conveying intended meanings and evaluations of past events (Freeman, 2010). While this sounds like an intentional, cognitive process, it is generally not so. Narrative structures help to organise the interpretations that an audience as well as the teller imposes on the events, persons and places that constitute what is told (Brannen, 2004; Phoenix and Brannen, 2014). In that context, what Lizzie says she remembers and cannot remember and how she narrates memories of the Caribbean and compares them with memories of the UK and family life as she encountered them helps to illuminate the impact she considered serial migration to have had on her.

Lizzie: Erm I remember my grandparents taking me to the airport. I don't actually remember the journey [*to the airport with her grandparents*] but I remember the airport being at the airport and er, going up these steps to the er, to the plane. And er and they were I could see them in the distance in the departure lounge or, yeah it must have been one of the areas where they could wave me off and er (.). I remember being very very tearful and wanting *to cry*, or I was crying, and I couldn't get the handkerchief off my dress because it was *pinned* to my dress and this er, I kind of assume now but it might not have been, it might have been the steward. But I was kind of thinking it was the pilot took it off for me so that I could cry into my handkerchief. (laugh) Because the difficulty is that or the kind of hardness of the whole *thing* was that I had to travel by myself at the age of 6. So I was you know erm a minor on my own on that journey and I sat in the plane next to this brother and sister who were travelling together, coming to England to join their parents as well. Erm, so that's my memory of a very very hot, humid day. Erm, going

up the flight, and then sitting on the *plane* and having this *horrible food*, I remember the food was *so disgusting* I'd never tasted anything quite like it. I think it must have been luncheon meat or something that smelt and tasted *horrible*. Certainly not what I'd been use to (laughing) at all. Erm, er so that was my journey, here, yes.

Interviewer: And so you get on the plane and you're on your own for 10 hours or whatever it is that it takes. Do you remember anything else about the journey other than the food?

Lizzie: Disgusting food. Oh the two children they talked, I remember the girl who was the older of the two, erm (.) talking a lot and she was very confident. I remember she was very confident and I think I was crying my eyes out. (laughing)

In keeping with accounts from many of the adults in the Serial Migration study, Lizzie presents systematically vague and vivid memories of her migration, by herself, when she was six years old. She says that she cannot remember the journey to the airport with her grandparents, but has vivid memories, told in a small story, of the 'horrible', 'disgusting' food on the plane and of the brother and sister she sat next to who were also travelling to meet their parents. She also has a vivid small story about 'being very, very tearful' and the difficulty of getting her handkerchief unpinned from her dress. Her small stories combine to present a big story of sorrow and trauma at leaving. She says little about her grandparents whom she is leaving except that she could see them in the distance and that they waved her off. The juxtaposition of '…and er (.). I remember being very very tearful and wanting to cry, or I was crying…' and being waved off by her grandparents with a pause followed by descriptions of her physical and emotional state makes it clear that, unlike a minority of the adults in the study, she did not feel excited about going on a plane or about seeing her parents, but overwhelming sorrow about leaving her grandparents.

Asked 'And what about when you arrived. What happened then?', Lizzie again gives a combination of vivid and vague stories that underline her shock and sorrow at arriving in the UK.

Lizzie: Oh, when I arrived it was just er, (.) I remember the shock continued really, erm.

Interviewer: Cos it was September?

Lizzie: Yeah it was September, I remember it was cold it was very cold. But I didn't know the cold until, was it cold in the airport? It *felt* cold as soon as I stepped off. Then they didn't have these er, (.) contraptions that bring you very into the airport very easily. You know the covered-over bits erm. You have to get down, so I think I was freezing, with my skinny little legs. /…/ I don't actually recollect seeing my parents for the first time. I don't recollect that at all. I just remember being in the airport to see if, er faces, people, bodies and baggages. And er (4) erm (.) being on my own, I guess it must have been the *loneliness* of it really and then the journey, in this car. /…/

Interviewer: So you remember the car journey, but you don't remember the people?

Lizzie: No no recollection of them at all.

Interviewer: What about the house when you got there?

Lizzie: Right the house, was all very strange. I remember the whole thing you know, this is a strange country, strange er (.) well everything. *Every single thing* seemed to be different. Different house you know, we had a very big house in Jamaica and it was much smaller and (.) erm, (.) but I guess what was nice was that there was a lot- so then I do remember being introduced to what was now my siblings, because by now my parents had had other children and meeting them for the first time. Thinking well aren't they strange. (laughing)

Interviewer: How old were they then, you were six?

Lizzie: Er, well (.) Monica is about 18 months younger than me and, Veronica was 5 years younger than me so. (.) Yeah so Veronica was quite young and then Monica. They seemed very curious.

Interviewer: In what way?

Lizzie: Of me, of me you know erm. (.) Em (.) and then I had to share a room with them.

Interviewer: Both of them?

Lizzie: Yes with both of them. /.../ Erm. I don't have any good memories of those early years at all.

Interviewer: When you say good do you mean good, clear? Or good=

Lizzie: *Happy*. I don't have any *happy* memories at all.

Interviewer: So how did you feel immediately?

Lizzie: Very very sad extremely sad and I remember vivid memories of, going off to sleep and believing that I was back in Jamaica and then *waking up* and then thinking oh no I'm here. It's a bad dream you know, I'm in a bad dream. I was dreaming that I was back in Jamaica and it felt so real and lovely. And then I'd wake up and I *wasn't* and that, I do, *feel* it feels to me that that continued for a *long long* time. Yes.

Interviewer: So you obviously wanted to be back?

Lizzie: Yes yes yes.

Interviewer: Do you get that dream ever now at times of stress or anything?

Lizzie: No it stopped. It stopped erm (.) I don't know when it stopped but it seemed as though it went on for years.

As with her description of leaving Jamaica, Lizzie's account of arriving in the UK is vivid about the weather, her emotions, the strangeness of the country and the house to which she came. She also has vivid memories of a lovely dream of being back in Jamaica contrasting with waking up and feeling that the life she was in was a bad dream. She explains that she felt shock, loneliness and 'very very sad extremely sad' and has no happy memories of that time (the early years after arrival) at all. The picture she conveys is of the whole process of migration being highly traumatic and herself as isolated and lonely in her parents' home. It is striking that, while she mentions her sisters, whom she met for the first time (as strange), she spontaneously says has no recollection of meeting her parents:

'I don't actually recollect seeing my parents for the first time. I don't recollect that at all. I just remember being in the airport to see if, er faces, people, bodies

and baggages. And er (4 seconds pause) erm (.) being on my own, I guess it must have been the loneliness of it really and then the journey, in this car.'

It is striking that she does not mention anything specific about her parents until I ask about her mother and, as can be seen in the first turn, although she has been extremely fluent previously, she pauses three times, including for five seconds.

Interviewer: So let's just ask, I mean what about your first memory of your mum when you came over, cos again you don't remember her at the airport?
Lizzie: Mm, (.) my first memory of my mother was (eating) (5), cooking, cooking food (.), (coughing) sorry (.) shouldn't have ate that [biscuit].
Interviewer: Oh dear do you want to get a drink.
Lizzie: (Having a drink) Er, it's funny that I should choke on food then.
Interviewer: (laughing)
Lizzie: I don't *know* about my conscious first experience. I remember a *feeling* of her being *around* me but er, erm, (.) er (4) I think the first kind of visible memory is sat around the table eating (coughing), eating something I didn't *like* actually. I remember being cooked this… *[meal]* and I ate it and I was immediately sick afterwards or I was sick later, something like that. Erm (4) so (.) it's kind of a negative isn't it. Not positive stuff.
Interviewer: So that's your first memory?
Lizzie: Yes.
Interviewer: And how did she react to that, that you were sick after eating?
Lizzie: I don't know whether it's a true memory or not but I *don't remember that it was good (laughing)*. But you see we didn't have, I don't think we had a very good relationship to begin with. Because I don't think that she could understand that I was in trauma. That the whole experience of coming to this country was a difficult thing for a six-year-old. I don't think she, I think she was just thinking about what the effect was on *her*. I just *don't* think that she could subjugate her *feelings* for and put herself in my position or do that kind of motherly thing. Whatever you think of as a motherly thing, you know. I don't think…she might have wanted to but I think she was frustrated with me. Because I didn't have any loving de- instincts. I didn't *know her* I just couldn't remember her and was a stranger in this family and you know, this whole insider-outsider thing. I think I've always had that. I just have this conscious thing of being always, always being an outsider wherever I am you know. Even in the family, of being different. And er, (.) the thing is I was very self-contained, and not very loving towards her.
Interviewer: And was she loving towards you?
Lizzie: I don't know, I don't think so…I do consciously remember with my dad knowing that I didn't love him. (.) But also thinking that was wrong that I didn't. You know and I could remember asking God to help me to *love* him. How can I? And that's why religion was very important to me because it did *help* me to do that I think, or *make sense* of my situation. It was a kind of a vehicle to help me to do that. And in a way that nothing else could, people *couldn't*, didn't. But somehow G*od*

did. You know in a way that er, you know made sense, made sense to me you know.

Lizzie is clearly very analytical about her responses to being with her parents from the vantage point of adulthood. The overall story she tells in all the extracts is that she was heartbroken to leave her grandparents in the Caribbean and traumatised both by leaving and by coming to join her parents and sisters. Her report of vomiting after eating may well be as much about her emotional turmoil as about the unfamiliar food she was eating. She reiterates that she was lonely, that she was a 'stranger' in her family and became 'self-contained', that she did not love her parents and that she does not think that her parents were loving to her.

   In presenting her narratives, Lizzie shifts between description from her perspective as a six-year-old and retrospective evaluation from her adult perspective. In her description of her experience, food seems to be a metonymic signifier, being 'disgusting' on the plane, or 'the first visible memory' of sitting at the table eating things with which she was unfamiliar and food she did not like that she considered made her sick. She never speaks of discussing anything with her parents and her sisters, from whom she always felt estranged in childhood, feature little in her narratives. The above extract both presents her childhood feelings and gives an adult retrospective rationale for why she found her family situation so difficult. She explains that she does not think that she and her mother had a good relationship to start with because her mother did not understand that this migration process was traumatic for her as a six-year-old. She blames her mother implicitly for not being able to understand her perspective and feelings as a child and instead focusing on the difficulties for herself. She considers that her mother's lack of empathy was part of what estranged them.

   Despite finding her start in the UK so difficult, Lizzie went on to do a degree and took up a professional career as well as marrying and having two young children. In the above extract, Lizzie indicates how this became possible. She suggests that religion became a vehicle for making sense of her situation. More than this, the Black church her family attended gave her a vastly different experience and positioning from what she experienced at home or school. Indeed, asked to tell the story of being in the UK with her parents and siblings, she pauses for four seconds before identifying church as the only good thing in her life at that time.

Interviewer: Tell me the story of your being here (.) with your parents and siblings?
Lizzie: Right erm, well I erm, (4 seconds pause) well I mean the thing if I tell you, if there was *any* good what good there was that church was the same.
Interviewer: And was it a particular branch of the church?
Lizzie: Yes yes, it was erm, an evangelical Christian church. That we went to. Erm (.) it was a Black-led church… So, the, the kind of saving grace for me was that there was a church that we *went* to that was, that worshipped in the same way and the *language* was the same. And the *people* were similar so that, you know I think that's really, was what er, stopped me from absolutely (laugh) breaking down probably. And erm, it was very validating *experience* going to church, and er, you know *although* at school all kind of, interestingly all, school was a struggle but church was different. It was much more freeing and er, and I excelled at church and won all the prizes and at school exactly the opposite. (laughing) You know, so it was quite

extraordinary, I was bottom of the class at school in everything. And er and top of everything at church to the point where the other girls *hated* me at church. (laughing) But I knew the bible inside out. Can't remember it now, you know the bible bits in the bible I could quote, the bible like nothing else. So, apparently I used to win everything, all the prizes. And then er, but at school the complete opposite.

The above extract gives a good sense of how the evangelical church she attended mediated how she fared. She identifies the church as being Black-led, the language being Jamaican English, which she spoke and was committed to speaking rather than shifting to the English English her mother wanted her to speak. It was a place where she excelled and was able to memorise the bible better than her peers. She also had successful relationships with adults who valued her. This was different from her experiences at home and completely 'opposite' to her experiences at school. Lizzie's narrative fits with 21st-century ways of reconceptualising the notion of resilience. From a 20-year study starting when 70 'deeply troubled' young people were teenagers, Hauser et al (2006a) argue that the handful who are faring very well in adulthood were able to draw on three things. First, they had at least one important relationship that was positive for them and that they paid attention to and drew on. In Lizzie's case, the church provided this. Second, is the ability to be reflective. In the extracts above, Lizzie clearly demonstrated evaluative reflection about people and events. The third is 'agency and the quest for mastery'. The extract above suggests that, despite her apparent lack of success at school, Lizzie worked to gain and maintain success and prizes at church. For all these three issues, narrative functions as a resource that 'bestows (apparent) order upon chaotic existence' (Hauser et al, 2006b). Certainly, by the time I interviewed Lizzie, she was able to tell various small and big stories about her experience, sometimes re-inhabiting her childhood identity and sometimes retrospectively evaluating her experiences; sometimes fluently telling what seems like a well-worn story about her experiences, and sometimes pausing and restarting her narrative as she seemed to work out a particular story.

So how did Lizzie consider that the family practices she encountered because of serial migration affect her present life? In response to questions about how she remembered her mother when she first arrived in the UK, one of the things Lizzie said was:

'I didn't know her I just couldn't remember her and was a stranger in this family and you know, this whole insider-outsider thing. I think I've always had that. I just have this conscious thing of being always, always being an outsider wherever I am you know. Even in the family, of being different.'

Asked if she still feels this, she develops this link between outsiderness and her experience of serial migration.

Interviewer: Do you still feel the outsider? Because you said that you were the outsider?

Lizzie: *Yes I do* but that's a part of me now, I just know I can't get out of it. Wherever I am.

Interviewer: In every setting?

Lizzie: In *every* setting I'm kind of like a bit of the outsider. Except you know, it's funny I have a circle of friends who are outsiders. (laughing)

Interviewer: In what way?

Lizzie: Oh you know the odd ones out of their families and kind of moved away and you know...

Interviewer: So has er that experience of serial migration then do you think affected your relationships? I mean in general? In life?

Lizzie: I think it affected mine and it is this thing about feeling different and feeling the outsider. (.) That's how it's affected me on a personal level. The experience though of coming here has made me want to, (.) I think perhaps it's been *because* of it it's made me want to make something of myself erm.

Interviewer: Right.

Lizzie: And maybe determined, but I think also, in a funny way it's also anchored me. I kind of *know* who I am because of the experience. I don't know if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Of course.

Lizzie: But it, you know, it's er, *been important to me* that I was born in Jamaica, it's very much part of my identity, who I am and who I see myself as now. Erm, I still see it as home. Even though when I go there I know it's not my home. Things have moved on.

Lizzie owns the notion that outsiderness is always part of her identities, in every setting. According to her narrative, her outsiderness is central to the friendships she makes in that her circle of friends are outsiders. She also points to the experience of serial migration as having positive impacts. She considers that it impelled her to want to make something of herself and to know who she is, as well as to continue seeing Jamaica as home and part of her identity, even though she recognises that Jamaica has changed, and her grandmother has died.

For all the participants, the processes of leaving the Caribbean and the people there and joining their parents in the UK were major life events (even though a minority were keen to come to their parents). It is also important to recognise, however, that, as with all families, family practices are dynamic. In adulthood, for example, Lizzie was beginning cautiously to forge more positive relationships with her UK family, even though she was very clear that she would never do what her parents did; migrate and leave her children behind.

Making diversity visible in often unrecognised family practices

In the ten years it has been established, *Families, Relationships and Societies* has made an important contribution to pioneering knowledge production and to bringing together the areas of families, relationships and societies as well as scholars who work in these areas. There are six main ways in which this article makes a small contribution to taking forward the aim of providing '[e]vidence that contributes to wider theoretical debates about families and relationships in their social, cultural and historical contexts' (Ridge and Featherstone, 2012: 3). First, it addresses racialised and ethnicised inequalities experienced in everyday family lives and relationships and gives insights into transnational experiences that are common for children around the

world (Fan and Parrenas, 2018; Phoenix, 2019; Greenfield et al, 2020; Wen et al, 2021). For Lizzie, school was an ordeal because of the racism she experienced and being the 'bottom of the class' in everything. In the extracts above, she addresses this only in contrast with the church where she was accepted in ways that gave her a sense of belonging as opposed to being made to feel non-normative in school (something very apparent in her narratives of school). Second, Lizzie's narrative shows that the ways in which children experience their childhoods are linked to what happens outside the home as well as what happens in the family. Lizzie's reported loneliness both results from feeling herself to be an outsider in her family and her subjection to racism at school. However, the Black-led church she attended provided her with support and esteem she otherwise lacked. She views her adult identity as an outsider as resulting from her feelings of alienation from her parents and siblings and her exclusion from belonging at school. However, her experiences of being loved and belonging with her grandparents as well as at church allowed her to make relationships, particularly with others who identify as outsiders in adulthood. While this is not foregrounded in the article, the context of the serial migration experienced by Lizzie results from the sociostructural positioning of people in the Caribbean and the contemporary legacies of historical relationships of enslavement and colonialism by the UK. It is in this sense that Lizzie's family relationships, school life and church experiences were all haunted by historical relationships and, in turn, haunt her adult life (c.f. Gordon, 2011).

Third, Lizzie's narrative demonstrates the importance of taking an intersectional perspective in studying her experience of serial migration. It has long been known that children in the same families have very different experiences and grow up together in different environments (Dunn, 2015). The study of serial migration frequently shows how siblings born to the same mothers and fathers are positioned differently according to whether they are migrants or born in the country to which their parents migrated. In Lizzie's case, as the only serial migrant child with British-born, non-migrant younger siblings, loneliness and outsiderness, key elements of her experience, were linked to the intersection of these characteristics. As she makes clear, her experiences of racism at school show the salience of her racialised positioning and its intersection with her migration status, national identity, use of Jamaican English, birth order as the oldest child and relation to her grandparents. Most of these aspects of her social positioning differentiated her from her siblings from whom she felt estranged during childhood, as well as from her parents. While it is not apparent in the extracts presented, her gender also intersects with the social categories to which she orients. This is evident elsewhere in the interview both in how her appearance (particularly hair) was denigrated at school, the household work she was expected to do at home and that she laughingly explains that she did so well at church that the other girls (not boys or children) 'hated' her.

Fourth, the article shows how family experiences that are not widely recognised because they are non-normative, are central to children's experiences, continue to have impacts on their lives and identities in adulthood and so feed into the construction of contemporary society. For Lizzie, as for many in the sample, the disjunctions produced by serial migration were not left behind in childhood, but remain central to their identities and relationships, even though those experiences are not determinist and their effects not static. For example, Lizzie considers that her experiences, difficult as they were, made her want to 'make something' of herself and 'anchored' her, giving her a clear sense of identity and enabling her to craft a 'liveable life' (Butler, 2004; McLean

and Thorne, 2006). In adulthood, she considers that her friendships are patterned by her childhood experiences. Equally important, her narrative explains that her relationship with her mother and siblings is dynamic in that she has begun to have a relationship with them since having children. The centrality of these experiences kept them alive in her memory and, since memory is reconstructed, her understandings of them is likely to have changed over time (Brockmeier, 2015; Freeman, 2015).

Fifth, the retrospective methodology employed gives substance to *Families, Relationships and Societies*' explanation that it is looking for articles that examine the 'fluid, complex and diverse nature of contemporary relationships, seen in varied social, cultural and historical contexts'. It fits with already-existing understandings that childhood experiences are complex, multifaceted and not determinist (Casas and Frones, 2020; Varvantakis et al, 2019), as well as that resilience is not an individual, but a relational process (Hauser et al, 2006a). It would be extremely difficult to do such a study prospectively but, in looking back over the decades of her life, we can see the dynamism and complexity of Lizzie's experiences and the importance of the church relationships that validated her in the face of invalidating school relationships in which she was subjected to racism and home relationships in which she was the late-arriving outsider. Sixth and finally, the article shows the methodological utility of drawing on participants' narratives to understand their family lives from their perspectives while avoiding the imposition of ethnocentric and colonising perspectives on analyses of what they say (Jackson, 2012).

Together, these six contributions help to make diversity visible in a family practice that is frequently unnoticed or ignored within societies to which serial migrants migrate. In its next decade of life, cutting-edge scholarship in *Families, Relationships and Societies* will undoubtedly make the diversity of families, relationships and everyday practices more visible and contextualise them intersectionally, historically and globally in ways that are likely sometimes to transform understandings.

Conflict of interest
The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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