

Approaching Middle Age Through Non-Representational Theories

Participant Information Sheet

About the research

You are invited to take part in an independent research study which...

Aims to understand what the categories of 'middle-age' and 'mid-life' mean to those within them.

This is an independent piece of research by Dr Amy Barron - a Lecturer in Social and Cultural Geography at the University of Manchester - and is not directly affiliated with an external body. Please take the time to read this information sheet which explains why the research is being done and what it will involve. Feel free to discuss it with others if you wish and please do not hesitate to ask me about anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Who will conduct the research?

Name: Dr Amy Barron

Email: amy.barron@manchester.ac.uk

University of Manchester Address: Department of Geography | School of Environment, Education and Development | The University of Manchester | Oxford Road | Manchester | M13 9PL

What is the context and purpose of this research?

'Middle-age' or 'mid-life' are often overlooked in policies and in academic research which focuses on the young and the old, yet they remain important thresholds in the lives of individuals. As a threshold, middle-age is vital not only to transitions in individual life-courses but also to how society represents and relates to age. Because middle-age is made sense of in relation to youth and older age, a lot of issues associated with it (empty-nest syndrome, unemployment, menopause, policies at work) are rendered invisible.

It is therefore important to focus on middle-age as something that is generally forgotten. We know very little about middle-age, the way it is lived, and the way it is links to policy.

This research intends to:

- Explore what 'middle age' and 'mid life' mean to you
- Discuss some of the different ways middle age is represented and understood in our everyday lives

- Understand how your experiences of middle-age are shaped by a variety of everyday, historical, individual, social, cultural and political factors
- Consider the moments when 'middle-age' is more or less relevant in your lives
- Reflect on the different ways middle age is experienced
- Consider the changes that have marked your life, particularly around middle age

Why have I been chosen?

You are someone who self-identifies as being 'middle-aged' or in 'mid-life'.

I am interested in representing the diversity of what it means to be middle aged. I am particularly interested in talking to under-represented individuals such as ethnically diverse people, LGBTQ+ individuals and other minority groups.

I intend on conducting 10 roughly 1 hour long interviews with different people who self-identify as being in 'mid-life' or 'middle-aged'.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The information you provide may be used in academic journal articles, edited books, conference presentations, on my own website, in blog posts, videos and written research findings which will be delivered to participants (including yourself) upon completion of the research.

Who has reviewed the research project?

This project has been reviewed by The University of Manchester's Proportionate Research Ethics Committee Ethics Ref: 2022-14717-24394.

Who is funding the research project?

This research is funded by an RGS-IBG Small Research Grant.

What would my involvement be?

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You would be asked to partake in one roughly 1-hour long interview. Ultimately, I would like to understand what 'middle-age' means to you.

- Once you have volunteered to take part in this research, I will follow up with a telephone call or email to explain the purpose of the research and provide you with this Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form. You will also be provided with a list of interview themes.
- You will have time to ask any questions before the interview takes place. We will arrange to conduct the interview in a way which suits you. This can either be online (Teams/Skype), via the telephone, or, in person in a public place of your choosing or in your private residence.
- Interviews will normally last roughly 1 hour, though the length will be led by your needs and wants.
- Should the need for follow-up questions be identified, you will be contacted via telephone and the questions will either be asked there and then, or another convenient time will be arranged. Follow-up questions will likely last no more than roughly 20 minutes.

- You will be informed about the results of this research through a summary provided on a single side of A4. If data collection goes to plan, you should receive this by January 2023 via email. If the timeframe changes, Dr Amy Barron will let you know via email or telephone.

In the interview you may be asked to talk around:

- What you commonly associate with 'middle-age' and 'mid-life'
- Your hobbies and routines and how these have changed over the course of your life
- Important people and places in your life and how these have changed over your life

Your full participation in this study will likely be no more than roughly 1 hour (this is approximately how long the interview will take).

The interview is designed to focus on your everyday life, practices, and opinions. **The interview will not intentionally cover uncomfortable or distressing topics and it should be an enjoyable experience.** However, if you do feel uncomfortable or distressed, you are free to take a break from the interview or withdraw fully at any point. This is the case if your interview takes place online or in person. If you feel you need further support, please find the *Mind in Greater Manchester* website here: <https://www.gmmind.org.uk/>

There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers in this research. I am simply interested in understanding your personal experiences and opinions on the topic of middle-age.

Will I be compensated for taking part?

No compensation will be offered.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You can inform me whether or not you want to take part by email or telephone at any point. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and will be asked to sign a consent form. Consent will always be given in written or typed format regardless of whether your interview takes place online or in person. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself. However, it will not be possible to remove your data from the project once it has been anonymised as we will not be able to identify your specific data. This does not affect your data protection rights. If you decide not to take part, you do not need to do anything further.

Permission to audio record the interview is essential to your participation in this research. It is important, however, that you are comfortable with the recording process at all times. You are free to stop the recording at any time.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

What information will you collect about me?

In order to participate in this research project, I will need to collect information that could identify you, called 'personal identifiable information'. Specifically, I will need to collect:

- Name
- Contact details
- Age
- Record of consent

Audio recordings will be made of the interview and will consist of voice only. Audio recordings will be deleted immediately once a transcript has been created (please see more detail below).

Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

Dr Amy Barron is collecting and storing this personal identifiable information in accordance with UK data protection law which protects your rights. These state that I must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is 'a public interest task' and 'a process necessary for research purposes'.

What are my rights in relation to the information you will collect about me?

You have a number of rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example, you can request a copy of the information we hold about you, including transcripts and audio recordings. It must be noted, however, that all audio files will be deleted as soon as a transcript has been created. The transcript will be done as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after the interview has taken place.

If you would like to know more about your different rights or the way we use your personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our [Privacy Notice for Research](#). A full URL of the privacy notice can be found here: <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=37095>

Will my participation in the study be confidential and my personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that the University is responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained with this in mind, and your data will be looked after in the following ways:

- Participants will be assigned a different name (a pseudonym) known only to Dr Amy Barron to ensure confidentiality.
- All collected data will be pseudonymised. This means that Dr Amy Barron will have a key which will enable her to identify specific participants if necessary.
- Data will become fully anonymised after 5 years. Data will be fully anonymised by breaking the key link for the pseudonymised data. If you want to request for your data to be withdrawn, it must be ahead of December 2022 as this is when the transcript will become part of the data set.
- Interviews will be conducted using an encrypted device that has been enrolled onto the University exchange email service to activate device encryption. At this stage, the data will be identifiable.
- Audio recordings of the interview will be transferred to a password protected, encrypted USB drive, and transferred to the University's Research Data Storage, under two-factor authentication password

protected access. Audio recordings will include identifiable information because they are a direct recording of the interview.

- Once uploaded to the University's Research Storage under two-factor authentication password protected access, audio material will be deleted from the recording device immediately. At this stage, the audio device will not include identifiable information but the audio file on the University's Research Storage will.
- Audio-recordings will then be transcribed by the PI (Dr Amy Barron) .
- Transcripts will be stored on a password protected, encrypted USB drive, and transferred to the University's Research Data Storage, under two-factor authentication password protected access.
- At this stage, each transcript will be assigned a pseudonym meaning it will become anonymous.
- Audio recordings will be deleted from the University's Research Data Storage once the transcript has been created.
- Transcripts will be stored for a minimum of 11 years and a maximum of 21 years.
- Data will not be shared with any other organisation.
- Data will not be stored on any cloud services.
- Your consent form will be retained for 5 years in an encrypted, password protected file on a secure University server for audit purposes. With your consent, I would also like to retain your contact details for 5 years to provide you with a summary of the findings for this study and also to inform you about future studies that you may be interested in. If you provide consent for this, your details will be safely stored on UoM servers in a digital folder only accessible to Dr Amy Barron and used only for the purposes described above.
- You are free to opt out of any future communications from The University of Manchester and research team (Dr Amy Barron) at any point. Dr Amy Barron will ask you verbally whether you would like to opt out of further contact in each communication. The research team will contact you no more than two times if you have not responded. Your information will be stored for 5 years for this purpose.
- This data will not be archived in a repository.

Information specifically about audio-recordings:

- Audio recordings will be used to create transcripts. Transcription will be completed by me (Dr Amy Barron).
- Personal identifiable information will be removed in the final transcript.
- All audio recordings will be deleted once transcripts have been created.
- Only Dr Amy Barron will have access to the audio-recordings.
- If you opt for your interview to take place using Skype/Teams this means your personal data will be processed by Microsoft/Zoom. This may mean that your personal data is transferred to a country outside of the European Economic Area, some of which have not yet been determined by the United Kingdom to have an adequate level of data protection. Appropriate legal mechanisms to ensure these transfers are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation are in place. The recordings will be removed from the above third party platform and stored on University of Manchester managed file storage as soon as possible following the completion of data collection.

Potential disclosures:

- If, during the study, we have concerns about your safety or the safety of others, we will inform the emergency services or the local council.
- If, during the study, you disclose information about any current or future illegal activities, we have a legal obligation to report this and will therefore need to inform the relevant authorities.
- Individuals from the University, the site where the research is taking place and regulatory authorities may need to review the study information for auditing and monitoring purposes or in the event of an incident.

Please note that individuals from The University of Manchester or regulatory authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in auditing and monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant.

What if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to someone within the research team, then please feel free to contact me. If you wish to direct a complaint to someone independent of the research team, this should be the RGEI Manager as listed below.

Contact details for complaints

If you have a complaint that you wish to direct to members of the research team, please contact:

NAME: DR AMY BARRON

EMAIL: AMY.BARRON@MANCHESTER.AC.UK

If you wish to make a formal complaint to someone independent of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance then please contact:

The Research Ethics Manager, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, by emailing: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk or by telephoning 0161 306 8089.

If you wish to contact us about your data protection rights, please email dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL at the University and we will guide you through the process of exercising your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the [Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your personal identifiable information](#) (full URL: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>)

Tel 0303 123 1113

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part, then please contact Dr Amy Barron.

NAME: DR AMY BARRON

EMAIL: AMY.BARRON@MANCHESTER.AC.UK

Additional information in relation to COVID-19

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, we have made some adjustments to the way in which this research study will be conducted that ensures we are adhering to the latest government advice in relation to social distancing as well as taking all reasonable precautions in terms of limiting the spread of the virus. You should carefully consider all of the information provided below before deciding if you still want to take part in this research study. If you choose not to take part, you need to inform research team. If you have any additional queries about any of the information provided, please speak with a member of the research team.

Are there any additional considerations that I need to know about before deciding whether I should take part?

If you choose to have your interview in person, you are at risk of possible infection through travelling to and from the venue and by coming into contact with members of the public and the researcher whilst the interview is being conducted.

You should not take part if you are in a vulnerable group or if you have symptoms.

What additional steps will you take to keep me safe while I take part?

The following steps will be taken to reduce the chances of coming into contact with and/or spreading the virus:

- The researcher will wear a mask and socially distance should the participant prefer
- If the participant feels more comfortable conducting the interview online or outside then this can be arranged
- If the participant feels uncomfortable having the interview in a public place then it can be done in their private residence

Is there any additional information that I need to know?

There are no additional requirements of participation or any additional information that you need to know before deciding if you still wish to take part.

Additional data use

It may become necessary to provide contact details to NHS Track and Trace.

What if the Government Guidance changes?

If the government guidelines change then we can arrange to conduct the interview online.

What if I have additional queries?

Please contact Dr Amy Barron using the information detailed below.

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the study or if you are interested in taking part then please contact Dr Amy Barron.

NAME: DR AMY BARRON

EMAIL: AMY.BARRON@MANCHESTER.AC.UK