South Asian Young British Muslims:

Identity, Habitus and the Family Field

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Abstract

Since the 1950s the incoming flows of immigrants have deeply transformed the social composition of British society which has become increasingly multicultural. Amongst other minority groups the position of Muslims, who are the second largest religious group in the UK, is particularly difficult. The 9/11 and London bombings (2005) have increased the moral panic about Muslims perceived as 'hard to integrate' and a threat to western democracies. In this context, the thesis aims to explore the negotiation of religious and national identities amongst young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds as well as the strategies used by their parents to transmit values.

The thesis applies and extends Bourdieu's (1930-2002) theory of habitus and social field to the study of identity negotiation and intergenerational transmission. In so doing, the study adopts a sociological perspective which is sensitive to individual action, and conceptualises identity as the process of individuals assimilating structural conditions, such as Islam and Britishness, to then produce subjective practices, tastes, values and beliefs.

The research employs a mixed method approach which started with an in-school exploratory survey (N=560) with young people aged 14-18 years old from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in a inner London boroughs and in Oldham, followed by semi-structured interviews (N=52) with South Asian British Muslim young people and their parents. Visual methods in the form of photographs taken by young people were used as prompts during their interviews.

The thesis contributes to the understanding of identity construction in the context of South Asian Muslim communities in the UK. Findings from the survey confirm that Islam was the main source of self-definition for Muslim young people, while qualitative analysis suggests that this emphasis on religion originated in the family field. The concept of *Islamic capital* was developed to understand the specific role of Islam as a resource for parenting. However, Islam was not the only focus in the family field, and in line with other research on migration, results highlight the importance of education for social mobility within South Asian Muslim migrant families from different socio-economic backgrounds. Finally, the study illustrates that multiple identities are not

necessarily exclusive, but rather negotiated through strategies such as those adopted by British Muslim young people and embodied by three emerging typologies: *conforming* and *contesting* parental culture and Islam, and *combining* identities. In the context of multicultural Britain, these findings show how the traditional notions of national identity and belonging are put into question and transformed by the development of new and fluid identities.

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'*These days everyone was insisting on their identity, coming out as a man, woman, gay, black, Jew - brandishing whichever features they could claim, as if without a tag they wouldn't be human.*'

Hanif Kureishi, The Black Album

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1   Background and rationale of the study

'Being a youth, being of British - Pakistani heritage, a women and a Muslim in the UK today, I have all the negative stereotypes and prejudice of society going against me and the person that I am. What we as the British public or even the worldwide population have failed to realise is that every individual should be judged independently. We should be judged on our sense of self, our ability, and our behaviour and not be tarnished with the same brush but be seen as unique and individual. We should be judged on our character not our creed, faith or educational and financial background. But I have resisted any criticism or disadvantage that I have experienced and carried on doing everything and living my life my way. I am happy to say that I am a high achieving student who values education, peace and independence and extremely driven to build myself the best future possible on my own. As a woman I have proven to other women that we can be just as good as men. As a young person I have proven to other youngsters that achievement is in our stride and that education is paramount for us. As a Muslim I have proven to other Muslims that you can merge your religion with normal British life and have the best of both worlds. As a Pakistani I have proven to other Pakistani and others belonging to ethnic minorities that we are just as good as everybody else and that it is difference that makes the world go round. Stereotype is destroying all social value consensus and social solidarity especially in a multicultural society in which I live in. We need to communicate with each other, learn firsthand about each other and not just absorb and accept the garbage the media feeds us. We must unlock our minds and see beyond clothing, sexuality and appreciate each other for who we are not what we are.' (Maria, 17 years old, British Pakistani, Oldham)

In this note left on the last page of the in-school questionnaire completed as part of the fieldwork for this research study, Maria caught the complexity of having multiple identities which can be perceived by society as antagonistic. This thesis draws from Bourdieu's (1990; 1986) notions of habitus and social field and explores the construction and development of 'fluid' identities that transform and challenge traditional notions of identity and belonging in the context of multicultural societies. It does so by applying a mixed-method approach to investigate the negotiation of religious and national identities among second generation young South Asian British Muslims, while taking into account the pathways adopted by their first generation migrant parents for transmitting values.

The research design involved two stages. The first one consisted of an exploratory quantitative survey conducted in secondary schools in London Newham and one Sixth Form College in Oldham with young people aged 14-18 years from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The second stage was qualitative and involved semi-structured interviews with young people from South Asian Muslim background (aged 14-18 years old) and both of their parents. Visual methods, in the form of photographs taken by the respondents, were used as support during the interviews with young people.

Bourdieu did not directly address the issue of identity. However, this thesis recognises the importance of his theory of social practice in identifying the dynamics between subjective action and social structure which inevitably affect identity construction. Bourdieu used habitus to explain how individual action is both constructing and constructed by the social structure and defined it as *'a system of durable and transposable dispositions (…) which generate organized practices and representations (…)'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53-65). In other words, habitus, as a theoretical construct, explains how an individual adopts certain values, beliefs, tastes and practices embedded within specific social fields (Shepherd, 2010). This last point is pivotal to understanding the relationship between habitus and identity, central to this study: *'Habitus informs identity because it is the way we know about our position in the social structure and appreciate our cultural tastes'* (Shepherd, 2010, p.151).

The concept of social field is complementary to habitus and defined by Bourdieu *'as a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions'* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96-97). In other words, the social field is the relational context where the habitus originates and involves relationships of power resulting from the struggle to preserve or improve positions within the defining *capital* of the field (Jenkins, 2002).

The current study considers the question of action and structure as the theoretical underpinning of the study of identity. Therefore, identity and habitus overlap as both interpret the relation between the individual and the social world. More specifically, identity embodies how elements of the social structure are internalised by individuals to produce and reproduce subjective values, beliefs, tastes and practices and it is defined in the thesis as follow:

Identity is the body of individual's orientations, which are assimilated by the individual in the social fields under the influences of the structural conditions, and are then internalised to reflect subjective values, beliefs, tastes and practices.

Within the theoretical context of identity construction, the study focuses on the specific case of South Asian British Muslims which include three different communities and distinct ethnic groups: Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Muslims are the largest religious group in Britain after Christians and the religious group with the youngest age profile. The 2001 Census shows that there were 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain, which accounted for 3 per cent of the total population (ONS, 2004, p.21). The expectation is for the number to have increased in the last 10 years. Whilst new figures from the 2011 Census population have not yet been released, preliminary data from the Integrated Household Survey (2011) indicate that the proportion of Muslims in the UK has reached about 4 per cent (ONS, 2011). However, this last survey provides a measure of religious affiliation irrespective of actual practice or belief as respondents were asked the *question 'What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?'* In 2001, about three quarters of Muslims (74 per cent) living in Britain were from a South Asian ethnic background. Pakistanis counted for 43 per cent of all Muslims in the UK, followed by Bangladeshis (17 per cent) while Indians represented a smaller proportion (8 per cent) as the majority of them were from Hindu and Sikh religious backgrounds (Dobbs, 2006, p. 22).

In the UK and other countries such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands, immigration flows were related to the colonial legacy. During the 1950s and early 1960s immigrants from foreign colonies could take advantage of an open policy toward labour immigration. The first South Asian Muslim migrants to arrive to the UK straight after the war were mainly men from rural areas. They experienced the hardship and difficulties of first settlers and took up unskilled positions involving unsociable hours, poor working conditions and low wages (Brah, 1996). At first, South Asian Muslim migrants believed they were only transient and would eventually move back to their country of origin (Anwar, 1979). After the oil price shock and rising unemployment in the 1970s, migration dynamics changed and policies aiming to 'zero immigration' were put into place in Northern European countries (Modood, Triandafyllidou, & Barrero, 2006). These restrictions forced migrants to choose whether to stay or go back, and for

many of them implied shifting from temporary to permanent settlement which also involved their spouses moving to the UK for family reunion. Current economic dynamics, including deregulation, increasing competition, job insecurity and decreasing welfare protection, have created even more difficult conditions for the integration of immigrants. This adds up, since 9/11, to a political climate where concerns about security are increasingly related to migration (Modood, 2006).

The demographic trends that characterise South Asian Muslim families are quite different to the most common demographic trends of families from other ethnic religious groups in the UK: South Asian Muslim families are generally larger, with fewer childless couples, higher rates of extended families, lower rates of lone parent families, cohabiting and divorce (ONS, 2004; Dobbs Green, & Zealey, 2006). Muslim families are also more likely to experience disadvantage: in 2001, Muslims were the most likely religious group to be unemployed. In addition, Muslim women were much more likely than women from other religious groups to be unemployed. For instance, 18 per cent of them were unemployed compared only 4 per cent of the Jewish and Christian women (Dobbs, 2006; ONS, 2004).

The socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Muslim communities in the UK is exacerbated by the consequences of the most recent world events. Particularly, since 9/11 and the London bombings in 2005, there has been a worldwide escalation in Islamophobia, with Muslims being increasingly perceived as a threat to western democracies (Massey & Tatla, 2012; Morgan & Poynting, 2012). The report *Living Apart Together* (Mirza, Senthikumaran, & Ja'far, 2007) by the think-tank Policy Exchange, pinpoints how *"for many, the growth of radical Islamist terrorism has raised serious questions about the relationship between Islam and the modern Western world, and whether the two can coexist"* (Ibid, p.11). Mohammed Sidique Khan, the 30-year old who led the London bombers, '*was an apparently mild-mannered and respected class-room assistant from Yorkshire, who had lived a comfortable life with his young family*' (Ibid, p.11). In the martyrdom video, released two months after his death, Khan spoke with a strong Yorkshire accent: '*why a man would declare himself at war with the country where he grew up, apparently conducted a content life and where he was bringing up his children*?'(Ibid).

On one hand, these questions fuel the debate about multiculturalism and how the sense of belonging can be constructed in highly diverse societies. On the other hand, they trigger negative public perceptions and stereotyping embodied by discourses on the incompatibility of Islamic and the western values, while raising doubts about the capacity to integrate of Muslims who are perceived as a *'culturally alien presence'* (Werbner, 2000, p.307).

As I am writing, a new issue about Muslims is receiving a lot of attention in the media: a poorly-made US movie, which portrays the Prophet Muhammad as a greedy and violent man alleging affairs with women, has been judged deeply offensive and provoked angry protests across the Muslim world leading to numerous deaths. Protests started in Egypt and then spread through social media into other Muslim countries. The public debate is now divided between those who defend freedom of speech and those who believe that creating offence is not compatible with civic liberty and liberal values (Orr, 2012).

In general, moral panics about extremism and Islam has been rising and young Muslims living in Western countries have been under the spotlight as they are perceived by the public and described by the media as *'alienated, deviant, underachieving, and potential terrorists'* (Dwyer, Shah, & Sanghera, 2008, p.117) and also *'militant and aggressive, intrinsically fundamentalist, ultimate others'* (Archer, 2001, p.81). Just after the London bombings the report by Peace Direct *'Young Muslims Speak'* (2006) stated:

> *'The July 2005 London bombings suddenly catapulted young British Muslims into the spotlight. They have been surrounded by discussions focussing on terrorism, radicalisation, incompatibility and conflict. During this debate the opinions and views of young Muslims have not been sought on their own terms and have been overshadowed by misconceptions and the need to create a 'story'* (Peace Direct, 2006, p.4).

Therefore, interest in young British Muslims has increased sharply in recent years. The thesis is placed in the context of literature and empirical research that has examined different aspects of identity in the context of minority groups living in the UK (eg. Archer, 2001, 2002; Basit, 1997; Dwyer, 2000; Dwyer, Shah, & Sanghera, 2008; Haque & Bell, 2001; Ramji, 2007; Shah, Dwyer, & Modood, 2010). However, research studies have mostly been concerned with specific aspects of the identity of young people. Dwyer (1999, 2000, 2008) and Ramji (2007) focus on the negotiation and construction

of gender identities. The educational aspirations of young British Muslims is another area explored by the literature (Archer, 2001; Basit, 1997) together with the issue of underachieving Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people (Haque & Bell, 2001). The report by Lewis (2007) examined possible paths to the radicalisation of Islam while Mondal's study (2008) aimed to give voice to young British Muslims so that they could challenge the most common stereotypes about them.

It could be argued that, research has provided static descriptions of the identity of young British Muslims by concentrating on what these identities are like and what issues young people face. This thesis provides a new angle to explore young British Muslims' identity by focusing on the intergenerational dynamics underling identity construction.

Scholars have tended to approach the process of identity construction in the specific context of minority groups in terms of either conflict between different dimensions of identity, or negotiation amongst these dimensions, which brings about new fluid identities. This dispute about identity conflict or negotiation mirrors questions about how multiculturalism is possible.

The thesis is therefore relevant in relation to the debate about multiculturalism, which developed as result of social changes brought about by migration impacting on the ethnic composition of contemporary western societies (Modood, 2006, 2007; Modood et al., 2006; Parekh, 2000, 2009). The debate addresses the question of how to reconcile the need for promotion of equality with a respect for the diversity of interests relevant to multiple ethnic groups. The main apparent division amongst scholars, and particularly political scientists, is between those who believe differences in society can be reconciled through integration, and those, like theorists of multiculturalism, who argue that differences should be respected and not tackled as a way to force integration.

The 2001 riots that broke out in Oldham and Bradford were followed by the British government's interventions aimed to tackle self-segregation and separateness and impacted on the British model of multiculturalism, which since then has focused on *'politics of difference'* placing effort on accommodating the claims of ethnic and religious groups. Modood (2010) refers to *'the politics of difference'* as opposed to the

notion of liberal equality (Modood, 2010), while Wieviorka (2007) identifies its theoretical underpinning in philosophical anti-essentialism:

> *'Originating from very different work of thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, given certain indeterminate radicalism in the hands of more recent theorists Foucault and Derrida, anti-essentialism has been used to critique hegemonic ideas such as nation-state, community, class and even counter-hegemonic ideas such as woman' (*Wieviorka, 2007, p.40).

These politics of differences are therefore characterised by *'*fluidity and multiplicity of meanings' and 'cultural pluralism'. They define inclusion into a political community not in terms of accepting the rule of such community, instead as opening an *'on-going discursive contestation where the rules of what are appropriate concerns, and the terms of politics, far from being fixed in advance, are object of political discourse'*. (Ibid)

The theoretical debate on multiculturalism had a number of policy implications. The report, *The end of Parallel Lives,* recommended that central and local governments should take the lead in promoting community cohesion (Latour, 2007). According to this approach, policies for 'diversity management' should also address employment and be considered, for instance, in welfare to work schemes. Policies aimed to overcome ethnic and religious disadvantage have developed since then and Citizenship education typifies the government's attempt to promote community cohesion.

Criticism of Modood's multicultural approach comes particularly around the idea that such a strong emphasis on respect of differences can finally lead to increasing divisions amongst groups and thus to segregation (Davies, 2009). Modood argues that *'the tension can be only resolved in practice, through finding and cultivating points of common ground between dominant and subordinate cultures as well as new synthesis and hybridities'* (Ibid). As stated by Habermas, multicultural citizenship *'has to be a form of citizenship that is sensitive to ethnic differences and incorporates a respect for persons as individuals and for the collectivities to which people have a sense of belonging'* (Modood, Berthoud, & al, 1997).

This thesis reflects the complexity of the debate about multiculturalism for the issue of young people's identity construction and sets out implications for policy and practice. Bourdieu said that *'youth is just a word'* to imply the complexity of labelling the multiple and diverse experiences of being young nowadays. In line with this idea, the

thesis focuses on the case of a specific group, South Asian British Muslims, where youth identity needs to be negotiated within the complex habitus originating in multiple social fields amongst which family is a central focus.

1.2 Thesis aims and research questions

The lack of specific research, which examines the intergenerational dimension of identity formation in the context of South Asian Muslim communities in the UK, has defined the exploratory nature of the thesis, which has dual focus on both young people and parents.

Firstly, the thesis aims to explore the process of negotiating religious and national identities that affects young British Muslims from South Asian background living in the UK. Secondly, the research takes a particular standpoint and also seeks to understand the specific contribution of intergenerational transmission in the construction of young British Muslims' religious and national identities. Therefore, the main research questions of the study are the following:

- How do young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds negotiate between their religious and national identities? Do religious and national identities conflict, co-exist or are they mutually reinforcing?
- How do South Asian Muslim parents transmit values to their children? Do they adopt particular strategies?

The study also seeks to answer the following subsidiary research questions:

- How do values transmitted by Muslim parents from South Asian backgrounds affect the development of their children's identity?
- What are the priorities of South Asian Muslim parents in bringing up their children?

Ultimately, the research aims to provide primary data about the experiences and everyday lives of young people from South Asian Muslim background and their families in order to improve the understanding of these communities. In so doing, the thesis seeks to inform the development of theory and policy which take account different family values and beliefs.

1.3 Thesis outline

The thesis consists of eleven chapters. The present chapter introduces the context where the thesis is set, including the current debate about Muslims in the UK, and some of the key issues in the literature.

Chapter 2 details the conceptual framework of the study, with particular reference to Bourdieu's theory of habitus, social fields, cultural and religious capitals. It focuses on explaining how habitus can be utilised for understanding identity construction, while it sets out the definition and model of identity used in the study. In so doing, the chapter portrays the complexity of the theoretical context where this research is placed and outlines other approaches, coming from psychology and social psychology, to the study of identity. The conceptual model presented in Chapter Two also provides an account of the process and content of intergenerational transmission, which is shaped by the dynamics between habitus and social fields, where the transfer of cultural capital takes place.

Chapter 3 explores in more detail the South Asian Muslim family field and its features, such as the influence of migration, ethnic capital, Islam and South Asian cultures. In so doing, it provides context about how habitus and identities have been constructed and negotiated in this complex social field.

The concept of youth is examined in Chapter 4 which provides an account of different theoretical perspectives, particularly the work of Bourdieu, who interpreted youth as another social field. The conceptualisation of youth as a social field involves looking at the complex range of factors and social dynamics which affect the construction of identity and habitus within this specific field including citizenship, Britishness, social class, gender and religion.

Chapter 5 describes the methodology of the study which consists of a two stage mixed method design including visual methods. The chapter explains how the epistemology and ontology of the study, based on Critical Realism, have influenced the research design and presents more empirical aspects of the research such as the sampling processes and the procedures used to access the field. A reflection on the scope and

implications of the role of the researcher during the data elicitation and analysis is also included.

The findings from the in-school questionnaire are presented in Chapter 6, which focuses on three main areas: religious identity, national identity and identity statuses, a concept adopted by development psychologists (Marcia & Friedman, 1993) to study the influence of parents and external role models on young people's identity development.

The last four chapters of the thesis report qualitative findings obtained through thematic analysis. Chapter 7 explores the process of intergenerational transmission, which is pivotal for young people's identity construction. It reports on the strategies adopted by parents to transmit values, including the role of Islam in parenting, the definition of Islamic capital and gender differences in transmission.

Chapter 8 examines the priorities and aspirations that South Asian Muslim parents held for their children in relation to young people's perspectives. The chapter presents evidence in the form of three family case studies, which exemplify significant themes emerging from the analysis: 'because education is everything', marriage as aspiration and the influences of parents' priorities and aspirations for their children. The development of case studies emerged from analysing the accounts of different family members (son/daughter and both parents) within the same family group.

Chapters 9 and 10 specifically address the main research question of the study and explore the different ways young British Muslims use to negotiate religious and national identities. The two chapters report qualitative findings in combination with insights from visual methods which, in the form of photographs taken by young people, provided the initial focus of the interviews. The accounts from the interviews were used to construct three typologies – Conforming, Contesting and Combining – which interpret different processes of identities negotiation.

Finally, Chapter 11 provides a general discussion of the research findings. The Chapter revises and answers the original research questions; it places the findings in the context of the literature and outlines the implications of the thesis for policy and practice.

Chapter 2

Habitus, social fields and the transmission of cultural capital: a conceptual framework for understanding identity

Introduction

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework of the research study drawing from the work of the French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930; 2002). The first section of the chapter describes the conceptual model and the key definition of identity used in this thesis based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus. The chapter will then provide an overview of the different approaches to identity coming from the psychological, social-psychological and sociological traditions. It then explains why this study adopted a sociological approach with a particular focus on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus[1], social fields and cultural capital. The chapter explores how Bourdieu's concepts can contribute to the understanding of intergenerational transmission of values in terms of both the process and the content of the transfer.

Identity is a complex concept and its definition requires negotiating individual factors with social and structural conditions. More specifically, psychologists have tended to emphasise the subjective aspect of identity and have looked at it as intra-psychic or a

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[1] *Habitus or **the** habitus?* When I firstly drafted this chapter I referred to habitus as *the habitus* following more closely the literal translation from the French. The use of the definite article prior the word habitus was also influenced by the Italian translation, which is much closer to the French original Bourdieu's text. Bourdieu wrote about *l'habitus* (it is the same in Italian) which stands for the literal transition *the habitus*:

'L'habitus, *système de disposition acquises par l'apprentissage implicite ou explicite qui fonctionne comme un système de schèmes générateurs, est générateur de stratégies qui peuvent être objectivement conformes aux intérêts objectifs de leurs auteurs sans en avoir été expressément conçues à cette fin'.*
(Bourdieu, 1980, *Le sens pratique*, p.88-89).
Looking at the literature in English I realised there are some differences between how scholars write about habitus. Direct translations of Bourdieu's work from French to English, such as the *Logic of Practice* (1990), retained the definite article and speak about **the habitus;** similarly to Lahire's article (2003), also French, *'From **the** habitus to an individual heritage of dispositions. Towards a sociology at the level of the individual'*. Jenkins (2002), in his book reviewing Bourdieu's sociological theory, speaks about *the habitus* with the definite article (Jenkins, 2002, p.74); others, like Ingram (2011), who applied Bourdieu's concepts to her own research and findings, rather than reporting/reviewing it, speak of *habitus* without the article.

'mental process'. In contrast, in sociology and social psychology the predominant idea is that identity is subjected to the influences coming from society through the sharing of definitions and meanings.

Even though Bourdieu did not directly address the issue of identity, it is argued below that his theory about habitus, social field and cultural capital represents a significant ground for the sociological analysis of identity. Bourdieu started his career as an anthropologist and conducted a study in Algeria for four years, during the 1960s, about the rural people of Kabyle in the Mahgreb (Bourdieu, 1979). This experience deeply influenced his subsequent work by developing his interest in exploring what lies behind people's everyday practices, and thus behind things that are generally taken for granted. The analysis of the logic of practice was the starting point of Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field which, in this study, provides the framework for the conceptualisation of identity and the theoretical settings for the process of the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital.

2.1 Defining identity in the context of this study

Since the outset of the research study, what I have tried to understand about identity was not so much how people define themselves (I'm a student, I'm unemployed, I'm British, I'm Muslim, I'm Italian etc.) but why they define themselves in certain ways. As detailed later in the chapter, the debate about social structure and individual action embodied by Bourdieu's concept of habitus has provided the conceptual settings for the development of the definition of identity. Therefore, in the thesis I defined identity as follows:

> *'Identity is the body of individual's orientations, which are assimilated by the individual in the social fields under the influences of the structural conditions, and are then internalised to reflect subjective values, beliefs, tastes and practices'.*

In other words, drawing from Bourdieu's theory of habitus and social fields, the study assumes that identity results from the process by which individuals internalise elements of the social world during their social interactions within different social fields. These elements are then interpreted by individuals and externalised back into the social world in the form of subjective beliefs, tastes, practices and values, which, in

this study, are regarded as the main indicators to understand identity. The model below was developed to describe the circularity of this process between individual, social and structural conditions with a focus on specific elements relevant for the study and selected for each level:

Figure 2.1: 'Habitus and identity': individual, social and structural spheres.

Structural/Historical conditions
Socio-economic, political, cultural system

Islam	*South Asian Cultures*	*Britishness*

Social Fields

Day-to-day interactions & Values Transmission

Domestic field: Family		Public field: School & peers

Individual Sphere

Individual orientation and way of being in the world

Individual Values	Individual Beliefs	Every-day Practices	Individual Tastes

Like in Bourdieu's habitus, the model above (Figure 2.1) suggests a circular relationship between the three spheres individual, social and structural. More specifically:

- The wider social context includes structural conditions, such as religion, Britishness or cultures, which set out the regularity and predictability of human actions and behaviours. The structural level influences the day-to-day processes of socialisation and social interaction by defining general norms, values and beliefs. The analysis will focus on Islam, South Asian cultures and Britishness as elements of the social structure relevant to young British Muslims and their parents.

- The social fields constitute a middle ground which bridges together the individual and the structural spheres by providing the setting where structural norms, beliefs and values are negotiated by individuals through the interaction with other social actors. The exposure to social interaction - particularly within the domestic field of the family, and the public field of school and peers, leads individuals to assimilate and internalise social norms and values. The domestic field of family and the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital will be the pathway of primary focus of the study.

- The individual subjective dimension of identity is where the two other levels, social and structural, are internalised and reconciled to produce subjective values, tastes, beliefs and practices. Internalise does not mean passively absorb, rather, social and structural conditions can be contested and reinterpreted by individuals during the process of internalisation. With individual beliefs I specifically refer to the internalization and subjective interpretation of religious beliefs; while values include the wider set of cultural principles and meanings associated to a particular social context, in this case Britain and the influences of South Asian countries of origin.

- Subjective practices, values, beliefs and tastes were considered the main indicators of identity and were the main objects of discussion with respondents during the interviews.

The rest of the chapter tracks back the theoretical journey which led to the development of the definition of identity and conceptual framework adopted by the study.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to identity: psychology and social psychology

Scholars and researchers from various disciplinary viewpoints have defined what identity is and what it entails. Definitions reflect different methodological and epistemological perspectives, particularly amongst the three disciplines more involved in the study of identity: sociology, psychology and social-psychology. While there is general agreement that identity results from a complex interplay of inner (individual) and outer (social) factors, the different emphasis on either the subjective or the objective dimension is what distinguishes the main disciplinary approaches.

In a review of the contribution of psychology and sociology to the study of identity Coté and Levine (2002) argued that sociological analysis tends to focus on the macro-societal level, while psychologists have been studying the micro-individual level. They also pinpointed divergent views regarding the relevance of certain domains of identity, like cultural or national identity. Sociologists argue that people's sense of belonging to a particular culture or nation results from socialisation beginning with childhood, while developmental psychologists look at adolescence as the period of monumental change (Coté & Levine, 2002).

Identity in psychology

More specifically, psychologists tend to look at identity within the individuals as part of their *'psyche'* or *'inner working'*. This means that cultural, social and intrapersonal factors tend to be conceptualised as elements that the '*cognizing person assimilate and influence'* (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.48). Erik Erikson (1902-1994) dedicated most of his career to study the psychosocial process that marks the development of identity through the life cycle and gave a fundamental contribution to the analysis of identity in the context of developmental psychology. As Erikson stated:

> *'(…) in the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity'* (Erikson, 1968, p.130).

He defined identity as '*a psychological process'* (Erikson, 1968, p.296) which *'employs simultaneous reflection and observation, a process taking place on all levels of mental functioning, by which an individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology*

significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and types that have become relevant to him' (Erikson, 1968, p. 23).

Building on Freud's theoretical work on psychosexual growth, Erikson developed an extensive model of individuals' psychosocial development also structured into stages (Fowler, 1981, p.43). The psychosocial stages refer to a phase of development characterised by significant physical, emotional and cognitive changes giving rise to new relational modes and roles and thus to a new *'self'* (Ibid, p.48). Erikson argued that the process of identity formation is a process of increasing differentiation which starts during childhood, with the baby distinguishing himself from the mother, and continues throughout life with adolescence, as the key stage of transition to adulthood. He aimed to elaborate a cross-cultural framework based on the assumption that, adolescence grants young people the freedom to experiment with various roles before reaching moral autonomy during adulthood. According to Erikson, the ideological moral stage which characterises adolescence enables the young person to choose which truth will guide his/her sense of justice (Coté & Levine, 2002). This is followed by the development of an ethical awareness which involves the recognition of individual responsibilities for his/her own actions. However, this level of freedom and experimentation granted by adolescence is enabled, according to Erikson, by the high degree of freedom and choice permitted in contemporary societies (Erikson, 1982). This assumption about freedom is not value-free and it seems to imply that there is a universal set of values at the basis of the 'truth' guiding the sense of justice and way of life. Criticism of Erikson's theory of identity development saw the model as essentialist and put into question its cross-cultural validity (Graf, Mullis, & Mullis, 2008). Erikson aspired to go beyond the specific cultural context of individualistic and free choice-oriented American culture where his formulations about identity were developed. In so doing, he did not take into account the variety of value systems across different social environments and the implications of the historical conditions on the development of the individual. As Graf et al. argue (2008):

> *'Erikson's views of the importance of the identity development issues in adolescence may apply more to Western societies rather than to adolescents in more traditional cultures'* (Graf et al., 2008, p.58).

Identity in social psychology

From a social psychological perspective Coté and Levine defined identity as *'the structure of the human psyche and the attributes of the agentic ego understood in relationship with interactional and social processes'* (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.140). Coté and Levine drew from a social-psychological framework- the 'Personality and Social Structure Perspective' (PSSP) - which recognis

ed the relevance of three levels of analysis in the study of identity: personality, interaction and social structure. Personality referred to the intrapsychic domain of the individual including psyche, self and cognitive structure; interaction consisted of the micro level of analysis which includes *'patterns of behaviour that characterize day-to-day contacts among people'* and the *social structure* was the political and economic system surrounding the individual (Ibid, p.6).

The second major influence on the social psychological perspective was the identity status paradigm developed by James Marcia (1964; 1966), which quite closely aligned with Erikson's theory. The central concept of Marcia's paradigm is that identity status is a theoretical construct defined by two respective actions: exploration and commitment. Exploration consists of *'the conscious deliberations of alternative goals, roles and values,* while commitment *'regards the consolidation of these deliberations as courses of future actions'* (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.18). On the basis of commitment and exploration Marcia identified four identity statuses: Identity Diffusion, Identity Foreclosure, Identity Moratorium and Identity Achievement. The table below summarises the level of commitment and exploration (choice making) that every identity status involves.

Table 2.1: Marcia's identity statuses paradigm

	Exploration	Commitment
Diffusion	Low	Low
Foreclosure	Low	High
Moratorium	High	Low
Achievement	High	High

Coté and Levine developed further Marcia's work on identity status and set out a new model which cross-tabulated the intrapsychic level of analysis with the social-structural level. This new framework provided an understanding of identity in relation to both social and psychological dimensions by adding two further layers linking identity to the macro-societal sphere as shown in Table 2.2 below: community structure and cultural change. Nomic communities are those highly integrated while anomic refers to community structure where individuals are disconnected, un-committed and alienated (Coté & Levine, 2002, p. 60-65).

Table 2.2: Structure and agency

		Individualization	
		Undifferentiated	Individualized
Community Structure	Anomic	Pre-modern (Transitional)/ Diffusion	Late Modern / Moratorium-Diffusion
	Nomic	Pre-modern (Stable)/ Foreclosure	Early Modern (Stable)/ Achievement

Coté and Levine suggested that stable pre-modern societies were characterised by Identity foreclosure with lower level of exploration but higher level of cultural commitment. Transitional pre-modern societies fostered diffusion types of identities with both lower levels of exploration and cultural commitment; achievement characterised early modern societies with both a higher level of exploration and cultural commitment; while late modern societies tended to support moratorium identities and therefore higher exploration but low cultural commitment. Coté and Levine explained that a moratorium status of identity, which characterised late modern societies, is the consequence of the increasing individualisation of consumer-corporate capitalism.

However, while this model deals with cultural parameters which influence identities, it does not tell how the process of influencing is actually happening and what the

outcomes are. In addition, by focusing on cultural change Coté and Levine extend the concept of identity status from the individual to society. In so doing they neglect to explain to whom identity statuses really belong to and therefore leave the individual out of their theory.

2.3 The concept of identity and identity formation in sociology: macro and micro perspectives

The concept of identity in sociology can be placed within the context of the sociological debate about the relationship between individual action and social structure, or in other words, the paradigm of how *'sociocultural factors shape the structure and content of human self-definition'* (Weigert & Teitge, 1986 , p. 2). Classical sociologists, such as Durkheim, assumed that a person's nature and character were primarily functions of social stimuli (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.10) while the subjective element of identity remained secondary. In other words, sociologists have been generally less interested with the 'interior life' and have focused 'the role of others' and social interaction in the process of identity construction.

Even though the concept of identity was not in its essence new in sociology, it entered the sociological debate only in the 1980s. In *Identity and Society* (1986) Wiegert explained that this late arrival of the concept into the debate was mainly due to sociologists holding some '*intellectual concerns'* about identity which was considered to be the domain of psychological analysis (Weigert & Teitge, 1986, p. 2). In fact, Weigert pointed out that the sociological assumption that meanings are in large part socially constructed has led to focusing on '*social organization as the principle of self-organization'* (Weigert & Teitge, 1986, p X) and therefore to address the question of the self from the perspective of the social structure.

Sociologists explain the growing interest on identity as a reflection of historical and social changes. For instance, Weigert traced back the need for theorising identity in the post World War II context, when the question of national identities (what it means to be American, British, French etc.) came at the forefront and defined social consciousness. With the following spread of social conflict during the rise of civil rights movements, the language of identity developed further within the theoretical debate

and it was used positively by groups to legitimize their own claims to social and legal recognition (Weigert & Teitge, 1986, p.29). Richard Jenkins (2006), instead, sees the growing concerns about identity strongly related to the social changes led by modernity such as *'the reorientation of work and family; class status mobility, migration, medical and technological innovation the redrawing of political borders'* (Jenkins, 2006, p.11).

Different definitions of identity in sociology share the same attention for how social interaction and structural conditions affect subjective action. Weigert, by combining different features of identity coming from the sociological tradition (such as the abstract features of typical, apriority, organization, sociality) developed the following definition -or analytical description- of identity:

> *'Identity is a typified self at a stage in the life course situated in a context of organized social relationships'* (Weigert & Teitge, 1986, p.53).

In *Social Identity* Jenkins (2006) emphasised the relational nature of identity understood as a continuous process of distinguishing individuals and collectivities from other individuals and collectivities and defined it as:

> *'Identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which include us). The outcomes of agreement and disagreement, at least in principle always negotiable, identity is not fixed'* (Jenkins, 2006 ,p.5).

Lawler (2008) also agreed that a social and collective approach to identity means *'to start with the social conditions which determine 'self-perception'* (Lawler, 2008, p.7). Similarly to Jenkins, Lawler pointed out that identity should be understood as produced within social relations by a process which is concerned with *'sameness and difference'*. This is to say that, identity is understood as being simultaneously determined by either sharing certain commonalities with others such as *'we are women, British, Black etc*.' or by the search for uniqueness and difference. For instance Lawler examines how middle-class identity is formed by sharing certain characteristics and values while emphasising the difference with working-class lifestyles and identity (Lawler, 2008).

Micro and macro levels of identity

While compiling their review of sociological approaches of identity, Weigert & Teitge (1986) identified two main theoretical trends: one concerned with the micro level and the other with the macro level. On a micro level identity is seen as '*multiple characterizations of the individual by both self and other*' (Wiegert in Coté & Levine, 2002, p. 44) while on a macro level identity is '*a positional definition of actors within institutions and societies*' (Ibid).

Weigert et al. argued that psychological theories, such as the one by Erik Erikson (1902-1994), had an impact on the sociological traditions concerned with the micro level, particularly Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interactionists (Mead, Strauss, Goffman in Coté & Levine, 2002) look at social reality as continually created by the individual action of communicating meanings and names (symbols) during their interactions. Therefore identities are constructed and modified through these on-going processes. Mead and Goffman are particularly relevant in this context because of the focus on the relationship between the interactional levels and the self. Since G. H. Mead (1934), who theorised the distinction '*mind, self and society*', sociologists have started to recognise the utility of a three level approach in the analysis of identity. Mead argued that individual consciousness is the product of social interaction through reflexivity by which the whole social process '*is brought into the experience of the individuals involved with it*' (Jenkins, 2006, p.36). The mind represents the cognitive dimension of the individual, the self concerned with the emotional sphere, and both of them are processes that cannot exist without the social relationships embodied by society (Jenkins, 2006). Relevant in this context is also Goffman who focused on the interactional level of self-identification and particularly on how '*individuals negotiate their identities within the interaction order*' (Jenkins, 2006, p. 71). In other words, Goffman argued that, individuals, in order to be accepted by others, feel compelled to present an image of themselves that conforms to routines. Therefore, self-identification becomes a normative and standardised aspect of every-day life, a process through which individuals develop strategies to manage the impressions that other people gain of them from the outside. This interplay between self-image and public image becomes the basis for individual identification (Jenkins, 2006, p. 20 & p 71).

Sociological traditions more focused on the macro level include Structural Functionalism (Parsons, 1902-1979) and Critical Theory (Habermas, 1929). Even though these two theoretical frameworks do not address identity directly, they contribute to its study from a sociological perspective by elucidating about relations between the structural and individual spheres. Structural Functionalism, for instance, helps to understand how differentiation within society can create identity problems (Coté & Levine, 2002), while Critical Theory shows how identity is embedded in *'social experience, symbolic communication and reflection of institutional processes'* (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.39).

The interest in either the micro or the macro aspects also involves using different epistemologies and methodologies. For instance, Coté and Levine argued that qualitative approaches are most appropriate at a personal/interactional level, while quantitative realist approaches are more effective in investigating the institutional/societal level where roles and statuses are more fixed and stable (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.45). An attempt to bridge together the macro and micro level of identity comes from the critical realist perspective. As it will be detailed later in Chapter 5, Critical Realism is an ontological and epistemological framework which stands between realism and relativism. Critical realists theorise that reality is complex and multilayered and therefore its explanation requires multidimensional approaches. From this perspective Derek Layder (1993) developed a model which *'conveys the textured or interwoven nature of different levels and dimensions of social reality'* (Layder, 1993, p.7) by bringing together macro and micro dimensions. Layder suggested that macro structural aspects can complement the analysis of micro phenomena and defines the process by which the level of *the self, the situated activity, the setting, the context and history* produce the macro-micro interaction (Ibid). This results in a map where the self is '*the individual's relation to the social environment characterized by the intersection between the individual social and biographical experience; the situated activity refers to the social interactions; the settings represents social organizations such as schools, factories, etc; the context denotes the wider macro-social system*' (Layder, 1993, p. 74-128). The different levels interact and combine to influence behaviour and social activity. Therefore, Layder argued:

'The micro processes of everyday life as reflected in the situations and identities of the persons involved can only be understood properly when seen in conjunction with more macro features' (Layder, 1993,p.10) .

On the other hand social activity is the result of different elements such as the self, the situation, the setting and history as summarised by the research map below.

Figure 2.2: Layder's '*Research Map*': how to bring together micro & macro levels of analysis in Sociology

Research element	Research focus
CONTEXT	*Macro social organization* Values, traditions, forms of social and economic organization and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution; interlocking directorships, state intervention. As they are implicated in the sector below.
SETTING	*Intermediate social organization* Work: Industrial, military and state bureaucracies; labour markets; hospitals; social work agencies, domestic labour; penal and mental institutions. Non-work: Social organization of leisure activities, sports and social clubs; religious and spiritual organizations.
SITUATED ACTIVITY	*Social activity* Face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above contexts and settings. Focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below).
SELF	*Self-identity and individual's social experience* As these are influenced by the above sectors and as they interact with the unique psychobiography of the individual. Focus on the life-career.

(HISTORY spans all rows, shown on the left margin of the table.)

Source: Layder, 1993, p.72.

To conclude, sociologists theorise that identity is not the exclusive property of the individual but *'something that is realized strategically and circumstantially'* through reciprocal interaction (Weigert in Coté & Levine, 2002, p.49). Sociologists' interest on identity is centred on the dialectic between personal and social identity in the context of the social structure. Therefore identity is either internal or external to individuals: it is internal because it is subjectively constructed and external because it is constructed on the basis of social circumstances (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.49) including social roles, cultural institutions and social structures:

> *'Identity is the product of the person negotiating passages through life and reflecting on these actions (…) there is not identity without society, and society steers identity formation while individuals attempt to navigate often hazardous and blocked passages'* (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.39).

Identity has been used by sociologists as a tool to bridge the gap between subjectivism and objectivism, individual and society, freedom and necessity. In this sense, identity provides a unique tool to reflect how social structure is internalised by individuals to produce subjective action.

2.4 P. Bourdieu: habitus, field and the forms of capital

Under many aspects, Bourdieu's theory represents for sociological theory *'the return of the subject'* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 in Jones, 2009) particularly in relationship to frameworks such as the Structuralism of Levis Strauss or French Existentialism (Jones, 2009). Bourdieu did not theorise explicitly about identity however, as shown earlier in this chapter, the study considers his concepts of habitus, social field and cultural and religious capital as the main framework for studying identity.

Bourdieu's theory about habitus, social fields, cultural and religious capital is set in the context of the sociological debate about agency and structure, which deals with the question of how individual action is possible within the constraints set by the social structure (Giddens, 2009). In other words, the social structure constraints individuals to behave in quite predictable ways, at the same time, the social structure depends on the regularity of individuals' actions by which it is informed (Ibid). Bourdieu's answer to this question involved re-thinking the duality between agency and structure in terms of the *'reflexivity in social practice between the structural conditions of possibility (possibility and constraints) and actors use of these possibilities'* (Jones 2009, p.39). In other words, Bourdieu relied on the idea of *reflexivity* to explain how individual action reproduces the objective structure and how the objective structure informs individual action: '*the dialectic of internalization of externality and the externalisation of internality'* (Bourdieu, 1977 in Jones 2009, p.39).

Defining and understanding *habitus*

Bourdieu's idea of habitus served to bring together the objective structural conditions and subjective action. In this sense habitus is a 'socialised subjectivity' or the subjective dimension which is socially constructed through socialisation, interaction and learning within social fields (Swingewood, 2000). In *The Logic of Practice* (1980; 1990), Bourdieu defined the essence of habitus as:

> '*A system of durable and transposable dispositions (…) which generate organized practices and representations (…) without presupposing a conscious aiming of the operations necessary to attain them*' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53-65)

Habitus explains how agents internalise and turn the objective structures into durable dispositions which, reproduce and reinforce elements of the objective structure (Lienard & Servais, 2000). These *transposable dispositions* are *'predisposed ways'* of being and operating in the social world (Sweetman, 2009, p.493) such as the way of talking, ways of moving, walking and generally ways of making and doing things, behaviours and gestures. Jenkins explained that a disposition in Bourdieu's terms *'is the manner and style by which actors carry themselves'* (Jenkins, 2002, pp.74-75). These inclinations to act and behave in a certain way function as generative classificatory schemes or cognitive mechanisms (Ibid, p.82), which exists inside the individual's head but manifest themselves externally in gestures or mannerisms. However, this recognition that habitus exists inside the individual goes together with the acknowledgment that habitus originated externally through interaction.

Practice is a major concept of Bourdieu's theory. With practice Bourdieu refers to any visible and objective social phenomenon (Ibid, p.69); practice is about '*what people actually do in the social world*' (Ibid, pp. 68-69). Bourdieu's idea of *'all social life is essentially practical'* derives from the Marxist tradition and particularly Marx's Theses on Feuerbach (in Jenkins, 2002) and therefore, practice is a visible objective social phenomenon which can be understood only in the context of a particular time/space (Ibid, pp.66-69).

A leading theme of Bourdieu's theory of practice is this circular relationship between internal subjective dispositions and external objective structures. Bourdieu explained

this interplay between agency and structure through a -middle level- which consists of 'objective practices'. According to this paradigm, the individual functions as a 'filter' which absorbs and internalises influences coming from the social world in the form of external objective practices. The internalisation of objective practices produces individual dispositions to act and behave in certain ways. These dispositions go back to reproduce and inform objective practices and thus ultimately to influence the social world or objective structure. This circular relationship between subjective and objective dimensions characterises the nature of habitus itself. In other words, habitus is informed by structural conditions through socialisation (captured by objective practices), but it is then assumed by individuals to produce individual practices, which shape elements of the objective structure. In this sense, habitus encompasses subjective individual behaviours as well as the social structure: on one side, it informs individual small and larger actions: from *'posture, demeanour, outlook, expectations and tastes'* (Sweetman, 2009, p.493). On the other side, it reproduces the social structure by embodying social, cultural and class relations determined by upbringing. In sum, habitus explicates how the social world is both inside us and outside us (Lahire, 2003); Figure 2.3 was developed to show how habitus links together the objective structure with subjective actions:

> *'Thus, habitus is the source of 'objective practices' but is itself a set of 'subjective; generative principles produced by the 'objective' patterns of social life'* (Jenkins, 2002, p.82).

Figure 2.3: The circularity of habitus
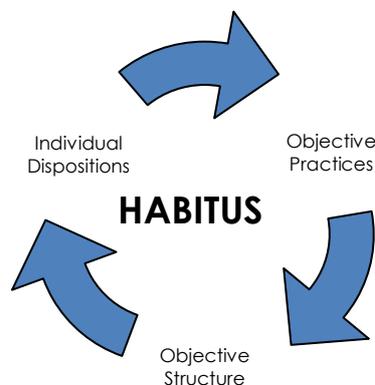
Referring to his anthropological work in Algeria, Bourdieu detailed about how the social world defines individual behaviour. By observing a scene of olive gathering he noticed how the specific feminine virtue of modesty oriented the women's body downwards, towards the ground while the male virtue of excellence was externalised by *'asserted movements upwards, towards other men'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.70-71). Bourdieu described how women offered the stool to men and walked a few paces behind them:

> *'Here, the opposition between the straight and the bent, the stiff and the supple, takes the form of the distinction between the man who stands and knocks down the olives and the woman who stoops to pick them up' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.70-71).*

This example explains how the gendered division of labour is reflected by the individual gestures, behaviour and interactions with others and ultimately serves to reinforce the gendered structure itself:

> *'The politics of gender shape and are revealed in the way of walking, moving and even standing still. The female idea of modesty (in Kabylia) and restraints orient her body down, toward the ground; the ideal male, however, moves upwards and outwards in his hexes, his body oriented towards other men'* (Jenkins, 2002, p.74-75).

Social fields and the forms of capital

The concept of field is complementary to the concept of habitus within Bourdieu's sociological theory and 'the' habitus of an individual actor is placed within the context of a social field and its external determinants: *'The field is the crucial mediating context wherein external factors are brought to bear upon individual practice and institutions'* (Jenkins, 2002, p.86). This is to say that habitus only operates in relation to a social field which is *'a structured system of social positions – occupied by either individuals or institutions the nature of which defines the situations of their occupants'* (Ibid, p. 85).

Bourdieu pointed out that *fields* are *'fields of struggle'* in the sense that they are defined by the interests that are at stake and include different *areas* such as, for instance, culture, housing, intellectual distinction (education), employment, land, power, politics, social class, prestige (Jenkins, 2002, p. 84-85). He posited that the nature of social fields is relational and characterised by the struggle for different types of capital:

> *'To think in terms of field is to think relationally (…) in analytic terms a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions'* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 96-97).

The idea of struggle comes from the fact that agents have to develop strategies concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining *capital* of the field (Jenkins, 2002, p.84-86).

Bourdieu extended Marx's theory of capital- *'the product of an investment which can secure a return'* (Moore, 2004, p. 446) - beyond the economic sphere. He theorised about the social (valued relations with significant others), cultural (legitimate knowledge and education) and symbolic (prestige and social honour) types of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as the inner elements of the social fields. In other words, fields are the social arenas where different groups compete, like in a game, for different volumes of economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.XXI). Bourdieu's argument that the internal structure of the field is shaped by relations of power, implies that society, resulting from the whole system of fields, is based on power dynamics. In this context, the concept of class is used by Bourdieu to describe people who occupy similar power positions within a field and share similar habitus (Jenkins, 2002, p.88). These power positions are characterised by capital, which is both the product and the process within a field.

Beliefs and religious capital

Importantly, in the 'Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field' (1991, firstly published in French in 1971) Bourdieu delineated another type of capital which is relevant for this study: religious capital. He affirmed that religion is an autonomous social field which therefore involves the production, reproduction and diffusion of religious goods (Bourdieu, 1991, p.7). Bourdieu looked back to the history of monotheist religions which developed in settled communities with quite advanced agricultural systems of production and emergent organized dominant classes. Therefore, as other social fields, religion implies struggle and class distinction based on the possession of religious capital as a symbolic resource in the hand of dominant groups.

According to Bourdieu, hierarchical division is the inner nature of the religious field: originally religious thinking was influenced by the 'Aristotelian cosmology' which

implied the idea of a *'prime mover who transmits his movement to the heavenly spheres'* (Ibid, p. 32). Similarly, religious hierarchies found their justification and legitimisation in the hierarchical cosmologic order established by God and then become social. Finally, Bourdieu argued that religion fulfils a social/political function which is the maintenance of the establishment by '*imposing and inculcating schemes of perception, thought and action objectively agreeing with political structures'* (Ibid, p.31). Bringing together the thought of Weber and Marx, Bourdieu argued that religion uses its symbolic power to maintain class distinction by *'imposing a hierarchical way of thinking'* amongst groups as reflected by institutions such as the church.

Belief is another important concept within Bourdieu's theory of habitus and field which is relevant to this study and particularly for the definition of identity, dealt at the beginning of this chapter. In the *Logic of Practice (1990)*, Bourdieu detailed about the importance of beliefs as *'the inherent part of belonging to a field'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.67). Bourdieu essentially argued that beliefs are pre-intentional and are part of social fields. As such, they are acquired during childhood through learning. In this sense he distinguished between practical and enacted beliefs. Practical beliefs are relevant parts of the membership to a field, they are a state of the body (rather than just a state of mind), involving the adherence and adaptation to external conditions of existence. For instance, some conditions (i.e. witchcraft) may appear intolerable to someone who is external to that specific social context. Bourdieu explained that there is a pre-reflexive naive sense of adaptation to external conditions that implies that *'you have to be born in it'* in order to be an entire part of it (Ibid). Beliefs stay between habitus and field and set the pre-condition for the adaptation of one to the other to create what Bourdieu defined as doxa: *'pre-reflexive, naive, native compliance with the fundamental presuppositions of the field'* (Ibid, p. 68).

2.5 The process of intergenerational transmission and cultural capital

Sociologists define socialization as the wide process by which an infant becomes a 'self-aware knowledgeable person' (Giddens, 2009) within a specific cultural context. Therefore, sociologists believe that during socialization, which starts in the early years of life, children learn to distinguish their own identity from the identities of others

(Ibid). Amongst others, George Herbert Mead (1934) gave a crucial contribution to the study of socialization as the achievement of self awareness by discerning 'the unsocialised I' from 'the socialised me' (Mead, 1934, 1992).

This study presents the process of intergenerational transmission from parents to young people, as a specific aspect of the wider socialisation. In this sense intergenerational transmission is the process used by parents to transmit their body of knowledge, values and notions to their children. Even though Bourdieu did not investigate directly internal family dynamics, some of the concepts he developed in the wider context of his analysis about social class and inequality, are particularly relevant to the understanding of intergenerational transmission. As the American sociologist Annette Lareau (2011, second edition) pointed out, the sociology of Bourdieu is particularly relevant to understand how parents strive to maintain or improve their social position and that of their children (Lareau, 2011). More specifically, in this study the idea of habitus and social fields and the concept of cultural capital are used to understand intergenerational transmission both in terms of content of transmission and process of transmitting.

The content and process of intergenerational transmission and cultural capital

Cultural capital: the content of transmission

Cultural capital is a key concept in Bourdieu's theory and concerns with the investment in education, measured by its quality and duration, which can then provide outcomes on other spheres including the economic one. In this sense cultural capital can be transformed into economic capital. More specifically, Bourdieu defined cultural capital as a resource with multiple (triple) dimensions:

> *'Cultural capital can exit in three forms: in the embodied state i.e. in the form of long lasting disposition of the mind and the body; in the objectified state, in the forms of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries (...)) which are the trace realization of theories o critiques of these theories etc; and in the institutionalised state (...) as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications'* (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243).

As any other form of capital, cultural *capital* involves the *'capacity to reproduce itself, produce profits expand and contains the tendency to persist'* (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241-243). This is to say that that culture is a convertible resource that can produce and lead to specific outcomes. In this study, the concept of cultural capital will be applied as the overarching framework which describes the content of intergenerational transmission. In this sense cultural capital includes the body of knowledge and competencies but also the values, beliefs and resources that parents directly or indirectly transmit to their children (Geert, 2001).

Transmitting: **the process of intergenerational transmission**

Together with looking at the content of intergenerational transmission, it is important to address the question of how cultural capital is transmitted from parents to children and thus how *transmitting* takes place. Intergenerational transmission is the mechanism, or process, by which cultural capital passes from parents to their children.

Bourdieu incorporated the process of transmission into his analysis of social structure and class distinction, and particularly the idea that habitus indicates the unconscious acquisition from the social world of ways of doing and being (Silva, 2005). Therefore the conceptualisation of intergenerational transmission, within Bourdieu's sociological theory, consists of the role of family in the development of young people's habitus, and it involves bringing together elements of its logic of practice (1980- French Edition, 1990 English Edition), like habitus and field, with his work about social class and culture exemplified by Distinction (1984). In *The Logic of Practice* (1990), Bourdieu described how habitus informs individual small and larger actions and how it is a source of practices which reproduce and reinforce the social structure by embodying social, cultural and class relations determined during upbringing. In this context, the transmission and acquisition of cultural capital are unconscious processes reflected by the metaphor of the social world as a game: participants enter and adapt to the rules of the game which are already in place; these rules reflect and perpetuate social class inequalities (Silva, 2005). Bourdieu explained that early familiarization with the rules of the game eases the adaptation and leads to reinforcing these rules:

> *'The earlier the player enters the game the less he is aware of the associated*
> *learning' and the greater is his ignorance the more strongly the conditions of*

> *the game are perpetuated by the player's adaptation to it* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.68).

In *Distinction,* which was firstly published in French in 1979 (and was then translated in English in 1984), Bourdieu addressed the issue of the transmission of cultural capital into more depth. Drawing upon two surveys undertaken in 1963 and 1968 in Paris and Lille, in *Distinction* Bourdieu investigated the relationship between taste and social class. Bourdieu focused on identifying how the consumption of cultural goods including clothing, furniture, food etc. related to cultural capital (measured by educational qualification) and social origin (measured by father's occupation). Therefore, *Distinction* set out the role of family and social origin for individual development and social class position (Silva, 2005). Bourdieu argued that cultural capital is imprinted and encoded in habitus starting from childhood through learning (Bourdieu, 1984). In line with the logic of practice, habitus acts as an unconscious orientation that shapes individual taste according to class position and to the cultural capital associated to that.

Bourdieu dedicated two articles, '*On the Family as realized category'* (1996) and '*The family Spirit'* (1998) to the discussion of how the notion of family specifically fits with the rest of his theory about the circularity of *habitus* and *field*. Bourdieu defines *family* as:

> *'A principle of construction that is both immanent in individuals (as an internalized collective) and transcendent to them, since they encounter it in the form of objectivity in all other individuals'* (Bourdieu, 1996, p.21).

This is to say that family is both '*an objective social category'* (a structuring structure)' and *'a subjective mental category (a structured structure)'* used by the individual to bring together representations and actions coming from the social world (Bourdieu, 1996 p.21; Bourdieu, 1998). Family therefore generates individuals' habitus as well as is being generated by the habitus of individuals. This dual nature of the family involves the existence of a family habitus, which includes the body of common dispositions within the family, as well as family as a social field, or the body of external conditions at the origin of dispositions. The idea of family as a field is concerned with these power relationships and exchange processes within family members. In this sense, family has for Bourdieu a decisive role in the maintenance and reproduction of a certain social

order (Bourdieu, 1996) through the accumulation and then the transmission amongst members of different forms of capital.

Bourdieu argued that the structural objective dimension, including institutions such as the State, determine 'social obligations' amongst family members, which are maintained and reinforced through a process of institutionalising the family. On the other hand, Bourdieu pointed out that these norms regulating individual behaviours are internalised by family members and reflected in their habitus in the form of affective bonds which transform the social obligation toward family's members into a 'loving disposition' (Bourdieu, 1998). This loving disposition serves to bond each member of the family with what Bourdieu called '*family feeling*' which is made of devotion, generosity and solidarity as well as 'exchange services, assistance, visits, attention and kindness' (Ibid, p.22). In this context the border between private/domestic and the public field is blurred. Therefore, family is a field which provides the social context where the process of intergenerational transmission takes place. However as a social field, family is not culturally neutral, rather it is influenced by specific historical and socio-economic conditions which determine both strategies and content of transmission. Therefore, family exists as part of the social structure, which creates the social expectations and the social understanding of family itself in terms of the reciprocal obligations bonding the members. However, family also contains subjective dimensions which consist of the individual dispositions of the single family members as well as the body of these dispositions as family habitus.

As Brannen (2006) pointed out in her study of cultures of intergenerational transmission in four generational families, the *st*rategies adopted by parents to transfer cultural capital vary according to '*the contexts where people speak and in which people's lives are lived'* (Brannen, 2006, p.151). In Brannen's study the family members interviewed were born in three different historical periods[2], which impacted on the availability of resources, the economic cycle, employment rates and on the systems of social stratification (Ibid). Similarly, in the present study, which only focuses on two generations of British Muslim of South Asians origin (young people aged 14-18 years old and their parents), the historical context which includes parental migration

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[2] Great grandparents 1911-1921; grandparents 1940-1948; parents born 1965-1975 in (Brannen, 2006).

histories and processes of settlement in the UK, is particularly influential as described in the following chapter.

In conclusion, family is one the key social fields where habitus originated; the process of intergenerational transfer occurs in the context of social fields, including the family, to ultimately affect and shape individual dispositions or habitus.

2.6 *Strategy*: the synthesis between habitus and the objective structure

In sociology the concept of strategy is widely used in the analysis of different types of situations from power relations to economic, work and family life (Crow, 1989). Strategy is defined by Crow (1989), who started up a debate about the use of the term in the sociological community (Morgan, 1990; Morgan 1989; Crow 1989; Shaw 1990; Watson 1990), as a term used *'to imply the presence of conscious and rational decisions involving a long term perspective'* (Crow, 1989, p.19). Importantly, since the term strategy implies choice (Crow, 1989, p.3) it is a particular object of discussion in the context of structural constraints limiting individual action such as those imposed by limited resources or conflicting demands (Ibid, p.15).

Challenging rational calculation and finalist rationality, Bourdieu argued that strategising is ultimately the result of the implications of the objective structures on individual habitus and determined by past conditions thus, in this sense, unintentional:

> *'Even when they look like the realization of specific ends, the strategies produced by habitus and enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and constantly changing situations are only apparently determined by the future.*
> *If they seem to be oriented by anticipation of their own consequences, thereby encouraging a finalist illusion, this is because always tend to reproduce the objective structures'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.61).

The idea of strategy provides the link between Bourdieu's most important concepts - habitus, field and practice. This logic for Bourdieu is the product of interaction between the subjectivity of habitus and the constraints imposed by the objective structure such as those, for instance, of cultural consumption (Jenkins, 2002). Therefore, Bourdieu posited that strategies are the result of the adjustment of subjective aspirations to objective possibilities (Bourdieu, 1990) and stated:

> *'The practical world that is constituted in the relationship with habitus
> (...) is a world of already realized ends, procedure to follows, paths to
> take'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53).

Bourdieu's approach to individual action and rationality led to criticism of determinism (Jenkins, 2002, p.82-83) as subjectivity and strategic intention are reduced to adaptation to conditions set by the objective structure. However, this paradox, where subjective action is explained through the effects of the objective structure can be overcome by the interpretation of their relation as circular. In this sense, the objective structure is reproduced by the individuals' habitus which, on the other hand, contain elements of the objective structure. As Bourdieu stated:

> *'Habitus that at every moment structure new experience in accordance with
> the structure produced by past experience which are modified by new
> experience (...)'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 60)

Finally, in this study Bourdieu's concept of strategy will be applied to explain actions in two settings: the parenting strategies used to transmit values to children and the strategies adopted by young people in negotiating their identities. Similarly to Bourdieu's approach, in both these settings the idea of strategy will not involve rational-decisional making but it will be used to describe how individuals deal and negotiate structural and social influences both consciously and unconsciously.

More specifically, the strategies adopted by parents will be identified through thematic analysis and will involve the description of how the process of intergenerational transmission takes place, the content of transmission and differences amongst parental roles, as shown in Chapter 7. The idea of parenting strategies goes back to literature on parenting from the late 1960s and particularly research studies based on questionnaires, interviews and observations on nursery school children and their parents, conducted by the development psychologist Diana Baumrind (1966). Baumrind identified, through three separate studies which focused on the correlation between parenting and children's behaviour, three different but consistent patterns of what she defined as parenting styles: authoritative , authoritarian and permissive (Baumrind, 1966). These styles were later extended to four (authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent and neglectful) by Maccoby and Martin (Maccoby, 1983). However in this study the concept of *parenting strategy* will not reflect Baumrind's framework, rather it will be used more flexibly as an analytical tool which brings together different activities,

discourses and practices adopted by parents to teach values and beliefs to their children as emerging from the findings. More relevant for the thesis is the ethnography conducted with families in Philadelphia during the 1990s by Lareau (2002; 2011). Lareau's concepts of *'concerted cultivation'* and *'natural growth'* reflect the differences between middle class and working class parenting 'strategies' as aspects of the habitus and of its transmission (Lareau, 2002; 2011).

The idea of strategy as an analytical tool will also be applied to bring together different ways, or techniques, used by young people in the study to negotiate the multiple influences on their identity. *Negotiation strategies* will be used in the context of Bourdieu's theory which implies the constant interaction between habitus and field ultimately leading to habitus fluidity (Ingram, 2011). However, as Ingram's (2011) study of working class boys who are academically successful indicated, there are complexities associated with identities which develop in multiple social fields (Ingram, 2011). In Ingram's study negotiation strategies are required by young people to deal with the requirement of reconciling habitus and identities which develops from the interaction between different, at times contrasting, social fields such as those shaped by family, religion and tradition and those reflecting a more secular and British way of life. This disparity between habitus and fields compels these young people to fulfil different sets of expectations coming particularly from their domestic and public lives.

The relationship between habitus and identity

In the thesis, habitus and identity overlap in the sense that they function in similar ways. As habitus, identity combines individual orientations and social conditions. It is internal to the individual but socially constructed and it is at the same time a process of internalising external norms and conditions and, the outcome of the process which produces individual values beliefs, tastes and practices. In this context, identity is a resource available to the individual, which provides him/her with skills, abilities, knowledge and experiences. In this sense, as Jones (2009) argues, identity as 'capital' implies considering the body of personal resources '*that people are able to develop and draw on to construct their biographies*' (Jones, 2009, p.81). Therefore, identity capital brings about the question of what can enable or prevent individuals to make full use of the resources attached to identity. Once again, this is the key question of agency and

structure, or in other words how social conditions enhance individual action and how individual action serves social conditions.

Conclusions

This chapter presented the conceptual framework of this study and particularly referred to how Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, fields, cultural and religious capital can be used for studying young British Muslims' identity in relationship to their parents.

The chapter began with portraying the complex theoretical context where this research is placed. While adopting a sociological approach to the analysis of young British Muslims' identity, the research will pay particular attention to the dynamics between individual experience, structural/historical context and the social fields where interaction takes place.

In the context of this study, Bourdieu's habitus and field are relevant to explore the interplay between individual and social dynamics that affect identity: if habitus is a reflection of how the subjective dimension can be negotiated with the objective social structure, the field most strongly represents the social space which constrains and determines the opportunities available to the agent.

To conclude, the process of intergenerational transmission is shaped by the reciprocal dynamics between habitus and different social fields, amongst which family is a particular focus. This transfer is embodied by cultural capital as the body of resources that depends on parents' personal histories including the experience of migration and settling in the UK, their attachment to South Asian culture, Islam, native language and British culture.

Chapter 3

South Asian Muslims in Britain and the family field

Introduction

This chapter examines the South Asian Muslim family field and it focuses on the main attributes that characterise intergenerational relations in the specific context of these religious-ethnic groups. The chapter begins with an outline of the demographic trends that characterise South Asian Muslim families living in the UK. It then provides context about the construction of 'transnational habitus', starting with the conditions behind the migration of South Asians to the UK in the 1950s and the changes in the intra-family relations brought about by the process of migrating and settling in the new country. Finally, the chapter explores specific characteristics of the South Asian Muslim family field including South Asian cultures, ethnic capital, Islam, intergenerational relations and the process transmission.

There is a wide body of literature stemming from different disciplinary backgrounds that explores where children get their religion, values or culture and what family characteristics strengthen their transmission. Thompson (1995) argues that family has a primary role in transmitting religion together with languages, social standing, social values, aspirations, world views, domestic skills and more generally habitus (Thompson, 1995). Sociologists look at family as a major agency for the socialisation of children and young people (eg. Brannen, 2006; Brannen & O'Brien, 1996; Finch, 1989; Laslett, 1972; Morgan, 1996; Parsons & Bales, 1956; Stone, 1980), and they assume that the range of contacts and the nature of the relationships that family involves vary across different social and historical contexts (Stone, 1980).

3.1 South Asian Muslim families in the UK: the demographic context

Nowadays the religious variable is present in most national surveys in the UK. However, this has only been possible since the last 10 years as the variable was introduced for

the first time with the 2001 Census. In the 1950s and 1960s, the discourses on ethnic minorities were principally marked by the idea of colour. The emphasis move to race during the 1970s and 1980s, and shifted toward ethnicity during the 1990s (Peach, 2006). Until the late 1990s researchers who wanted to conduct analysis on religion could only gain partial information by relying on other variables, such as ethnicity or country of origin, which only partially reflect the religious affiliation of the groups (Becher, 2003). From the mid 1990s the National Surveys of Ethnic Minorities (Modood et al., 1997) represented the first change in the analysis of race and ethnicity in Britain by introducing the new dimension of religion. The question was then added to the 2001 Census and answered by 92% of people in England and Wales reflecting for the first time the new plurality of faith communities in Britain (Peach, 2006).

Analysis of 2001 Census data on ethnicity and religion suggests that South Asian Muslim families tend to be larger, have fewer childless couples, have higher rates of extended families, lower rate of lone parent families, cohabiting and divorce compared to families from other ethnic religious backgrounds (Dobbs et al., 2006).

Statisticians and demographers in the UK have defined a household as '*a person living alone or a group of people who have the address as their only or main residence and who either share one meal a day or share the living accommodation*' (ONS, 2009, p.19). This concept is different from the idea of family which implies a relationship amongst members that goes beyond the sharing of the address and '*comprises a group of people consisting of a married or cohabiting couple with or without child(ren), or a lone parent with child(ren). It also includes a married or cohabiting couple with their grandchild(ren) or a lone grandparent with his or her grandchild(ren) where there are no children in the intervening generation in the household* (Ibid). Households are further classified as one person households (such as pensioners living on their own), family households (including married couples, cohabiting and lone parent families) or other types of households.

The 2001 Census shows high variations across different ethnic and religious groups in terms of household size, presence of dependent children and extended families; level of deprivation measured by overcrowding and the proportion of households with no working adults.

Muslim households

Historical research has outlined that household composition has not been subjected to substantial changes at least since the industrialization era when family shifted from extended to nuclear (Coontz, 1992). This pattern toward a smaller family has stayed constant between the 17th and the 20th century, and the average size of family in western countries only fell in the early 20th century from 4 or 5 members to about 3 (Finch, 1989). Other research tracked back the origin of the contemporary nuclear family structure to even earlier in the time, starting from the 15th century (Laslett, 1972).

The 2001 Census confirms that the one *family household* is the prevalent type of household in Britain nowadays: 63 per cent of the households in Britain in 2001 were in fact family households, compared to 30 per cent of one person households and 7 per cent of other households (Dobbs et. al, 2006, p.84-85). This trend also applied to Muslim households: in 2001 65 per cent of the Muslims in the UK lived in one family household (Ibid).

Muslim households were overall much more likely to contain married couples and amongst the least likely to include cohabiting and lone parent families compared to Christian, Jewish and Buddhist households, as shown in the table below (Dobbs et al., 2006; ONS, 2004). Similarly, South Asian groups were more likely to live in married couple households than any other group: 54 per cent of Bangladeshi; 53 per cent of Indian; and 51 per cent of Pakistani households compared to 37 per cent of White British households (Dobbs et al., 2006, p. 85).

Divorce and separation are less common amongst Muslim households with dependent children: the 2001 Census suggested that only 20 per cent of the Muslims were living in lone parent households because of divorce, compared to 47 per cent of Jewish; 38 per cent of Christian; 36 per cent of Buddhist and 30 per cent of Hindu and Sikh households (Dobbs et al., 2006). Muslims living in lone parent households were the most likely to be widowed (13 per cent of Muslim lone parents were widowed compared to 5 per cent of the Christians) which may result from the age gap characteristic of many Muslim couples. However, the Census also highlighted that the proportion of South Asian lone parent households with dependent children have increased slightly between

1991 and 2001 (from 7 per cent to 9 per cent amongst Pakistani; from 8 per cent to 9 per cent amongst Bangladeshi; from 5 to 6 per cent amongst Indians) (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.90).

As summarised by Table 3.1, in 2001 Muslim households had the largest family size with an average of 3.8 family members compared to 2.3 in Christian, Jewish and Buddhist households (ONS, 2006, p.93-94).

Table 3.1: Average of household size by religion

	People per household
Christian	2.3
Buddhist	2.3
Hindu	3.2
Jewish	2.3
Muslim	3.8
Sikh	3.6
Any other religion	2.2
No religion	2.4
Not stated	2.2
All households	2.4

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics N= 23,852,721

This pattern was reflected across ethnicity and Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian households had, on average, larger families with 4.5 people per Bangladeshi households, followed by Pakistani (4.1) and Indians (3.3), in contrast with White Irish (2.2), White British and Black Caribbean (both 2.3), which had the smallest families (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.92-93). A combination of cultural and socio-economic factors explains the larger size of Muslim households. Firstly Muslim households contained a higher number of children in the home: 25 per cent of Muslim households contained three or more dependent children, compared with 14 per cent of Sikh, 7 per cent of Hindu, and 5 per cent of Christian households (Ibid). The higher numbers of children implied the younger age structure of the Muslim population in the UK. The Census indicated that in 2001 Pakistani and Bangladeshi were amongst the youngest groups in the UK. Secondly, Muslim young people are more likely to live longer within their parents' household and, most often, until they marry. Other cultural practices, such as

the oldest son remaining in the parental household with the wife after marriage, also affected the household size (Dobbs et al., 2006).

Intergenerational households

The 2001 Census showed that a higher proportion of Muslims, together with Sikhs and Hindu, were living in extended families compared to other religious groups, which also impacted on the size of the households. Cultural practices such as the requirement for looking after the elderly underlie the higher presence of the extended household type amongst British Muslims.

According to the Census definition, a household *'contains extended families if contains three or more generations in direct descendent'* (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.95). This is to say that an extended family household will contain children sharing their home with at least one grandparent. In 2001 the proportion of extended family household in England and Wales were pretty low and less than 2 per cent of the households were of this type. However, intergenerational households were particularly present amongst South Asians and amongst Muslim households, which were, after Sikh and Hindu, the most likely to contain extended family households: Sikh 12 per cent; Hindus 9 per cent; and Muslims 8 per cent (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.95).

Muslim households and disadvantage

Research evidence highlights that ethnic minority groups are at higher risk of income poverty and social exclusion (TUC, 2006; JRF, 2007; Platt, 2009). JRF (2007) research, based on data reviews from different national sources, shows that around 40 per cent of people from ethnic minorities are in income poverty, which is twice the rate for white people (Ibid). More specifically the report suggests that the rates of income poverty vary substantially between ethnic groups: Bangladeshi and Pakistani are the two groups with the highest rates (65 per cent and 55 per cent) followed by Black African and Black Caribbean (JRF, 2007, p.5). In contrast, amongst the South Asian groups Indians are doing proportionally much better and are closer to the White British group. The TUC report based on extensive data refers to the policy implications of poverty amongst these groups:

'The position of people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin is vitally important for all anti-poverty campaigners, because they are far more likely to be poor than any other ethnic group' (TUC, 2006)

Research focused on explaining differences amongst groups went to investigate the links between poverty and ethnicity. Particularly, a range of complex factors have been identified behind the disadvantage of Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups including their working status; the level of deprivation of the areas where they live; low qualifications; larger average family size. However, TUC report also highlights other social factors including discrimination and Islamophobia as triggering the socio-economic disadvantage of these groups. The internal variance in outcomes amongst South Asian groups, with Indians being relatively much more well off, are generally explained in terms of differences in 'human capital' (TUC, 2006).

Household deprivation is a multidimensional factor which comprises disadvantage in household tenure, living in overcrowded accommodation and being subject to higher rates of unemployment (Dobbs et al., 2006), with the higher number of children triggering further the level of deprivation. In 2001 Muslim families were more likely to experience household deprivation as their larger size had implications on different grounds from housing provision, to access to social services, healthcare and labour market.

The Census measures overcrowding as *'the ratio between the number of rooms in the household compared to the estimated number of rooms'* (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.99). In 2001, 32 per cent of the Muslim households lived in overcrowded accommodation compared to 22 per cent of the Hindu, 19 per cent of the Sikh, 10 per cent of the Buddhist, only 6 per cent of the Jewish and 6 per cent of the Christian households (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.100).

Household tenure is defined '*as the right or title under which property is held*' (ONS, 2006, p96). The 2001 Census highlighted that Muslim households were amongst the least likely to own their homes followed only by Buddhists: 52 per cent of Muslim and per cent 54 per cent of Buddhist households owned their homes, compared to 70 per cent of Christian; 82 per cent of Sikh and 74 per cent of Hindu households. Muslim households were also the most likely to live in social housing (28 per cent of them) and

were much more likely than other religious groups to contain non working adults as shown in the chart below (Dobbs et al., 2006).

Muslims also had the higher rates of unemployment: the unemployment rate among Muslim men was 17 per cent while Buddhist and Sikh men had the next highest unemployment rates of 10 per cent and 9 per cent, whilst Jewish and Christian men had the lowest (5 per cent and 6 per cent) (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.122). As shown in the table below unemployment tends to be higher for women than men across all different ethnic and religious groups. As Muslims were the group most likely to be unemployed[3], Muslim women were much more likely than women from any other religious group to be unemployed: 18 per cent of the Muslim women in 2001 were unemployed compared to only 4 per cent of Jewish and Christian women (Dobbs et al., 2006, p.122). Amongst the ethnic groups, Bangladeshi women were the most likely to be unemployed (22 per cent) followed by Pakistani women (18 per cent) while only 7 per cent of Indian women and 4 per cent of White British women were unemployed (Ibid).

Table 3.2 Unemployment rates: by ethnic group and sex, April 2001

	Men	Women
Other Black	21.36	14.21
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	18.72	13.33
Bangladeshi	18.60	22.13
Black African	18.48	16.20
Black Caribbean	16.62	9.52
Mixed White and Black African	16.54	12.52
Pakistani	16.21	18.31
Other Mixed	12.68	9.74
Mixed White and Asian	11.09	8.16
Other Asian	10.42	10.01
Chinese	7.81	7.70
Indian	7.42	7.48
Other White	7.35	6.51
White Irish	7.10	4.49
White British	5.76	4.19
Other ethnic group	12.50	9.12
All people	13421207	10886677

Source: Census, April 2001, Office for National Statistics

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[3] Muslims' unemployment rates among were more than double those in other groups (ONS, 2006, p.121).

3.2 Transnational habitus: migration, diaspora and the formation of British Muslim South Asianess

The habitus that characterises South Asian Muslim families originates within multiple social fields. It reflects a complexity deriving from negotiating transnational senses of belonging to the country of origin, the associated South Asian cultures, and Islam while settling and living in the UK. Migration, South Asian cultures and Islam are key determinants of the construction of South Asian Muslim identities in the context of the communities in Britain. The following section examines how the migration histories of South Asian Muslims became interwoven with the British social and cultural milieus to form *'British Asianess'* (Brah, 1996).

Migration and diaspora: the construction of South Asian Muslim identity in Britain

Migration strongly characterises the South Asian Muslim family field in many respects. Even though South Asian Muslim communities have been present in Britain since the colonial time (Ansari, 1988), it was during the 1950s that a more consistent wave of South Asian Muslim migrants started moving to the UK. Anwar and Ansari argue that migration results from socio-economic imbalances which 'push' people away from a region while 'pull' them into a new area (Ansari, 1988; Anwar, 1979). Ansari (1988) divided the post War migration of Muslims in the UK into two phases: the first wave from 1945 to the early 1970s; and the second wave starting from the 1970s onwards (Ansari, 1988). The first Muslim migrants to arrive to the UK straight after the war were mainly men: some of them fought with the British forces during the war while many others moved to Britain after the creation, in 1947, of Pakistan as an independent Islamic nation, which brought about 7 million refugees from India into the fragile economy of the newly born state (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). These first migrant men were from rural origins and belonged to the peasant proprietor class (Ibid). They arrived to the UK mostly on their own and they experienced the hardship of first settlers but believed in the 'myth of return' and therefore that they were only transient and would eventually move back to their country of origin (Anwar, 1979). During the 1960s many more South Asian Muslim men arrived in the UK attracted by the economic boom, the development

of the British manufacturing industry and the high demand of work particularly in the wool textile sector. However, almost all the jobs available to South Asians were those rejected by white workers, mostly unskilled roles involving unsociable hours, poor working conditions and low wages (Brah, 1996). In 'Cartographies of Diaspora' Brah (1996) argues that the migration for labour from the ex-colonies was the consequence of the history of colonialism and imperialism: *'Once the colonies had been a source of cheap raw materials, now they became a source of cheap labour'* (Brah, 1996, p.21).

The social and historical context of Britain between the 1960s-1990s was determinant in the construction of British Muslim identity. In June 1962 unrestricted immigration in the UK ended with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act and during the 1970s immigration laws became even more restrictive: a non-patrial Commonwealth citizen could no longer enter the UK unless he/she had a work permit and a job offer (Brah, 1996). This change of direction in British immigration policies had, in certain respects, an unexpected effect: it encouraged family reunion of permanent settlers and sped up the process of spouses moving to the UK. Importantly, the 1970s were characterised by the oil crisis, recession and deep economic restructuring leading to high unemployment and social tensions (Ansari, 1988). Brah argues that during the 1970s the general problem of immigration turned into the problem of South Asian and black migrants (Brah, 1996), while the economic recession incremented racial conflict. Since the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s racism targeting Asians and Muslims broke out, and violent practices such as 'Paki bashing' perpetrated against Asians started spreading (Brah, 1996). The racial conflict was sustained by economic recession and the restrictive immigration rules. Tensions were further exacerbated and by the political propaganda such as that of Enoch Powell's speech with references to Asians as inherently outsiders, and reinforced by Margaret Thatcher's assertion of migrant cultures as alien and threatening the British way of life (Ibid). The 1980s marked the definite shift from temporary male residence to permanent family settlement (Gilliat-Ray, 2010) and saw the rise of the populist English nationalism exemplified by the rhetoric of the New Right, which contributed to the marginalisation of minorities through the *'racialised constructions of national belonging'* (Ansari, 1988, p.1). During this time, the South Asian migration to the UK took the form of a proper diaspora defined by Werbner as a global affiliation which produces *'a transnational network of*

dispersed subjects, connected with ties of co-responsibilities across boundaries of empires, political communities or nations' (Werbner, 2000, p.307-308).

During the 1990s and early 2000 the social integration policies in Britain took a new direction and the debate about multiculturalism reached its peak. The Rushdie Affair, the Gulf War, the attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, profoundly marked the construction of South Asian Muslim identity in Britain and racial tensions have continued to affect Britain until now. During 2001 Bradford, Oldham and Burnley saw an outbreak of rioting between the white majority and the growing Asian communities. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the London bombings have shaped even more deeply the construction of Muslim identity, not just in Britain but possibly in the West (G. Morgan & Poynting, 2012). Hussain (2004) describes how 9/11 led to very strong anti-Muslim feelings revitalised by far right propaganda and very negative media coverage, which has led to a general increase of Islamophobia and discrimination against the British Muslim communities (Hussain, 2004). This climate has had a dual effect: on one hand it has led Muslim communities to search for new opportunities for dialogue and participation, as reflected by Muslims joining left wing groups and non Muslims campaigning to 'Stop the War'. On the other hand it put Muslims under the spotlight causing feelings of increasing isolation and alienation from the rest of British society, which in some instances has led to the radicalisation of Islam (Hussain, 2004).

Such a complex historical and social context has profound implications for the construction of contemporary South Asian Muslim habitus and identity and was particularly influential for the second generation of young British Muslims. Werbner argues that the diaspora was seen by the first generation as a 'boundary crossing connections' and therefore as a positive resource, whilst it increased the sense of difference amongst the second generation of British Muslims particularly in relation to their peers (Werbner, 2000, 2004). The context created by the diaspora, international affairs and most recently the 9/11, and the London bombings triggered off a sense of alienation and led young Muslims to question and try to make sense of traditional loyalties. While the sense of belonging to South Asian cultures and traditions started falling, Islamic identity has emerged as stronger and regenerated out of the identity impasse (Hussain, 2004).

The review of literature on the broader dynamics that shape western Muslims identity, by Duderija (2007) suggested that the religious commitment of migrants is intensified by migration and the process of resettlement (Duderija, 2007). Duderija argues that the change from being part of a religious majority to having a religious minority status affect beliefs and practices that were taken for granted in the home country. This path is confirmed by a wide body of studies showing how identity modifications experienced by migrants are evident in the *'changing nature of the relationship between their ethnic and religious identity'* (Duderija, 2007, p. 142) with religion becoming more prominent. According to Duderija, in the context of British Muslims, the primacy of Islam led to two opposing paths: the individualisation and privatisation of Islamic faith, with religious identity and manifestation to be constrained in the private sphere, or, in contrast, a new focus on a political Islam which is more visible in the public sphere and reflecting the need for *'purification of Islam from the inherited ethno-cultural elements of first generation'* (Duderija, 2007, p.149).

Migration, family and cultural changes

Migration affects the habitus of newly settled migrants in a variety of ways which involve negotiating and constructing new identities. As other Muslim immigrants in western countries, South Asian Muslims in the UK have to deal with settling in quite a different socio-cultural context with implications for relationships and gender dynamics in the family.

Pels's study of Moroccan families in the Netherlands (2000), based on literature review and two in-depth studies (the first one with 16 families including interviews with both parents and observations, the second based on semi structured interviews focused mostly on mothers and some fathers of 82 families), is particularly relevant in catching some of the cultural changes within the family field which are attached to migration. Pels found that migration led to shifting power relations in the families from fathers toward mothers, even though female power remained not publically recognised. Migration, according Pels's findings, favoured the mother's status in the family who took over part of traditional fathers' responsibilities such as controlling and disciplining the children (Pels, 2000). This shift in the division of labour and power relationships in the family is the consequence of mothers and children's increasing autonomy through

employment and education. Pels pointed out that working outside the home for long hours distanced men from their children, while those who became unemployed failed their role as breadwinners (Pels, 2000). Roer at al. (2005) also found evidence, based on 54 interviews with immigrant fathers from different ethnic backgrounds in Canada and Israel, that unemployment and lack of language skills challenged the traditional role of fathers. However they also suggested that migrant fathers remained the primary breadwinners and did not necessarily experience the decline of their traditional role. Roer at al. implied that migration can be seen as an opportunity for fathers to reconsider their role within the family and their relations with children and, for instance, take up more childcare responsibilities (Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, & Clark, 2005; Strier & Strier, 2010). The recent UN report on *Men in Families* (2011) highlighted how migrant fathers may see migration as a *'a cultural identity project' offering opportunities to attach new meanings to traditional roles, to reinterpret previous definitions of fatherhood and to reinvent oneself as father and as a man'* (Haour-Knipe, 2011). Ambrosini, in his review of the experiences of second generations in Italy, examined another effect of migration within the family field: the reversal of children and parents roles so that children, who most often have better language skills, take up adults responsibilities such as accompanying the parents to the doctor or translating for them in different contexts (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004).

The changing patterns of employment and access to education between the first and second generation of South Asian Muslim women is a further change triggered by migration. Evidence about the lower employment rates amongst South Asian Muslim women, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi, remains quite strong. As discussed above in 2001-5, levels of economic activity for women aged 19-60 (excluding full-time students) were 31 per cent for Pakistani women and 21per cent for Bangladeshi women, compared with 78 per cent for Black Caribbean women and 77 per cent for White women (Marsh, 2008). Most commonly cited as a reason for to the lower economic activity of South Asian Muslim women is that Muslim families oppose women to go and work outside the home. Brah argues that this explanation is *'culturalist'* and does not take into account the underlying factors that lead to South Asian Muslim women's disadvantage in the labour market (Brah, 1996). South Asian women came to the UK as dependents, many from the rural areas of Mirpur and Syllhet with few or no economic or educational resources (Brah, 1996; Marsh, 2008).

Research from the Department of Work and Pension (2006), based reviews of literature and labour market data, a survey with 1000 employers, 48 expert interviews and 250 semi-structured interviews with Bangladeshi and Pakistani women in the UK, suggested that the biggest barrier to employment for women from these two ethnic groups related to the low levels of human capital they possessed. The report highlighted that the majority of women interviewed had '*low levels of education and qualifications, low levels of confidence, limited experience of different types of jobs, and limited networks of contacts in different sectors. At the root of the low level of human capital they possessed was the lack of facility in the English language*' (Tackey et al., 2006, p.8).

However patterns of education and employment for South Asian Muslim women are changing across generations. As detailed in the next chapter, research on second generation and young South Asian Muslim women fails to identify any substantial difference in their job aspirations compared to non Muslim peers (Basit, 1997; Brah, 1996). Literature about the 'immigrant paradigm' suggests that, generally, immigrants are more ambitious than their native counterpart from similar socio-economic backgrounds and that this ambition is often the main reason why people emigrate (Strand, 2008). In her study of the formation of educational aspirations amongst adolescent British Muslim girls, based on 18 interviews with teachers, 24 young girls at year 11 and 24 parents, Basit (1997) found that almost all the girls had high career aspirations regardless of the occupational status of their parents and despite the apparently working class background of the families. Higher aspirations are often found amongst second generation migrants whose participation in education and general lifestyle matches that of their non-migrant peers leading to the rejection of the '*downward assimilation*' experienced by parents (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004b). Ambrosini defined '*downward assimilation*' as the process of integration into marginal and discriminated communities, which often characterises first generation migrants. In contrast, second generation young people compete with non migrant peers for similar roles and positions in education or the labour market. While the first generation parents occupied marginal positions in low skilled jobs, second generations are more exposed to the barriers posed by racialised labour markets and highly selective educational systems (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004b).

3.3 Culture, ethnic capital and Islam: the construction of South Asian British Muslim family field

The South Asian British Muslim family field originates in the intersection between the fields of cultures (South Asians and British), ethnic relations and Islam. The chart below portrays how these fields are linked to each other and reciprocally influencing.

In this thesis, culture is conceptualised as a wider framework that incorporates ethnicity by providing the context (in the forms of values and beliefs), where ethnic relations are placed; religion is separate but influencing and influenced by the other fields. This conceptualisation of the family field underlies the idea that cultures, religion and ethnic identities are not unchanging or monolithic but rather dynamic and flexible.

Figure 3.1: South Asian British Muslim Family Field: Islam, cultures and ethnicity
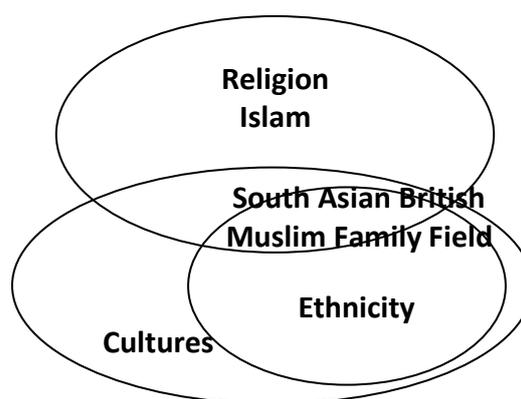
The following section examines the key features underlying the South Asian Muslim British family field with a focus on the relationship between culture, ethnicity and religion.

Defining culture and ethnic capital

Culture is a complex concept with a broad set of meanings which encompass the worldview of a particular group in society (Becher, 2003). In anthropological terms, culture is *'a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general'* (Williams, 1983, p.83). If we are asked to describe our own culture, what

would come to our mind? Brah defines culture as '*the symbolic construction of the vast array o a social group's life experiences. Culture is the embodiment, the chronicle of a group's history*' (Brah, 1996, p.18). In this sense, culture involves the whole spectrum of human experiences from modes of thinking, behaviours, value systems, norms and traditions and thus it is also a reflection of the socio economic status of the group.

Culture is a recurrent and central theme in the sociology of Bourdieu, who defined it as the main indicator of class distinction reflected in the differences of tastes and preferences, as well as in the cultural capital that determine social classes (Bourdieu, 1984). As in the Marxist tradition, Bourdieu treated both culture and religion as 'capital', which is to say, he recognised their potential as productive resources which mirror relations of power particularly as elements of the establishment whose main role is the legitimization, and '*reproduction of social inequality and all of its incumbent injustices*' (Rey, 2007 , p.5). As Erel (2010) points out in his study about the relation between migration and cultural capital, a central notion of Bourdieu's theory is that capital is a resource that produces and is convertible into other new forms of capital (Erel, 2010). Based on case studies research about Turkish migrants in Britain and Germany, Erel found that '*migrants exercise agency by creating new forms of migration-specific cultural capital*' rather than simply bringing with them a package of cultural resources that may or may not fit with the new country of residency (Erel, 2010, p.643). This conceptualisation implies looking at 'migrating cultural capital' as dynamic rather than static and pre-determined in the country of origin (Erel, 2010).

In the context of this thesis, culture is particularly relevant for the understanding of the worldview, which characterises the three studied South Asian communities: Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indians. In line with the overarching conceptual framework described in the previous chapter, culture is interpreted as an element of the habitus, which contributes to the dynamism between individual action and social structure by framing individual values, beliefs, tastes and social practice. As such, culture originates and is exchanged within specific social fields, of which family is of central interest. The cultures of South Asian Muslims living in the UK, reflect the transnational habitus enhanced by migration where elements of Pakistani, Bengali and Indian cultures merge with those of British culture.

Ethnicity is another important concept in the thesis and it is a relatively new analytical construct, which has, starting from the 1970s, replaced the category of race. The definitions of ethnicity have tended to focus on classifications listing the features that determine the membership to an ethnic group – such as languages, country of origin, nationality, religion, customs, skin colour names, clothes, food, family patterns (Becher, 2003). More recently, three different approaches have dominated the analysis of ethnicity: primordialist, which interprets ethnicity as 'innate' or biological and therefore fixed; instrumentalist, which focuses on how identity is politicised to achieve certain aims, such as political 'blackness' (Modood,1997); and constructivist approaches which look at ethnicity in relation to specific social and historical contexts (Becher, 2003). Modood acknowledges that ethnicities are not *'rigid groups defined by internal norms and practices'* rather *'interactive shaped partly by their original heritage and partly by racism and the political and economic relations between groups'* (Modood & al., 1997, p.9).

In this thesis, ethnicity is conceptualised in relation to Bourdieu's concept of capital and therefore as a body of convertible resources that generate new resources available to a specific group. These resources form the basis of ethnic capital, which involves the sharing of family norms, values, practices and community networks and therefore supports aspirations, educational goals and social mobility. Modood's et.al. (2010) idea of *'ethnic capital'* (Shah et al., 2010) is the combination of *'familial adult-child relationships, transmission of values and aspirations related to education and enforcement of norms and sanctions'* (Ibid, p.1123). In other words, ethnic capital provides a *'dense co-ethnic networks in immigrant communities'* which acts as a closed structure and protective barrier for second generation youths (Ibid, p.1112). Based on a 2 year qualitative study with 31 young British Pakistani women and 33 young British Pakistani men aged 16-26 in Slough, Modood et.al investigated the reasons behind the unexpected patterns of high academic attainment and aspirations amongst the group. The study found that regardless of their socio-economic background, all the young Pakistani in the sample believed strongly in education as a route to success and social mobility and stated that their parents emphasised education as a value. In other words, ethnic capital was behind the aspirations and patterns of social mobility in the community by providing *'cohesive co-ethnic ties characterised by common values related to education and high degree of trust which led to enforcement of norms'* (Shah

et.al., p.1123). In this sense, ethnic capital compensated for the lack of economic capital and the weak cultural capital of some of the working class and most disadvantaged families.

In summary, the concept of ethnicity encompasses pre-fixed categories and static attributes. Ethnicity is part of the habitus of a group and a fluid collective identity that draws on values, common practices and beliefs to support aspirations in relation to a specific social context such as, in this study, Britain today (Brah & Shaw, 1992; H. S. Mirza, 1992).

Islam, South Asian cultures the South Asian Muslim family field

As described by Figure 3.1, culture incorporates ethnicity, while religion stands on its own as a different entity. The intersection between these three - cultures, religion and ethnicity- characterises the South Asian Muslim family field. In this context, Islam also plays a key role by providing the main source of values for Muslims. A detailed overview of the range of values, beliefs and practices associated with Islam is beyond the scope of this thesis. This section of the chapter seeks to provide context about how Islam informs the South Asian Muslim family field.

Islam means surrender and a Muslim is a person who has made this entire submission to Allah – God - who demands that human beings live in justice, equity and compassion (Armstrong, 2001). To a Muslim, Islam is a way of life which governs religious practice but also encompasses a sense of morality, social relationships, marriage, divorce, kinship, economic and political relations (Anwar, 1979). The Qur'an is the holy book and foundation of Islam and it is believed to be the direct word of God which became audible through the words of the Prophet Muhammad (Nazr, 2003; Schimmel, 1992). The Qur'an is the main source of knowledge and action for Muslims setting out the core of the Islamic doctrine, which is based on Five Pillars: the declaration of faith (Kalimah) 'There is only one God and Muhammad is his Prophet'; five daily prayers; alms giving to the poor (zakat); fasting during the month of Ramadan and making the pilgrimage to Mecca (Schimmel, 1992). In addition, Islam involves five categories of practical rules: essential duties (the pillars); recommended acts which are not essential, acts lawfully indifferent and acts forbidden with punishment attached to it. Amongst this last category, there is the drinking of alcohol; the use of intoxicants, disobeying

parents and elderly, eating pork or *haram* meat (forbidden), delaying or missing the time of prayers (Ibid). The Qu'ran, which is considered the infallible word of God, is accompanied by the Prophet's *sunna* –customs- narrated in the *Hadiths* 'saying tales' (Schimmel, 1992). The Hadiths collect the oral tradition about the words and actions of Muhammad, which were told and retold through generations and tend to reflect different currents developing after the death of Muhammad inside Islam (Schimmel, 1992). In this sense, the Hadiths represent the link between Islam as stated in the Qur'an, considered by all Muslims the unifying word of God, and different traditions symbolised by the interpretations present in the Hadiths. For instance, Schimmel (1992) argues that the practice of circumcision is not directly stated in the Qur'an rather derives from the Hadiths (Schimmel, 1992).

Becher's mixed method research study (2003) was based on a school questionnaire followed by 44 qualitative interviews with Bangladeshi parents and children aged 9-10 years old in London, highlighted the centrality of Islam to many different aspects of their lives. The parents in Becher's study spoke about Islam as informing their parenting and being a basis for moral reasoning (Becher, 2008). Islam was a recurrent theme in Becher's study and interviewees described it as *'a way of life'* and *'the most important thing in my life'* offering *'a total framework for living'* (Becher, 2008, p.32). Islam also provided answers and ensured rewards in the afterlife. Children, in Becher's study, found it more difficult to articulate why Islam was important and referred to their religion 'being fun' as well as being important to them because it was important to their parents (Ibid).

The idea of 'izzat' – respect of family and elderly – is another example of how Islam and South Asian values are intertwined. The Qur'an sets out the duties toward parents are secondary only to the Muslim's duties to God:

> *"And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. If one or both of them attain old age during your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor repel them. But address them in terms of honour, and lower to them the wing of humility, out of mercy, and say, 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy, as they did bring me up when I was young'"* (17:23–24).

Becher (2003) found that izzat has become a central value in South Asian culture reflected by the requirement of showing respect for elders as well as for the family's

hierarchy: *'(izzat) encompassed the giving of hospitality, the obedience of children and more widely the importance of family reputation or 'honour' in the community which was affected by the behaviour of family members'* (Becher, 2008, p. 41).

The negotiating between individualistic and collective values which tend to coexist in the South Asian British Muslim family field, is a further characteristic of the value system constructed between Islam and South Asian cultures. In general, Muslim families tend to emphasise collective values which reinforce the group solidarity and collective duties and obligations as the Qur'an states:

> *'Remain steadfast and advocate steadfastness to others and join together to implement the laws of God; fear Him that you may succeed.'* (3:200)

In contrast, British culture tends to be more individualistic and concerned with autonomy and personal achievements (Becher, 2003). This attention to extended solidarities is reflected in the importance of local community as the extend family or 'clan network' – *biradari* - and the *ummah* (global Muslim community). Evidence from Lewis (2007) and Mondal's (2008) studies of young British Muslims indicate intergenerational differences in the interpretations and values of the biradari and ummah. Lewis (2007) interpreted them as sites for intergenerational tensions: whilst these forms of solidarity originally supported the settlement of the first generation parents, biradari and ummah are perceived to be barriers by the second generations because of the emphasis they place on family's reputation and honour.

Becher's study (2003) provides detailed context about how Islam and cultures intersect in the family lives of South Asian Muslims in the UK. Based on Morgan's definition of practices, as the combination of beliefs and behaviours which capture the way in which people 'do' family, (D. Morgan, 1996), Becher explored different aspects of negotiating tradition and change from the mixing of South Asian and English food, to the issue of clothing, language spoken at home and leisure time. Becher found that in the context of food children were the ones than most strongly requested English food while South Asian meals were the key to increase the 'reconnection' with cultural traditions such as religious and family celebrations. Interestingly, results from Becher's study also suggest that families negotiated their leisure time watching TV between South Asian channels and English channels (Becher, 2008). Becher identified two patterns: selective adoption, which involved incorporating acceptable British leisure practices, or

adaptation which aimed to render British practices Islamic such as watching only South Asian TV channels for religious education (Ibid).

In summary, the literature indicates that Islam, as the teachings stated by The Qur'an, trickles down and is interpreted by people's every day practices while it affects their values and beliefs.

3.4 Intergenerational relations: conflict, solidarity and transmission

Intergenerational relations and transmission are elements of the family field, and more specifically they reflect the dynamics and processes used by parents to pass on cultural and religious capitals to their children. Thinking of transmission as pivotal to the family field implies considering the social and structural conditions attached to it.

The concept of generation is particularly relevant in the context of migration. Brah defined generation as a *'unit of analysis articulating horizontal relations between cohorts'* (Brah, 1996, p.43). By contrast, intergenerational relations are defined by the verticality between different age groups.

Findings from exploratory studies on young British Muslims (Lewis, 2007; Mondal, 2008) emphasise inter-generational conflict as the main dimension of the family's relations. Mondal (2008), in his book based on 30 qualitative interviews with Muslim youths aged 18 to 30, recognised that the identity conflict that young British Muslims experience, is concerned with tensions between second and the older generations with the main object of challenge being the patriarchal model supported by parental cultural values (Mondal, 2008). Similarly, Lewis's study (2007) based on interviews with British Muslims aged 18-30 years old, found that the cultural 'bipolarism', between Britishness and Islam, intrinsically expresses differences between young and old generations of British Muslims (Lewis, 2007). More generally, these perspectives about generations fit with a wide body of literature which emphasise 'turmoil and rebellion' as the main features of the transition to adulthood (Basit, 1997). In these perspectives, the changing of social roles that takes place during the teenage years is appointed as the main cause of stress and tension that characterise the transition (Coleman, 1980).

In contrast to the emphasis on conflict, other research studies emphasise cohesiveness and solidarity as crucial dimensions of the parent-young person relationship. These perspectives tend to take distance from the idea that rebellion is an inner part of the transition to adulthood and rather explain that adolescents often tend to avoid conflict (Douvan and Adelson, 1966 in Basit, 1997). A study of American and Danish adolescents, quoted by Basit (1997), concluded that these young people were surprisingly close to their parents, they respected their authority and shared the same aspirations (Kandel and Lesser, 1972 in Basit, 1997).

In the context of young British Muslims, Islam may be seen as enabling intergenerational solidarity by stressing the value of the family and recognising the importance of respect for parents into the core of its religious teaching.

Inter-generational transmission and religion

Theories about the intergenerational transmission have moved away from the early 20th century biological and genetic idea that values, religion or culture are inherited as 'innate instincts', to contemporary approaches which look more outward to the contribution of the social context. For instance, in cultural psychology the level of analysis has shifted away from the focus on *'brain processes'* to macro-social variables (Schonpflug, 2009). Brannen's (2006) study of different cultures of intergenerational transmission based on a study of 12 four-generation families in England, particularly exemplified the emphasis on social context. Brannen explored how attitudes toward family obligations change across generations according to different cultures of transmission. The study particularly examined how transmission is determined by the resources and experiences associated with specific historical and structural conditions and identified four main cultures: cultures of continuity and mutuality; independence; personal autonomy and receiving (Brannen, 2006). For instance, the post war economic prosperity and the expanding welfare favoured a culture of independence amongst the grandparents' generation (Brannen, 2006).

The transmission of religion and the development of religious identity are also influenced by the combination of social, structural and personal conditions, or more precisely habitus. In the context of identity formation and transmission, religion acquires a particular value because it encourages the quest for meaning in individual

life. It also offers ways of answering existential enigmas; emphasises order and structure; supports coherence and integration between cognitions, emotions and moral actions and *'it postulates an invisible unity beyond the spatial and temporal discrepancies of the visible world'* (Saroglou & Galand, 2004).

Research focusing on the role of parenting in the transmission of religious values found that mothers have different effects on the religious socialisation of their children than fathers do. Where there are substantial differences among parents' values, fathers seem to be more influential than mothers (Clark, Worthington, & Danser, 1988) and the specific impact of mothers on transmitting religious values to children was found to depend on mother-child interaction. Taris and Semin (1997), based on a survey of 223 British adolescents and mothers, found that the quality of family interaction was a main factor in the adolescent's religious commitment. Becher's study suggested that co-parenting plays a key role in religious transmission, which is seen as a responsibility for both mothers and fathers (Becher, 2008). Becher found that parents adopt different strategies to nurture religion: talking, teaching and using *'deliberate modelling and observation'* (Becher, 2008, p.125). According to Becher, the religiosity of children relates to the level of parental interest and knowledge of Islam and on the availability of time to teach religion to children. Results from a study by Bader and Desmond, based on the analysis of US national health data, indicate the effect of parents on the religiosity of their children is stronger when parents are consistent about the values they transmit and engage in behaviours and practices to support their belief (Bader & Desmond, 2006). Therefore, when parents believe in and practice their religion young people also tend to be more religious.

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed some of the main features which characterise the South Asian British Muslim family field, particularly the influence of migration, ethnic capital, Islam, South Asian cultures and British lifestyle. In so doing, it has provided a context about how habitus and identities have been constructed and negotiated in this complex social field.

Data from the 2001 Census demonstrated that South Asian Muslim households still experience high levels of disadvantage and are more likely to live in social rented and overcrowded accommodation and to be workless. The migration histories of South Asians and the historical conditions of Britain from the 1950s onwards were explored in order to contextualise the South Asian Muslim family field and habitus that originates in there.

Once again, Bourdieu's theory has provided the theoretical context to explore the implications of migration, ethnicity, cultures and Islam in defining the internal relations within the South Asian family field. The literature suggests that migration affects the dynamics within the family field and thus the construction of habitus and identity. However, migration does not necessarily imply a straight transfer of resources from the country of origin to the new country of residency. Rather, as Erel (2010) argues, migration converts these resources into new forms of capital. In this sense, migrants do not simply bring with them a package of cultural resources from one place to another but, as Erel points out: *'cultural practices acquire different meanings and validations according to local, national and transnational context'* (Erel, 2010). Figure 3.2 portrays and summarises how the changes brought about by migration lead to the construction of a new habitus.

Figure 3.2: Migration, social fields and habitus.
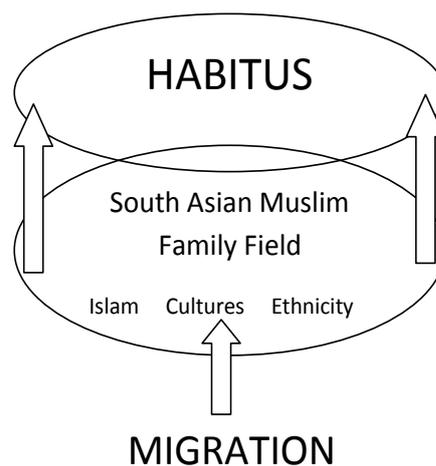
Chapter 4

Youth as a social field

Introduction

This chapter begins with introducing how sociology has approached the concept of youth particularly within Bourdieu's theory. It then focuses more specifically on British Muslim youth by presenting general demographics and findings from research studies, which reflect different perspectives on the construction of the identity of South Asian young Muslims in the UK. The final section of the chapter examines particular structural conditions, such as citizenship, Britishness, gender, social class and religion which are relevant for the analysis of young British Muslims' identity.

Youth around the world are subject to complex and uneven conditions and experience large disparities. In western countries, the media has shaped representations of youth often seen as violent and problematic and in the UK public perceptions of youths have been increasingly affected by gang culture and knife crime (Halsey & White, 2008). In addition, the moral panic about the spread of Islamic terrorism in the West has worsened even further the perception of young British Muslims leading to prejudice and negative stereotyping.

4.1   Youth in sociology: concepts, theories and experiences

The word *youth* is often used as categorisation of people based on their age. However, there is no final agreement and these categories vary across different contexts and disciplines (Wyn & White, 1997). In 1999, for the International Youth Year, the United Nations General Assembly defined youth as '*all persons falling between the age of 15 and 24 inclusive*' (Gidley, 2002, p.3); the Minimum Age Convention by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) regards youth as aged over 15 and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child considers young people as those over 18 (Ibid).

In the 1970s Friedman (1971) wrote about the 'yippy culture' and defined youth *as 'the group of human beings who have reached puberty but have not yet acquired the*

full right and duties of adult life' (Friedmann, 1971, p.9). It is common amongst theorists and researchers to look at youth as a process, transition or pathway to adulthood and it is in this context that the differences between sociological and psychological definitions are more apparent.

Development psychologists focus on youth as a stage of transition in the overall development of the person's identity (Erickson, 1968). Other perspectives have interpreted the transition to adulthood in biological terms considering this stage as the result of the endocrine changes of puberty (Hurlock, 1956; Rogers, 1969).

The current study adopts a sociological perspective, which considers youth as a social construction (Jones, 2002; 2009) dependent on the status and condition of the young individual in relation to the social context. Youth in sociology is a relatively recent as well as a fast developing object of study and it is an important conceptual category for the interpretations of the individual and social experiences of growing up. The 'history of youth' in sociology is mapped by Jones (2009) who, starting with the influences of psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, shows how the concept reached increasing theoretical independence within the sociological analysis. The work of George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) particularly reflected the legacy of social-psychological approaches about youth development (Wyn & White, 1997). Mead conceived the main phases of a child development as embodied by the emergence of the social self as the self-consciousness that developed from the interaction with others. In Mind, Self and Society (firstly published in 1934) Mead provides an account of the child's development as the process of achieving self-awareness through socialisation and argued that the interaction between human beings implies the interpretations of meanings and symbols. This interpretation is also at the origin of achieving self-awareness by distinguishing, during childhood, between the unsocialised I, the mind, and the socialised me, the self (Mead, 1934, 1992).

Most recently, sociological approaches about youth have moved away from the developmental model and have tended to focus on the specific issues affecting the lives of young people.

Youth cultures & subcultures

The study of youth culture and subcultures has been one of the objects that sociologists have been investigating. Between the 1950s-1960s post war affluence enabled the new generation to access emerging consumer markets such as fashionable clothes and pop records (Garratt, 1997). Since then, as Giddens argued, young people started to be studied on the basis of their market choices and leisure goods (Giddens, 2009). Culture and subculture are the two key terms of this theoretical context. Culture refers to '*a way of life*' (Wyn & White, 1997, p73), which is to say specific patterns of social interaction expressing and externalising social and material life experiences (Ibi). Culture, in this context, is a mean for social interaction and signifies '*the level at which different groups develop patterns and relationships, and more importantly, how these experiences are expressed*' (Garratt, 1997, p.144)

Cultural Studies refer to the chronological development of different subcultures starting with the Teddy Boys in the 1950s, mods in the early 1960s, punks in the 1970s and post punk during the 1980s (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995). The explanations about the rise of these subcultures claim that subcultures reflect the specific social context where they arose as well as media targeting of youths and the expansion of a youth market where the music industry has been particularly relevant. These approaches look at youth cultures and subcultures as the epitome of social change (Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995) theoretically rooted into two main approaches: the social identity theory and the subcultural theory. The latter claims that subculture is the expression of tension between those in power positions and those subordinate. In this sense, subculture is interpreted as resistance which takes the form of 'stylistic innovation' with outlook and style being deeply important means of expression (Hebdige, 1979). In the late 1970s Hebdige theorised about youth subcultures as expressions of disadvantaged youths: '*the expressive forms of rituals of subordinate groups – the teddy boys, mods, rockers, skinheads and the punks – who are alternately dismissed, denounced and canonized; treated at different times as threats to public order and as harmless buffoons*' (Hebdige, 1979, p.2). However, Hebdige regarded subcultures as having a relatively low power as mean of resistance and he described them with the metaphor '*graffiti on a prison wall*' (Hebdige, 1979, p.3) which captures the impossibility of subcultures to practically achieve change.

Social identity theory looks at style as a way to communicate group identity and differentiate from other sub cultural groups. Social identity is determined by group membership and, in this sense, subcultural identities are social (Widdicombe, 1995). However, according to Widdicombe and Wooffitt, groups affiliation does not exclude personal identities as 'person idiosyncratic traits and unique qualities' (Ibi) and thus social identity theory presents a way to negotiate agency and structure.

In her review of sociological theories about youth, Jones (2009) emphasised how the debate about youth culture and subcultures mirrors the influence of global consumer capital on youths' identities shaping collective cultural meanings and behaviours (Jones, 2009). Music styles, which are an important example in this setting, have been analysed by post-structural approaches such as Thornton (1995 in Jones, 2009) who put together subcultural theories with Bourdieu' social capital and coined the term *'subcultural capital'* describing the resources generated by the sharing of collective identities (Jones, 2009, p.77).

Most recently, Maffesoli (1996) translated some of the attributes of subcultures into the idea of 'neo-tribes' described as new fluid and occasional formations having a specific set of values and providing identity building and social support (Maffesoli, 1996). The idea of 'tribe' in the context of young people's new forms of aggregation has been widely used by marketing research in order to identify 'types' of youth with specific consumer tastes to then target with tailored campaigns, as demonstrated by the project 'UK Tribes' sponsored by Channel 4.[4]

Analyses of youth subcultures have been criticised as 'essentialists' as they attempt to view young people as essentially similar individuals (Miles, 2000; Wyn & White, 1997). Criticism has also pointed out that the focus of subculture has shifted the attention on the more superficial aspects of culture while neglecting the complex processes of cultural formation. Miles (2000) explained that the problem with cultural approaches to the sociology of youth is that they have tended to focus on the subordinacy of youth

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[4] UK Tribes is commissioned by Channel 4 and delivered by Crowd DNA. The project combines qualitative and quantitative techniques (Online forums, depth Interviews, video and picture diaries, SMS-derived insight and on line surveys etc.) and led to the identification of 25 youth tribes such as emos, hipsters, geeks etc.) http://uktribes.com/?p=about&id=null

and have contributed to label and frame specific social formations which emphasise the deviant element of groups of youths (Miles, 2000).

4.2 P. Bourdieu: *'youth is just a word'*

'How does a sociologist approach the problem of young people?'

Bourdieu answered that *'youth is just a word'* and *'an abuse of language'* (Bourdieu, 1993, p.95) to mean that youth is a concept that '*subsumes under the same term social universes that have nothing in common'* (Ibid, p.95). In 'Sociology in Question' (1993), Bourdieu reflects on the concept of youth and argues that '*age is a biologically datum that is socially manipulated'* (Bourdieu, 1993, p.95). To explain the relationship between youth and age, Bourdieu referred to the different existences of young people of the same age group who are working or instead studying. Bourdieu argued that youth and age are socially constructed within *'the struggle between the young and old'* (Ibid). He explained that the intergenerational conflict is a clash between aspirations which arise because of the changing patterns in the access to education between parents and their children. In other words, Bourdieu claimed that, as the access to education has expanded, what for parents was *'an extraordinary privilege'* is now for young people *'statistically banal'* (Bourdieu, 1993, p.99). In this sense, the intergenerational conflict is not about young against old but about two states of educational systems with attached different and specific aspirations which are facing each other (Ibid). Bourdieu describes what characterises contemporary youth as *'disenchantment'* and *'disappointment'* (Bourdieu, 1993, p.101): the increasing number of youths entering education has reduced the value of the actual qualifications and it has created a mismatch between the aspirations supported and created by the school system and the actual reality of life after qualified.

Another element of Bourdieu's theory that is relevant for the study of youth is the concept of lifestyle. In Distinction (1984) Bourdieu theorises that lifestyles, '*a unitary set of distinctive preferences*' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.169), are the product of habitus which develops during childhood through the interaction with social agents particularly the family. Lifestyles imply specific channels of communication, outlooks, values, tastes, practices etc. However, implicitly criticising sub-cultural and cultural theories, Bourdieu

did not consider youth lifestyles as forms of individual expressions but rather as upholding the establishment (class distinction) and therefore as factors which perpetuate the differences between social groups (classes).

In summary, Bourdieu saw age division in society as reflecting power relations, which are constituent parts of intergenerational relationships (Jones, 2009). In this sense, for Bourdieu youth is both a theoretical construct and a social field where different types of resources are at stake and where different types of conflicts take place. The concepts of youth and youth cultures fit in Bourdieu's theory of social practice where individual action contributes to the construction of culture (part of the social structure) which, at the same time, constrains individual action (Miles, 2000). In this context, individual acts are culturally defined and lifestyles result as the products of habitus, which serve to reinforce social hierarchies as people have different access to resources and capitals than others.

4.3   Young British Muslims: setting the context

This research study focuses on the specific experience of youth which affects and shapes the identity of young British Muslims. The 2001 Census showed that Muslims were the largest religious group in Britain after Christians (ONS, 2004). Overall, there were 1.6 million Muslims living in Britain in 2001, which counted for 3 per cent of the total population and over half (52 per cent) of the non-Christian religious population (ONS, 2004). In 2001, about three quarters of Muslims (74 per cent) living in Britain were from a South Asian ethnic background.

The migration paths and the larger family sizes explained the particular young age profile which characterises Muslims in the UK compared to other religious groups. In 2001 Muslims were actually the youngest group with about 34 per cent of them under 16 years old. This compared to 25 per cent of Sikhs and 21 per cent of Hindus with less than one in ten aged 65 years within these three groups. The 2001 Census also shows that, amongst those aged 16-24 years old Muslims were the most likely group to live with a partner as a married couple (19 per cent of them), while people with no religion were the most likely to be cohabiting (16 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds). Young Muslim adults (16-24 years old) were also the most likely to be married (22 per cent) compared

to Christians and those with no religion who were the least likely to be married (3 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds in each group) (ONS, 2004, p.9). This pattern was found across all age groups but as most marked among young adults aged 16 to 24.

Research has highlighted the implications of urban neighbourhoods and urban spaces on children and young people's experiences of growing up (Christensen & O'Brien, 2003; O'Brien, M. Rustin, & M. and Greenfield, 2000). The 2001 Census indicates that Muslims often live in high deprived areas, which has a negative impact on the life of children and young people. In London, young Muslims tend to be spatially very concentrated and are more likely to live in inner rather than outer boroughs (GLA, 2006, p.36-38). For instance, Muslims made up 8 per cent of the overall London population concentrated in deprived inner boroughs, counting for 36 per cent of the population in Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent of Newham, which were amongst the most deprived local authorities in the UK in 2001. The high level of deprivation of the areas most populated by young Muslims, negatively affects their lives and opportunities and it impacts on their likelihood of being involved with crime or being the victim of discrimination. The number of Muslim prisoners has increased by almost three times between 1993 and 2003 from 2,106 to 6,136 (Spalek, 2005) and Prison Service statistics also indicate that almost 10 per cent of the prison population is Muslim, two-thirds of whom are young men aged 18-30 (Source: Prison Service statistics, 2004 in Spalek, 2005). Spalek explained that the high number of Muslim prisoners is a consequence of the young age group and the level of deprivation of the areas where they live. As mentioned before, Muslims have the youngest age profile amongst all different religious groups in Britain and the young age increases the chances of offending, with a peak age been identified at 18 years old for males and 15 year old for females. Other sources of disadvantage which affect offending include high rates of unemployment amongst the Muslim population, which are also the most likely to have never worked (Spalek, 2005).

In addition, Muslims have been the object of negative stereotyping and victim of racial and religious discrimination. According to a survey by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies 47 per cent of Muslim students reported having experienced Islamophobia (FOSIS, 2005). Another survey for the Youth Justice Board (2004), (based on a sample of 4,715 young people aged 11 to16 in mainstream education, and another sample of

687 young people aged 11 to 17 who were excluded from mainstream schools and attending a special project), found that young Asian people were the most concerned about being victims of racism: 53 per cent of them were concerned compared to 42 per cent of black young people and 25 per cent of white young people (MORI, 2004). Moreover, Home Office statistics show that between 2001 and 2003 there was a 302% increase in 'stop and search' incidents among Asian people, compared with 118% among white people (Home Office, 2004).

Educational performance, unemployment and social exclusion

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional factor which is either structural, as defined by the socio-economic system or social, as it involves and affects the social relationships between people. It is therefore marked by socio-economic factors, such as educational underachievement and higher unemployment but, particularly in the case of British Muslim, social exclusion is triggered by Islamophobia and discrimination. The report '*Living Apart Together'* emphasises the class-dimension of social exclusion, tracking back its origin on parental background including parents' country of birth, educational attainment, cultural traditions and 'financial capital' which have a significant impact on the inclusion and access of resources in society (Mirza et al., 2007, p.68).

It is widely recognised that Muslims are experiencing disadvantage on different grounds compared to other groups. Particularly, low educational attainment and their employment situation are markers of their subordinate status. According to the 2001 Census, Bangladeshi and Pakistani children were amongst the least likely groups to obtain five A-C GCSE (Mirza et al., 2007, p.69). Concerns about the ethnic minority pupils educational attainment in Britain started growing as a consequence of the influx of migrants during the 1960s and 1970s (Wilson, Burgess, & Briggs, 2006) but it only became an issue in the 1980s, when *The Swan Report* (1975) officially recognised, for the first time, the unequal performance of students from different ethnic backgrounds particularly showing Bangladeshi underachieving (Haque & Bell, 2001). The ONS report on Religion (2004) shows that in 2003-2004 almost a third (31 per cent) of Muslims had no qualifications compared to around a quarter (23 per cent) of Sikhs and 15 per cent of Christians. Being born in the UK, however, increased the likelihood of Muslims

gaining higher qualifications: in 2003-2004 among those under the age of 30, UK-born Muslims were twice as likely to have degrees in as those born elsewhere (ONS, 2004).

Educational attainment impacts on the labour market opportunities and data from the Labour Force Survey (2003-2004) showed that young Muslims were subject to labour market disadvantage compared to any other religious group, for either men or women and across all age groups (ONS, 2004, p.13). Particularly, young Muslims aged 16 to 24 years old had the highest unemployment rates of all religious groups. For instance, they were twice as likely as Christians of the same age to be unemployed (22 per cent compared with 11 per cent) (ONS, 2004, p.13).

4.4 Young British Muslims negotiating identities

There is dualism amongst the disciplinary perspectives which describe the process of identity construction in the specific context of minority groups: some scholars approach it in terms of conflict between different dimensions identity while others look at solidarity and negotiation amongst these dimensions leading to new fluid and hybrid identities.

Identity and conflict

A Policy Exchange report *'Living apart together* '(Mirza et al., 2007) exemplifies quite well conclusions about young British Muslims experiencing a conflict between their secular and religious identity and thus finding themselves amongst two mindsets, western and Islamic. The report was based on findings from a quantitative survey of 1,003 Muslims in the UK conducted between July 2006 and January 2007, followed by semi-structured interviews with younger British-born Muslims (Mirza et al., 2007, p.19). According to findings from the report, many young British Muslims have turned to Islam as a way to distinguish themselves from the mainstream British society. Thus, their religious identity expresses a sense of detachment and exclusion rather than being a marker of positive identification with a set of religious values. Particularly, the report concluded for British Muslim teenagers religion becomes *'a kick against at the mainstream'* (Mirza et al., 2007, p.87). These findings can be incorporated into the marginalisation theories, which see young Muslims as marginal citizens feeling rejected by the society they grow up in but also are detached from the families they belong to.

The idea of an existing cultural conflict is reinforced by the media and general public's representations of young British Muslims. As Basit (1997) reflected in her ethnographic study about adolescent British Muslim girls, people tend to see Muslim children and young people as *'trapped between two cultures'* representing *'modern' and 'traditional'* values (Basit, 1997). The assumption that young British Muslims are *'torn between the British and Muslim cultures'* has a number of implications and leads to think that Muslims youths operate a double standard by conforming to the West at schools and to Islamic culture at home (Basit, 1997, p.437).

Identity and negotiation

In the current study, the concept of negotiation is defined as the process of reconciling and bringing back to unity different and multiple dimensions of identity from religious, to national, ethnic and gender including 'youth as identity'. As such, negotiation is relevant for the understanding of how complex identities and the sense of belonging are constructed.

The idea of a cultural clash as the key determinant of young British Muslim identity has been challenged on different grounds by findings, mainly of a qualitative nature, about young British Muslims combining British and Islamic practices, beliefs and values into fluid and hybrid identities (Dwyer, 2000a). Basit links the idea of fluidity to the concept of negotiation by saying that *'ethnic minorities are not some primordial stamp, but are fluid and formulated continuously in a process of negotiation with a number of economic and political forces that shift over time and space'* (Ibid). In this context, the study by Dwyer (2000) based on in-depth discussion groups with 49 British South Asian Muslim girls aged 16 to 18 years old, introduced the idea of hybrid identities as a *'fusion of cultural influences'* (Dwyer, 2000, p.483). Dwyer argues that young British Muslim girls in the study referred to a number of factors, such as gender and social class, as relevant to the formation and development of their sense of identity. They reconcile those factors to create new hybrid identities, which are not exclusively Muslim or British, but rather a fusion of both as apparent in the mixing of South Asian with British clothing (Dwyer, 2000). Tarlo (2010) investigated in more depth the issue of Islamic clothing and fashion and how it is attached to the identity of young Muslim girls in the UK. In her 6 years ethnographic study, which involved observations and

interviews with a number of Muslim girls from different ethnic backgrounds, Tarlo looked at how Islamic fashion has been revisited by young women, to fulfil their religious and cultural obligations, while at the same time following the trends set out by British/western fashion trends (Tarlo, 2010). Therefore, Tarlo described how visibly Muslim women in Britain combine high street fashion with items from the Islamic tradition creating *'eclectic clothing combinations'* mirroring articulated and complex fluid identities (Ibid).

Dwyer (2008), in her study of Pakistani boys aged 16 to 27 identified different paths adopted to negotiate identities. She focused on the theme of gender and how it intertwined with other dimensions of identity, and identified four types of 'masculinities' (typologies of male gender identities) (Dwyer et al., 2008a). The first type, the religious masculinity, concerned with participants prioritising their Muslim identities over the others. The second type, middle class masculinity characterised young Pakistani men who were evidently more oriented towards education and career aspirations; the third type involved young men with 'rebellious masculinity' displaying a sense of frustration and exclusion, which ended with rebellious behaviours toward those accused of being responsible of their disadvantage. Finally, the fourth type of masculinity identified by Dwyer, ambivalent masculinity, was constructed by merging elements of the other three types. Dwyer explained that the last typology included young men who, similarly to the group of the rebellious masculinity, left school but expressed criticism about their previous lifestyles and behaviour and the willingness to follow alternative career paths.

In summary, the idea of negotiation presupposes the existence of multiple identities, including youth as identity, which are not necessarily exclusive but rather reciprocally reinforcing.

4.5 Structural conditions and identity: citizenship, gender, social class and religion

The social structure provides the wider context for the day-to-day social interactions and the processes of socialisation as well as influencing the individual sphere by acting as a source of values and beliefs that are then internalized, interpreted and, at times,

challenged and contested (See Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2). The formation of identities is shaped by the interplay between the cultural demands of individuals or communities and the social-economic conditions they inhabit. Citizenship, Britishness, national identity, gender, social class and religion are examples from the wider social system that are particularly relevant for the study of British Muslims' identity.

Citizenship, Britishness and national identity

Britishness and citizenship are important elements of the British national identity and complex terms whose definitions remain site of discussion.

Citizenship and Britishness

The conceptualizations of citizenship reflect different theoretical approaches, particularly the opposing liberal and communitarian framework. The liberal tradition underlies individualistic approaches, which focus on the role of citizenship as protection of individuals and private property. The implications of this individual centred approach are that participation and decision making are restricted for those that do not own any property (Beiner, 1995; Faulks, 1998). Marshall's (1992), who was one of the first to theorise about citizenship in the post-Second World War, adopted an historical approach and associated citizenship with the development of respective civil, political and social rights, such as economic welfare and social security (Pattie, Seyd, & Whiteley, 2004). Communitarian approaches, which have affected the debate about citizenship since the 1990s in Britain, focus on social solidarity as the bonding determined by the sharing of the same history or tradition (Beiner, 1995). Goldsmith's (2008) definition of citizenship as a *'common bond'* (Goldsmith, 2008, p.82) in his review of citizenship in Britain can be placed in the context of communitarian approaches. Goldsmith expressed concerns about the growing individualisation observed in British society, which has reduced the range of shared experiences and threatened citizenship itself. Therefore, he called for enhancing citizenship through education and thus reinforcing the role of Citizenship education which has became statutory in secondary schools since 2002 (Ibid).

The debate on how citizenship can be reconstructed in an increasingly diverse Britain, revolves around the concept of Britishness, which characterises a sense of belonging to

Britain and what stands behind British national identity (Parekh, 2009). Parekh, who wrote extensively on the topic of citizenship, Britishness and multiculturalism (James & Prout, 1997; Parekh, 2006, 2009), argues that the construction of national identity in a context of high social and cultural diversity, implied a *'moral covenant'* from both the side of newcomers and the wider society (Parekh, 2009, p.39). Parekh claimed that the newcomers: *'should undertake to respect its democracy and liberal values and participate in the ongoing conversation on the kind of country it should be. While for its part the wider society should accept them (newcomers) as its legitimate and equal members'* (Ibid).

Empirical findings from a number of focus groups conducted for a report by the Commission of Racial Equality (2005) elucidates the wide combination of elements that shape the meaning of Britishness. In terms of geography, Britishness was associated with typical topographic features, such as the British Isles, Scottish Highlands, lochs, Welsh valleys. It was symbolised by, for instance, the Union Jack and the royal family but also associated with cultural habits such as 'fish and chips', 'English breakfast', 'Yorkshire pudding', 'English teas', 'Sunday lunch', 'curries' and 'drinking beer' (ETHNOS, 2005). Findings from the CRE also indicated a wide ranges of values and behaviours underlying Britishness from upholding human rights and freedoms, respect for the rule of law, fairness, tolerance and respect for others, work ethic, mutual help, but also drunkenness, hooliganism and yobbishness (ETHNOS, 2005). There were differences in terms of the people associated with Britishness: for some respondents British meant anybody with a British passport, for others British was associated with the White British group whilst for some others it had more of inclusive connotation and it incorporated people from different ethnic minority groups (Ibid).

On a more theoretical and policy level, the issue of constructing Britishness involves negotiating universalistic values and particularistic claims and therefore reconciling the complex dynamics between the promotion of equality and the respect of diversity (Modood, 2010). In this context, Modood elaborated the concept of 'multicultural citizenship' with particular reference to Muslims living in Britain (Modood, 2006). As originally stated by Habermas, multicultural citizenship has to be sensitive to ethnic differences and incorporate a sense of respect for the collectivities to which people show a sense of belonging (Modood et al., 1997). In this sense, multicultural citizenship

represents a response to the moral panics about Muslims being unable to integrate into British society. Modood focuses on the idea of respect, rather than tolerance, as the characterising element of multicultural citizenship and he describes equality as the right of minorities to assimilate as well as the right of differences to be recognised: *'the tension can be only resolved in practice, through finding and cultivating points of common ground between dominant and subordinate cultures as well as new synthesis and hybridities'* (Modood et al., 1997, p.358). These 'new hybridities' underlie the construction of Britishness implying a sense of belonging which presupposes similarities and sharing but takes into account and value differences. Therefore, according to Modood, multiculturalism implies supplementing the basic concept of civic rights and equality *'with the concept of equality of difference'* (Modood et al., 2006, p.39).

Young people, citizenship and national identity

The understanding of citizenship amongst young people is particularly relevant in the context of the current study. Political participation is generally considered a substantial determinant of citizenship, therefore the discussion about citizenship becomes even more controversial within the context of young people who are still not entitled to vote. Until the 1980s the general tendency within traditional childhood theories was to locate children and young people as passive recipients (James & Prout, 1997) with a focus on the developmental stages, transition to adulthood, and socialisation. The perception of young people as 'irrational beings' (Hine, 2008, p.7) was dominant and therefore, becoming a full citizen, was seen as a result of socialisation followed by the acquisition of increasing responsibilities. These approaches, viewing young people as passive recipients, developmentally immature and irrational actors, have increasingly become objects of criticism for positioning young people as 'inferior' to adults (James & Prout, 1997; Warwick, 2008).

New interpretations of youths as active social actors have put forward the idea that citizenship comes to be a marker of young people transition to adulthood. In this sense, the notion of citizenship has moved away from its traditional political/legal connotation and has become more social coming to signify increasing responsibilities and civic participation (Hine, 2008).

In 'Children and Citizenship', a report commissioned by the Home Office, Hine (2008) explored the understanding and perception of Citizenship among a sample (269 overall) of children and young people aged 7 to 15 years old. The research was based on 41 focus groups and focused on what makes a good citizen. The study revealed that the meaning of citizenship for young people was deeply different from adults who have the right to vote, and related to notions of belonging, helping others and responsibility. Based on ethnographic work with young people, Hall et.al. found that the notion of citizenship was associated with a sense of membership (being a member); residency (where you live); country of birth; while good citizens where seen as those who comply with the law and go to work (Hall, Coffey, & Williamson, 1999). Similarly, Thomson et. al. (2004) discussed how the relationship between adulthood and citizenship has changed along with the way young people's understanding of adulthood has evolved. Traditionally citizenship was closely tied with adult status which was associated with formal markers such as leaving home, entering employment, taking on legal obligations and rights. The study identified three complementary but distinct understandings of adulthood. The relational adulthood involved taking care and responsibilities for others; the individualised notion of adulthood included the internal and emotional aspects of feeling and acting in a mature way. The last dimension of adulthood involved citizenship, perceived as the arena which was bringing the individual into contact with the state and civil society (Thomson et al., 2004). Equally, other UK studies found that for young people the notion of citizenship takes distance from the traditional legal definition and becomes more of a normative idea based on the concept of membership and other related terms such as belongingness, independence and equality, responsibility and participation. Haste and Hogan (2006) emphasised, based on findings from a survey of 1136 young people aged 11 to 21 in the UK, the moral rather than political nature of citizenship that, specifically for young people, comes to signify participation rather than party affiliation or voting (Haste & Hogan, 2006). A more in-depth exploration of the concept of participation identified a number of specific activities ranging from signing petitions, volunteering, helping to organise events for charities, taking part in protests or marches, participating in election in school, clubs or other organisations (Kennelly and Dillabough, 2008, p.482-483). A different case emerged from a Canadian ethnographic study, based on individual interviews and classroom workshops, with 24 low-income young people aged 14-16 years old. The

study found that citizenship reflected and reproduced class differences (Kennelly and Dillabough, 2008). Thus young people's interpretation of 'good citizens' was mainly concerned with economic self-sufficiency and the non-reliance on state, rather than participation in public life: *'good citizen was a person who successfully utilizes strategies of self-regulation and self-surveillance to contribute to the economy or to benefit from it, to become affluent and not become a burden to the state'* (Kennelly & Dillabough, 2008, p.500).

Finally, a further factor affecting young people's socialisation and conceptualisation of citizenship is transnational migration. Global migration trends have created second generations who are challenging the notion that 'citizenship depends on affiliation with and assimilation to a national identity' (Crick, 1998, p.279). This has required further changes in the nature of belonging with many people holding 'multilayered affiliations across the borders of nation states' (Ibid).

Gender, social class and the immigrant paradigm

Gender is an important factor which affects identity on an individual, social and structural level. Gender impacts on social relationships, it is reflected in the individual understanding and 'way of being in the world', in their practices, values and beliefs, and more generally, forms an integral part of the wider social system.

In a study based on qualitative interviews with a sample of 20 South Asian Muslim young men and women aged 18-30 years old living in London (the method also involved 6 months participant observation amongst the London based Muslim community) Ramji (2007) looked at the complex dynamics between religion, gender and identity. The study explored how religion *'is mobilized as a power resource in the construction of the gender identity of young British Muslims'* (Ramji, 2007, p 1185) and suggested that young Muslim men and women adopted different interpretations of Islam to justify contrasting understanding of gender roles. Hence, men in Ramji's study mobilized Islam to justify their role as providers in the household, and therefore to legitimise their dominance and reinforce patriarchy. In contrast, women in that study used religion to challenge the conventional understanding of their roles and assert that Islam did not enforce gender inequality, which is the consequence of cultural patriarchal practices. According to this narrative, modesty was not about how people

socialise or what clothes they wear but was about a state of mind and the meaning given to actions which is pertinent to men as well as women.

In her qualitative study based on in-depth interviews with 20 young British Asian Muslims boys and girls aged 18 to 30, Ramji (2007) concluded that the way young people mobilize religion to legitimise their identity is intertwined with social class and gender. The analysis showed that men referred to Islam to legitimate their dominance, whilst girls challenged the conventional understanding of their roles by clearly distinguishing between religious beliefs and cultural practices. The girls in Ramji's study felt that accessing education and employment *'was a way of being a better Muslim creating a more inclusive British Muslim community and demonstrate the true egalitarian attribute of Islam'* (Ramji, 2007, p.1182)' (Ibid). Conversely, boys emphasised their role as providers based on claims that Islam sets up different roles for men and women and that providing and maintaining the families was the principal male responsibility and duty.

The role of social class in affecting young British Muslims' identity has also been recognised by several studies (Basit, 1997a; Dwyer et al., 2008; Ramji, 2007) as a substantial factor that intersects with a number of different others to shape views, attitudes, thoughts and individual aspirations. Within the habitus social class trickles down from the structure and affects social relationships as well as the individual sphere.

Research studies on the impact of social class on the identity of young British Muslims indicate that the differences between higher and lower social classes determine the level of conformism and attachment to traditional roles (Dwyer et al., 2008; Ramji, 2007). As Dwyer's study based on 58 qualitative interviews with young British Pakistani men aged 16 to 27 in Slough and Bradford, concluded, *'normative gender divisions'* (Dwyer et al., 2008, p.131) were mostly accepted amongst young men from working class background rather than by those from middle class background. These findings were supported by previous evidence from another qualitative study by Dwyer (2000) with 49 British South Asian Muslim girls aged 16 to 18 in Hertfordshire, which found that girls from a lower social economic background were more likely to be exposed to patriarchal gender relations, more involved with maintaining the honour of the family,

reproduce parental culture and more subject to restrictions than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds (Dwyer, 2000).

A different perspective about the outcome of class differences comes from Archer's study (2002) on post-16 educational choices based on discussion groups with 64 British young Muslim boys and girls aged 15-16 years old. The majority of girls in her study rejected the *'notions of restricted choices'* (Ibid) and argued that their educational choices had parental support as education was highly valued by the family (Archer, 2002). In contrast with some of the findings discussed above about the differences between middle and working class parents in guiding the educational choices of their children, Archer argued that the experiences of migration and disadvantage became strong drivers of parental aspirations and motivation: *'we (parents) don't want you to end up as we are now'* (Archer, 2002, p.369). Archer questioned theorists of class-based discourses who have tended to agree that working class parents are necessarily less involved in the educational choice of the children.

A similar argument about the role of social class and aspirations emerges from a study on the educational performance of 16 year old ethnic minority young people (Strand, 2008) by the Department of Children School and Families. Using the LSYPE (Longitudinal Study Young People with a national sample of 15,000 young people aged 13-14 years old), the study found that high educational aspirations of both parents and young people, were the most important factors predicting the educational performance of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Black African pupils in low SEC (Socio Economic Classification). Findings indicated that while the general pattern was that Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim students were underperforming at different Key Stages and levels compared to other ethnic-religious groups (ONS, 2004), they were doing better than the White British group in the similar SEC. The question was what accounted for the better performance of Pakistani and Bangladeshi in low SEC compared to similarly disadvantaged White British young people. The report suggested that *'the immigrant paradigm'* (Strand, 2008, p.47), the idea that migrants have higher educational aspirations for their children, made immigrants devote themselves to education, which is seen as the only route for upward social mobility and way out of poverty (Ibid). The DFCSF study links up with other findings showing that, when controlling for certain personal characteristics (gender, poverty, within year age,

SEN), minority ethnic groups make better average academic progress than their White peers (Wilson et al., 2006). Based on analysis of the Pupils Annual School Census (PLASC) with an overall sample of over 900,000 students in primary and secondary state schools in England, a research study found that Pakistani and Bangladeshi students had higher value added scores[5] than White British, even though they arrived in secondary school with generally low test scores. The combination of non-school factors; systemic school issues; between-school factors and within-school factors only partially accounted for the higher value added score of ethnic minority groups. Instead, the analysis found the progress of ethnic minority groups to be linked to *'the importance of aspirations and values inculcated by families and reinforce by communities'* (Wilson et al., 2006, p.55).

In summary, these findings about educational performance suggest that it is important to avoid generalisations that working class people are more traditional or hold conformist views about gender segregation and religious affiliation. The immigrant's paradigm challenges certain attributes typical of lower social classes (Ambrosini & Molina, 2004a) and raises awareness of the importance of exploring the role of parental aspirations and values.

Youth and religion: are young people losing their religion?

The most general trend emerging from the analysis of youth and religion is that young people growing up in contemporary societies tend to be less religious than the older generations (Park, Phillips, & Johnson, 2003b). Collins-Mayo (2010) questions why young people are less likely to identify and practice traditional world religions than their older peers. She states that a possible explanation is that religion deals with ultimate concerns and experiences which are more typical of later stages of life (Collins-Mayo & Dandelion, 2010). In exploring what underlies the declining trend, Voas and Crokett (2005) suggest that decreasing religiosity amongst youths could be attributed to a fault in the religious socialisation, which is a consequence of each generation believing less than the previous one (Voas and Crokett, 2005 in Shepherd, 2010). They argue that a fault in the intergenerational transmission of religion is the pivotal reason behind decreasing religiosity (Ibid). Shepherd, (2010) based on

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[5] The value added score is a measure of relative educational improvement.

qualitative interviews and focus groups with young Christians aged 14-17 years old, found that growing up in a family that espouses young people to religion does not automatically imply that they will adopt the parents' faith (Shepherd, 2010). His findings suggest that these young people feel they have been 'brought up to believe', but ultimately choose whether to continue to believing or not. Shepherd's (2010) work with young Christians highlights the important dynamics between individual action, reflexivity and social structure in the context of the construction of religious identity. Collins-Mayo and Beaudoin's (2010) analysis of the relation between youth, popular culture and religion provides context to the decreasing religiosity trend. They argue that there is an intrinsic generational tendency, starting from those who were born in the 1960s and 1970s (baby boomers), toward a spiritual apathy and indifference in favour of more *'materialistic, self-oriented, hedonistic consumption'* framed by the rising youth market supported by popular culture in the forms of fashion, pop music, magazine, films etc. (Collins-Mayo and Beaudoin, 2010, p.18).

Importantly, the fact that young people's attachment to the traditional world creeds is decreasing does not automatically imply that they simply do not believe and don't belong to any creed. Tommasi (1999) explored young people adherence to the 'New Religious Movements' (NRMs), a phenomenon also referred as alternative religions, which include for instance, movements like Scientology, Hare Krishna or New Age (Tommasi, 1999). Sociologists provide different explanations about the rise of NRMs: for Wilson (1982) they are an indication of secularization and therefore that religion has lost relevance in contemporary society (Wilson, 1982). Others look at them as the outcomes of a progressive functional differentiation happening in contemporary societies or as spiritual responses to normative breakdown and the *'vacuum of meanings'* that characterises late modernity (Tommasi, 1999, p.10). What appears to be the case is that NRMs appeal to young people because they break with tradition that these movements represent while playing the role of fulfilling the search for new meanings (Ibid). The analysis of NRMs catches another element of the relation between youth and world religions: the decline of traditional religions amongst youths and the rise of spirituality amongst young people. Spirituality is intended as *'a creative construction of the self which may borrow elements from religious traditions but stands independent from them'* (Mason, 2010, p.55).

However, within this general trend of decreasing religiosity amongst youth there are multiple and complex differences such as those between the religiosity of young men and young women. Data from the 2002-03 US National Survey of Youth and Religion showed that 44 per cent of female aged 13-17 years old and 37 per cent of males attended a religious service once a week, and 72 per cent of the females compared to 58 per cent of the males attended religious services once a week (Aune & Vincett, 2010). Evidence from another UK survey of 23,400 young people aged 13-15 years old living in urban areas also confirmed lower religiosity of males: 40 per cent of the males and 46 per cent of the females said they believe in God (Ibid). In their analysis of the relation between youth and religiosity, Aune and Vincett argue that gender differences in religiosity are closing and that the decrease in religious commitment is faster for girls. They explain that this path may be due to the advancing role that women have been acquiring in public spaces through education and employment, leading to emancipation as opposed to tradition within which religion tends to be placed.

The path of declining religion amongst youths is not affecting all traditional religions in the same ways, and a lot of the literature on this topic refers to Christianity in the West. Minganti's study of young Muslim women aged 18-15 in Sweden based on participant observations and interviews, found that there was actually a revival of Islam within the group (Minganti, 2010). The study identified a three stage scenario where, girls born into a Muslim family adopted Islam as the *'tacit common sense'*. When growing up these girls went through a teenage crisis and put into question their religious identity, then they became more *'religiously awakened'* and finally joined Muslim youth associations (Minganti, 2010, p.116). Werbner also argues that for Muslim young people in the UK religious identity has taken primacy over cultural and ethnic affiliations and Islam has become *'an adventure of self-discovery and an enjoyable substitute for British youth culture'* (Werbner, 2004, p.907).

Conclusions

This chapter has examined the concept of youth with a focus on the experiences of young British Muslims. In so doing, it has emphasised the multiplicity of their experiences as well as the complexity of being young British and Muslim in the specific social context of Britain today.

The concept of youth has been placed into a wider sociological context, particularly the work of Bourdieu who placed youth into his wider theory of social practice and interpreted it as another social field. Viewing youth as a social field implies looking at a complex range of factors and social dynamics which affect the construction of identity and habitus within that specific field. Therefore, this chapter sets the context about young British Muslim youth who are more likely to reside in deprived areas, underperform at school and be unemployed and therefore to experience disadvantage.

The chapter has demonstrated that there are two emerging key pathways – conflict and negotiation- describing the identity construction of Muslims in the UK, which can be related to two distinct theoretical references: the clash of civilizations and postmodernist theories about fluidity of identities. The approach which supports the idea that Muslims in the UK experience an identity conflict due to the intrinsically different and opposing British and Islamic values, are rooted in what Huntington (1997) defined as the broadest 'clash of civilizations', which divided the world after the post Cold war. According to Huntington, the nature of current world conflicts stays in the clash between cultural identities rather than class division (Huntington, 1997). In contrast, other research studies have provided a wider context about negotiation as a process which underlies the construction of hybrid/fluid identities. In this context, negotiation relates to the fluidity of identities and reflects postmodern inquiries about the disaggregation and melting of previous reference groups and institutions, such as social class, political parties or nationalities. Alongside Bauman's theory about 'liquid modernity', fluidity is an indication of traditional modern loyalties leaving space to lighter and flexible senses of belonging (Bauman, 2000).

The chapter has also examined certain structural conditions which are particularly salient for the youth field, such as citizenship, Britishness, social class gender and religion. In this context, it has been particularly relevant to explore the idea of multicultural citizenship elaborated by Modood and Parekh to explain the negotiation of equality and difference, and therefore of universal and particularistic claims, as the basis for the construction of a national identity in multicultural Britain.

There is a general trend which suggests declining religiosity amongst youths (Park et al., 2003). However, evidence about this trend derives mostly from literature about Christians in the West (Collins-Mayo & Dandelion, 2010; Tommasi, 1999). It is the

object of this thesis to explore the complex differences that characterise groups of youths within this general trend of declining religiosity with particular emphasis on the experiences of young British Muslims.

Chapter 5

Research methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the main stages of the methodology used in the current research study beginning with the research aims and questions. It then discusses how the epistemological basis of the study influenced the research design, which is based on a mixed method approach, and the analysis. It also presents more empirical aspects of the research such as the sampling process and the procedures used to access the field. Finally, it reflects on the scope and implications of the role of the researcher during the data elicitation and analysis.

5.1 Research Aims and Questions

Motivation for the research

My personal experience of moving from a predominantly white Italian town to a very ethnically diverse London borough enhanced my interest in multiculturalism and identity. In this wider context, the specific attention to the issue of Islam in the West developed in part as a result of my job as a researcher, where I carried out focus groups with Pakistani and Bangladeshi women about barriers to work and aspirations. While, for the final dissertation of my MSc Social Research Methods 'Schools in disadvantaged areas: a case of success' I interviewed Bangladeshi young girls. Ultimately, this personal interest led me to explore into more depth theoretical approaches to identity construction amongst minority ethnic groups.

The literature reviewed in the previous chapters has demonstrated that there is a need for more research to understand the development of religious and national identities in the context of South Asian Muslim communities in the UK. UK research on young Muslims has lacked an understanding of intergenerational dynamics that affect the identity development of young people. Particularly, there is a lack of research looking at intergenerational differences between the experiences of young people with those of their parents.

Research aims and questions

The current study has a dual focus on young people and their parents. The first aim of the study was to understand how religious beliefs and "Britishness" affect the identity of young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds. Secondly, the research also aimed to explore the transmission and reconstruction of values within the South Asian Muslim family field, with a focus on the interaction between parents and children. Hence, the study aimed to investigate the specific contribution of Muslim parents to their children's identity development. Therefore, the main research questions were:

> - How do young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds negotiate between their religious and national identities? Do religious and national identities conflict, co-exist or are mutually reinforcing?
> - How do South Asian Muslim parents transmit values to their children? Do they adopt particular strategies?

The study also sought to answer the following subsidiary research questions:

> - How do values transmitted by Muslim parents from South Asian backgrounds affect the development of their children's identity?
> - What are the priorities of South Asian Muslim parents in bringing up their children?

As detailed in Chapter 2, in order to identify how Islam, cultural norms and Britishness are negotiated, the research has examined the everyday practices, subjective beliefs, tastes and values that characterise the identities of British Muslim young people and their parents.

5.2 Ontology and Epistemology: a *critical realist* orientation

The research design and methodology have been informed by critical realism, which has provided the epistemological and ontological basis of the research and has contributed to the development of the conceptual framework as detailed below.

Applying critical realism to the study

Critical realism is an ontological and epistemological paradigm whose origin is associated with the theory of the British philosopher Roy Bhaskar (Bhaskar, 1997). The ontology of critical realism sets out that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, whilst the epistemology assumes that knowledge is socially produced, and is thus historically determined and contingent (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002). In this sense, critical realism can be placed as *'a third way'* between objective realism/empiricism and relativism/idealism (Danermark et al., 2002, p.202).

In what sense is critical realism critical? The term critical is used to distinguish critical realism from so called 'naive' realism, which claims that the knowledge is universal. *Critical* also stands for a critique of 'flat' ontological approaches unable to catch the multi-dimensions of reality and social world. As Danermark et.al. explained, the critical element of critical realism consists in its challenge to the polarisation between individual and structure and in the effort of bringing different perspectives together to reconcile *'individualising or sociologising'* explanations of reality (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 200-201). This interplay between the individual and the social structure, which is a core element of critical realism, guided the development of the theoretical framework of this study as particularly reflected in the notion of habitus. Bourdieu's habitus, which in the study informed the conceptualisation of identity, implied looking at the complexity between subjective action and social conditions in terms of reciprocity and circularity as summarised by Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2.

The ontology of critical realism posits that social or natural phenomena are not directly and empirically accessible because they contain internal generative mechanisms which cannot be observed. In social science, phenomena such as unemployment,

homelessness, social exclusion, poverty, religion, identity etc. require some form of human activity to exist. However, they would still be present if they were not object of investigation and therefore, their existence is somehow autonomous by the knowledge produced about them (Danermark et.al., 2002, p.20-21). In addition, the critical realist epistemology assumes that this knowledge is not neutral and universal but rather dependent on the problems and the questions we ask. Theory and conceptualisation are therefore substantial parts of knowledge. As Danermark et. al. state:

> *'In science, despite our efforts, we tend to see only some aspects of reality and we are blind to others. We should therefore not think that just any person can produce just any knowledge at just any time at just any condition- it is not possible to see just anything from just any viewpoint'* (Danermark et.al., 2002, p.26).

Epistemology and ontology have implications for the methods adopted in conducting research. Critical realism challenges most of the usual polarisations within the social science debate and bridges a gap between amongst apparently irreconcilable perspectives such as quantitative-qualitative; positivism and hermeneutics; universalism and particularism. In this sense, critical realism supports methodological flexibility and the use of mixed method approaches, which were adopted in this study as they appeared most appropriate for exploring a multi-layered concept such as identity.

Importantly, critical realists promote the need for linking empirical work with theory and regard theorising as an 'inherent and absolutely vital part of doing research' in order to avoid mere empirical descriptions (Danermark et.al., 2002, p.3). In the study, I followed this principle and used different elements of Bourdieu's theory, including the concepts of habitus, cultural and religious capitals, to inform the empirical aspects of the study from the data collection to the analysis. For instance, the topic guides used in the interviews took into account different aspects of identity highlighted by the conceptual framework such as the influences of social fields and structural conditions. The final development of themes was also informed by links with Bourdieu's theory as demonstrated by the concept of Islamic capital developed in Chapter 7.

5.3 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed method approach which combined quantitative and qualitative methods into a qualitatively driven sequential design, using both methods for different purposes according to their strengths but at different points in time (Bryman, 2006; Mason, 2006a, 2006b). Combining methods, rather than integrating them, means that one methodology prevails over the other which acts as support (Mason, 2006b; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006). The study involved two stages, which will be described into more details later in this chapter:

- **(Stage 1): An in-school exploratory survey**

The first stage of the research consisted of an exploratory quantitative survey (N=560), in the form of a school-based questionnaire, conducted in three secondary schools in London Newham and one Sixth Form College in Oldham with young people aged 14-18 years from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

- **(Stage 2): Semi-structured interviews and visual methods**

The qualitative stage provided the primary source of data in the study and involved semi-structured interviews with 25 young people from South Asian Muslim backgrounds (aged between 14-18 years old) and their parents (n=27). Visual methods, in the form of photographs taken by the respondents, were used for the purpose of elicitation during the interviews with young people. South Asian Muslim young people were identified through the questionnaire in schools and a combination of 'snowballing' techniques.

The rationale behind adopting a mixed method approach

The choice of a mixed-method approach was informed by the critical realist ontology and epistemology and followed what Mason's described as a *'multidimensional logic'* (Mason, 2006b) for mixing methods:

> *'The argument is that different methods and approaches have distinctive strengths and potential which, if allowed to flourish, can help us to understand multi-dimensionality and social complexity'* (Mason, 2006b, p.9)

As Mason (2006a) points out, the assumption that social experience and lived realities are multi-dimensional implies that their understanding is impoverished and inadequate if based on a reductive single method. In this research study, identity is conceptualised as multi-dimensional and involving a negotiation between the social, individual and structural conditions. Therefore, adopting a mixed method approach has enabled capture of micro and macro levels of identity: the macro categories such ethnic, national and religious identification have been the object of the in-class survey, while individual experiences have been addressed by the interviews and visual methods.

The adoption of mixed method approach also drew upon and extended on other research, particularly the successful methodology utilised by Becher (2003) in her doctoral study of family practices in South Asian Muslim families with primary school aged children.

In discussing the advantages of mixed method approaches Mason (2006a) identified two main elements: explanation and contextual understanding. Qualitatively data has the potential for greater explanatory power compared to the more descriptive measurement characteristic of a quantitative driven approach (Mason, 2006a). On the other hand, quantitative findings can enrich the contextual understanding of a phenomenon by inserting more meticulous, structured and comparative descriptions and by providing the reasoning for causation and relations between different factors. In this regard, the choice of a mixed method was also driven by the aims and questions of the research study. The focus of the research is on the individual experiences of the respondents negotiating identities and transmitting values, which are better caught by qualitative inquiry. However I felt an exploratory survey could provide important context to young people experiences, which were explored in depth in the second stage, and contribute to link findings with previous literature. The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (1993-1994 in Modood, 1997) found that religion was the main source of self-definition for South Asian Muslims in the UK. In developing the methodology I was interested in finding out if this is this still the case and most importantly, if this finding is different for second generation young British Muslims.

The two research stages: development, aims and content

The survey aimed to provide a first descriptive snapshot of some of the key issues related to young people's identity and sense of belonging. It also sought to collect comparative data across a range of different ethnic and religious groups and to identify a preliminary sampling frame for the following semi-structured interviews.

The survey included three main sections: it began with questions about general demographics including ethnic, religious and national self-identification. Young people were also asked about demographics of their parents. The second main section focused on religion and examined the importance of religion in life; religious practice and motivations behind practice. The section also included a set of questions about young people's views on the influence that their parents had on them, their views about politics, gender roles, socialising and dating. The final section included questions about their social trust and sense of belonging to different institutions and organisations and their views on whether racial and religious prejudices exist in the UK. A copy of the questionnaire and an outline of the design are included in Appendix B.

The development of the questionnaire was influenced by emergent themes from the literature review, in particular Marcia's model of identity's statuses (Coté & Levine, 2002, p.18). Twenty items were selected out of the 64 which compose The Objective Measure of Ego Identity (OMEI) (Adams, 1998) listed in Appendix B. The OMEI is a self-report measure of identity formation based on Marcia's paradigm which aims to assess the levels of commitment and exploration which characterise the identity statuses of young people. This is to say that the questionnaire seeks to measure the degree of which young people rely on their parents (or other external role models) when making important decisions about a range of issues such as social life, dating and future career but also on developing their views about politics or gender roles. In addition, a specific question based on a revised version of the religiosity scale by Maltby & Day (1997) was also included to gain insights about young people's motivations for practising their religion. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire focuses on national identity and was informed by both the Citizenship Survey Questionnaire (Home Office, 2010) and the Young People Social Attitude Survey (Park, Phillips, & Johnson, 2003). The Citizenship Survey introduced the concepts of belonging, civic participation and trust as

relevant to the definition of citizenship. Questions from the Young People Social Attitude Survey were introduced in this study to gain some insights about young people's aspirations, values and beliefs which were relevant for identity and that were addressed in more depth by the qualitative interviews.

The qualitative stage of the research (stage 2) aimed to collect accounts about the strategies used by young British Muslims from South Asian background to reconcile different values, beliefs and practices that are relevant to their identity. It also sought to identify themes illustrating different strategies adopted by parents to transmit values as well as their priorities in bringing up their children. During the interviews, I aimed to cover the following topic areas:

- Self description (& migration histories for parents)
- Social relations: family and friends
- Parenting (how/what values are transmitted; parental priorities in bringing up children)
- Islam and religious identity
- Living in the UK & national identity
- Negotiating different Identities (young people)

The interviews with young people were initially driven by the discussion about the photographs they previously took as detailed below. The topic guides for parents covered similar topics to those of the young people but included additional sections about employment, migration history, parenting and the role of Islam in bringing up children. Appendix E includes the full topic guides.

Using photographs for data elicitation: 'snapshot' of identity

Young people were given a digital camera prior to the interview, and asked to take some photographs of 'anything that they felt it was relevant to their identity'. In most cases, the images were emailed to me by participants and then printed in order to use them as prompts at the start of the interview. Appendix F includes selected photographs taken by respondents.

The main reason to introduce the photographs as part of the interviews with young people was to enhance access to their life world. Research studies (Bagnoli, 2009;

Galman, 2009; Morrow, 2001) have highlighted the benefits of visual methods in conducting research with young people particularly at the engagement stage, when images are used to identify what it is relevant to the participant at a particular point in life (Bagnoli, 2009). The use of photographs shifted power away from the researcher and toward the respondent and thus crossing the multiple boundaries that may divide them such as different age, language, race, class or education (Liebenberg, 2009). Visual methods have also been increasingly used in identity research to prioritise participants' meanings and representations (Galman, 2009,), and in triangulation within mixed method approaches to increase the research validity by exploring the phenomenon under investigation from different perspectives (Morrow, 2001).

Importantly, images can elucidate the habitus of participants (Back, 2009; Sweetman, 2009). For instance, Bourdieu complemented his fieldwork notes in Algeria with the use of photographs to uncover areas that are difficult to *verbalise and articulate* but which are a crucial part of people's overall *orientation and way of being in the world* (Sweetman, 2009, p.491). In this thesis, visual methods highlighted everyday practices, values and beliefs and invited young people to reflect on them.

On a more empirical level, the decision of introducing visual methods during the interviews with young people was also driven by the outcomes of the two pilot interviews as detailed below in the chapter.

Talking to multiple respondents in the family field and the use of family case studies

The current study has a double focus and gathered the views of both young people and parents in the same family group. The literature review indicated that intergenerational perspectives have been, to some extent, neglected by research and only quite recently family research has moved toward the inclusion of multiple perspectives from the same family (Barker et al., 2011; Becher, 2008; Brannen & Nilsen, 2006). Previous approaches tended to neglect, for instance, the gendered nature of parenting and focus just on mothers (Gilgun, Daly, Daly, & Handel, 1992; MaCarthy, Holland, & Gillies, 2003). A critical change from these perspectives came from the recognition that within one relationship there are multiple experiences and realities that co-exist. Recent research has therefore highlighted the importance of including the accounts of fathers (O'Brien,

2004, 2011). In addition, there has been a growing emphasis on considering children as active social actors and on listening to their perspectives (O'Brien, 1995).

The increasing use of case study is one of the methodological implications of this theoretical shift toward the inclusion into the research of perspectives coming from different family members (O'Brien & Jones, 1997). McCarthy et.al (2003) emphasised the important contribution of case study research in comparing the standpoints of both gender (amongst parents) and generations (between parents and children) (McCarthy et al., 2003). Case study also enable to identify differences and commonalities amongst the views of family members, while bringing issues into focus that could otherwise be neglected (Ibid).

In summary, a multiple perspectives approach seemed the most appropriate to address the complexity of identity and habitus within each single family field. This is to say that exploring issues across generations enhanced understanding of what lies behind young people identity development. Whilst the literature on young British Muslims has so far focused on static description of young people's identities, this study has aimed to explore identity as a dynamic and interactive process of construction within and across generations and under the influences of structural conditions.

The pilot studies: refining the research design

The final selection of research instruments was based on piloting, where particular attention was paid to the issue of cultural sensitivity and appropriateness of measure. The pilot studies of both stages of the research informed the research design and led to some changes.

The content and layout of the questionnaire was piloted with one classroom in London School 2 with about 21 students from different ethnic backgrounds and roughly equal proportions of boys and girls. After the piloting the questionnaire was refined: one open question was removed and route-out options (such as 'not applicable') were introduced specifically for non-religious students in order to allow them to fill only the relevant sections of the questionnaire.

The two pilot interviews with young people in London (one girl aged 17 years old and one boy aged 16) highlighted the requirement to develop a method to encourage their

active participation and stimulate their interest in the research. Importantly, after piloting I felt that the interviews needed to focus on young people's own priorities rather than having the researcher strictly directing the conversion. In order to address the emerging challenges with interviewing young people, visual methods were introduced in the research.

5.4 The selection of research participants

At the outset of the research, three preliminary selection criteria - research population; location and age group – were prescribed. Following this initial stage, the research adopted a more method-specific sampling rationale. In the survey, sampling criteria mostly focused on identifying different ethnic/religious groups. In the selection of interview participants I adopted a qualitative sampling strategy defined as purposive. Purposive sampling seeks to reflect differences in perspectives across the selected groups on the basis of specified criteria (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The selection criteria and their justifications are discussed below.

Preliminary selection criteria

The main research interest underlying the first development of the study concerned with exploring the identity of young people from ethnic/religious minority background living in the UK. Therefore, three main criteria – 'Who? Where? and What age group?'- guided me in the preliminary selection of the research population.

1) Ethnic/religious group: South Asian Muslims in the UK

The ethno/religious category of South Asian British Muslims includes British Muslims from three main ethnic backgrounds: Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani.

Firstly, South Asian Muslims were selected amongst other Muslim groups living in the UK, because they are the largest minority religious group in Britain. As reported in Chapter 3, in 2001 there were about 1.6 million British Muslims (Dobbs et. al., 2006) and 43 per cent of them originated in Pakistan, 17 per cent in Bangladesh and 9 per cent in India.

Secondly, the migration history of South Asians suggested that they were amongst the oldest Muslim groups to settle in the UK. Therefore they have the longest experience of living in the UK and of British lifestyle and values. It was also relevant that long-term settlers were more likely to have better English language skills important to conduct the interviews.

Thirdly, research on Muslims living in the UK often focuses on one specific group amongst the South Asians (Basit, 1997; Becher, 2008; Dwyer et al., 2008). However, this study followed the principle of intersectionality of identities as a key driver for the cases selection, analysis and findings discussion (Garner & Bhattacharyya, 2011). Intersectionality implies that people's life experiences are not shaped by one aspect of their identity alone but by a combination of factors such as gender, age, religion, health, disability, location, language and migration history (Ibid). The intersectionality of identities characterises the experiences of minority groups across the multiple dimensions of gender, age, geography, religion and belief, group membership and socio-economic status. In other words, the choice of looking at multiple ethnic groups provided a terrain for comparison between amongst families and thus a ground to explore into more depth how ethnicity, culture and religion may intersect. This principle takes into account that Muslims in the UK are not a uniform category, which prompted me to include different Muslim groups such as Sunni and other Shi'a minorities in the sample.

2) Geographical areas

Is being young British and Muslim in London different from being young, British and Muslim elsewhere in the UK? In order to capture whether the variability of locations is relevant to identity, I initially selected two main areas: London and Oldham.

According to the 2001 Census, South Asians were mainly concentrated in large urban centres. However the three groups were quite unequally spread throughout the UK. The London borough of Newham and Oldham in Lancashire were selected because they included proportions of all three different South Asian Muslim groups, whilst other areas, such as Tower Hamlets, have high percentages of Muslim residents from only one main ethnic group.

Table 5.1 South Asians Muslims by geographical area (%)

	All population	Muslims	Asian or Asian British: Indian	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
Newham	243891	24	12	8	9
Oldham	217273	11	1	6	4
London	7172091	8	6	2	2
England	49138831	3	2	1	1

Source ONS 2001

Differently from London which is generally more mixed, Oldham had a high proportion of Muslim residents within an overall majority of white population. The school population showed that Oldham was still quite segregated and most primary schools tend to be either 99 per cent white or 99 per cent Asian with ethnic and cultural divisions still perceived as strong within the town (Christafis, 2001).

The inherent segregation of communities in Oldham relates to the recent history of the area. Since the 1950s Oldham experienced significant levels of immigration particularly from Pakistan and Bangladesh. During the 1960s the all area fell into decline facing the challenges of deindustrialisation and the shift from manufacturing to services of the British economy and the consequent increasing unemployment (Ibid). The deriving socio-economic context has contributed to lower cross-community cohesion and during 2001 Oldham became the centre of racial conflicts between the local white population and South Asians (Lewis, 2007).

3) Age of young people and other factors

The study focused on young people aged 14-18 years old, as this particular period of the life span coincides with adolescence which is considered a crucial stage for the development of identity (Erikson, 1968). During adolescence the influence of religious beliefs and family practices is particularly strong and young people in this transitional age are expected to comply more formally with their religion (Becher, 2003).

This particular age group (14-18 years old) was also selected because young people of this age are attending citizenship education, now a statutory education requirement in KS3 and KS4 as discussed in Chapter 4. The study is highly relevant in the context of the

new citizenship curriculum and citizenship classes provided preliminary access to the schools and the main ground to get them involved. I also felt that young people with some background in citizenship, would have had a better understanding of the issues addressed by the research and possibly would have been more interested in taking part. It is through citizenship classes that young people are more specifically informed about expectations from a dominant non-Muslim society.

5.5 The process of accessing the field and the samples achieved

Final sample

Overall, **560 young people** completed the preliminary questionnaire survey and **15 families** (intended as youth and parents) were interviewed in the second stage of this research. The 15 families involved **52 individual interviews**: **25 interviews were conducted with young people and another 27 with parents**. Within the overall sample of 15 families, 5 families were selected through the survey in schools and the additional ten families were recruited through snowballing techniques. Figure 5.1 summarises the process which led to the selection of the final sample of interviewees in the second stage of the research.

Figure 5.1: Final sample achieved through survey and snowballing (families: youth and parents)

560
Overall sample from **survey** - STAGE 1 -

78/560
Overall Number who volunteered to stage 2

46/78
Non Muslim volunteers

26/78
South Asian Muslim volunteers

6/78
Muslim but not South Asian volunteers

11/26
South Asian volunteers interviewed from the **survey**

5/ 11
Families interviewed which were recruited through the **survey**

15
Overall number of families interviewed

10
Families interviewed which were recruited through **snowballing**

Getting the schools involved in the research

The initial approach adopted in this study involved accessing young people and their parents by using the channel of schools in the targeted areas. In this way, I aimed to reach different types of Muslim families and maximise their diversity.

Schools were firstly contacted by letter with a detailed description of the study, followed by emails and telephone calls as detailed in Appendix A. Following Becher's (2003) experience of difficulties in securing school participation, I made contact with all 32 schools, a mixture of public and community, in the 2 targeted areas (London and Oldham). The schools were sent a preliminary introduction letter at the end of August 2009. Other letters addressed to the headteachers followed in September 2009. Two schools in London and one in Oldham opted not to take part on the study. The first one explained that they did not have the staff capacity to be involved; the second school informed me that it was undergoing several changes and was under special measures while the third school in Oldham did not provide specific reasons for the refusal. Catholic and Church of England schools did not reply to letters and emails in both areas. In all the other cases, it was difficult to get in touch directly with the headteachers and to identify alternative members of staff to talk to. I often left several messages to headteachers' PAs and never heard back from some of them. Finally, three out of 17 secondary schools/colleges in Newham and one Sixth Form College out of the 15 schools and colleges contacted in Oldham agreed to take part in the study.

The contact people in schools explained that the main reasons for participating in the study were because they felt the issues addressed in the questionnaire were relevant to multicultural education, the citizenship curriculum and the sociology module. It was also the case that racial and faith issues were perceived as a problem in the schools. The schools which responded were predominantly multicultural including high proportions of South Asians and Muslim students but within a very mixed environment.

Young people were given the option of leaving their contact details in the last page of the questionnaire conducted in the classroom in London or, in the case of the Sixth Form in Oldham, in the last section of the web questionnaire. Appendix A includes the primary tools used to access the field. The idea was to interview young people first. After their interview, I aimed to give them a letter for their parents, which explained

about the research and asked for their contribution. Following the experience of Becher, who worked with younger children and carried out most of the interviews in the participants' homes. I was also hoping to meet the parents in the homes while carrying out the interview with young people but most of the young people preferred to speak to me at school rather than home. The lack of direct access to their homes became an obstacle in reaching the parents and therefore, other sources of recruitment were used as detailed later in the chapter.

The survey response rate

The overall response rate to the questionnaire was **42 per cent**: **413** young people filled in paper questionnaires in the three schools in London and **147** answered the online survey in Oldham. Response rates varied between the three London schools and the college in Oldham (see Table 5.2).

The paper questionnaires were taken to the schools and then collected after completion. In some cases, I stayed in the class while students filled the questionnaires which allowed me to supervise the process and answer questions. I felt that being in the classroom maximised the response even though it was not possible to attend every class because of clash with timetables. Because of resources and administrative issues, it was instead decided and agreed with the sixth form college to adopt the on-line option by using Survey-Monkey. The contact person in the school, the Deputy Head, expressed preference for the on-line option as she felt it would limit disruption in the class and allow students to decide whether to take part or not. The Deputy Head emailed the survey link to the students and a brief introduction about the study was given in class by teachers. The 450 students aged 16-18 years old undertaking social science related subjects including sociology and psychology in Oldham were given about 8 weeks to complete the questionnaire online by the 18th December 2009. The response is summarised in the table below.

Table 5.2: Survey response rate

	Number of questionnaires distributed	N	% Response rate
London School 1	23	19	83
London School 2	100	82	82
London School 3	750	312	42
Oldham	450	147	33
Total	1323	560	42

Looking back, there were several advantages and disadvantages to using two differing methods of data collection. The paper version was more time-consuming and required a lot of administrative work including data inputting. However, the response rate was higher and in some cases, it allowed me to supervise the process and provide guidance. The online version saved time as data inputting was not required but the overall response was lower. The two samples also differed in terms of students' motivation to take part. Students at Oldham were older and taking social science modules and therefore showed a deeper understanding about the aim and context of the research.

The main characteristics of the survey sample

Overall, **560 young people** completed the questionnaire between October and December 2009. The final response from schools was higher than expected and the final sample exceeded the initial target of 400 students. Most importantly, the required South Asian Muslim sample was achieved and overall 44 per cent of the respondents were from South Asian ethnic background. However not all of them were Muslims: the proportion of South Asian Muslim young people was 33 per cent of the all young people who took part in the survey.

Seventy four per cent of the respondents attended secondary schools in London Newham and 26 per cent a sixth form college in Oldham. There were differences between the sub-samples of respondents in London and Oldham that were taken into account in the analysis. The two sub-samples had different gender distributions and the majority of Oldham participants were girls (83 per cent compared to 17 per cent of boys) whilst in Newham the proportions were much more balanced with 60 per cent of the London sample composed by boys and 40 per cent by girls. The ethnic distribution,

particularly important in respect of the South Asians, also varied across the two sub-samples. In London, Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents were equally represented (16 per cent Pakistani and 15 per cent Bangladeshi) and 5 per cent of the respondents were from Indian background, whilst in Oldham Pakistani were the most represented of the South Asian groups. Pakistani comprised for 20 per cent of the compared to 12 per cent of Bangladeshi and 2 per cent of students from Indian background. The proportion of White British was much higher in Oldham: 71 per cent of the participants in Oldham, compared to 29 per cent in London. Moreover, Black Caribbean, Black African and respondents from other Black backgrounds were hardly represented in Oldham (2 per cent) while they accounted for the 18 per cent of the London sample. Appendix C provides a detailed description of the survey sample.

Multicultural schools

The schools which volunteered were very diverse, students were originally from a number of different countries and 22 per cent of them[6] were first generation migrants not born in the UK. The majority of non UK born respondents were born in Lithuania and Pakistan (2 per cent); Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and Somalia (1 per cent each country). Of those born in the UK (78 per cent), 25 per cent said England was their country of origin and the others 56 per cent said instead their country of origin was the United Kingdom.

There was a variety of languages, other than English, which students spoke at home reflecting the multicultural environment of the sampled schools. Just over a half (53 per cent) of the 541 respondents who answered the question about language, spoke only English at home; while 18 per cent spoke other languages rather than English and 29 per cent spoke English and another language. Amongst the other languages spoken at home, Bengali was the most common, (22 per cent of all the students in the survey who spoke more than 1 language at home N=255) followed by Urdu (19 per cent); Tamil (9 per cent); Gujarati (7 per cent) and others did not specify any language (9 per cent).

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[6] 548 out of 560 answered the question about their country of origin

The processes of recruiting participants for the interviews (stage 2)

As explained above, I aimed to recruit a sub-sample of South Asian British Muslim interviewees from the school survey. The original idea was to target about 15 young people and both their parents to achieve a total number of interviews of about 45 individuals. However, during the data elicitation I experienced a number of challenges. Firstly, conducting the interviews at school prevented me from reaching as many parents as I first set out to do. The parents of six of the 11 young people who were recruited through schools could not be reached. Some of these young people explained that their parents were busy and thus refused; others pointed out that their parents had low English language skills or did not reply to emails and phone calls.

Secondly, using the schools as the primary source of selection led to recruiting families from low socio-economic background with often unemployed parents as a consequence of the areas selection, as both Newham and Oldham are deprived areas with high unemployment rates (ONS, 2004). Thirdly, there were other aspects of the sample diversity, such as including non Sunni groups that were not met by the preliminary sample obtained through the survey. Therefore, the requirement to adopt a more pragmatic sampling strategy emerged and led to the introduction of alternative recruitment strategies.

As summarised in Figure 5.1, 78 of the 560 respondents (14 per cent) to the survey agreed to participate to the second stage of the research and left their contacts details. Amongst these 78, 44 attended a sixth form college in Oldham and the remaining 34 were in the three secondary schools in London. However, respondents from different ethnic and religious background, not only South Asian Muslims, left their details and volunteered to take part to the qualitative interviews. Only 26 of the 78 preliminary respondents who volunteered to take part in the interviews were South Asian British Muslims. Of these 26, 11 young people were finally interviewed. The table below summarises the characteristics of sample obtained through schools.

Table 5.3: Qualitative sample of young people obtained through schools: main characteristics

Gender of young person	7 females
	4 males
Ethnic background of young person	5 Pakistani
	6 Bangladeshi
	1 Indians
Geographical area	4 London
	7 Oldham

Other routes were researched in order to refine the sample of interviewees and include also families from higher socio-economic background. Overall, other 14 young people were recruited through contacts and snowballing but only 10 families were finally interviewed as the parents of two of the 14 young people could not be reached (and in two families brother and sister were interviewed).

Two local community centres in London Newham and one charity (Mosaic) dedicated to provide mentoring to young British Muslims identified three families. An organisation in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (the Limehouse Project) providing training and employment support mainly to Bangladeshi women, was particularly useful and helped to identify five young people which led to interview with three other families. By using other available personal contacts I finally recruited two families (one was a non Sunni) who put me in touch to the other two final families (one of which was non Sunni).

The characteristics of the families in the final qualitative sample are summarised in Table 5.4 below and further details about family circumstances are provided in Table D.2 in Appendix D, which also reports pseudonyms as all the original names were changed for confidentiality purposes.

The final qualitative sample

Overall, the sample of South Asian Muslim interviewees reflected a good gender balance. New geographical areas were introduced in addition to the originally targeted areas of Oldham and London Newham and included a mixture of inner and outer

London boroughs, Manchester and Eastbourne. The final sample of families reflects ethnic diversity and covered the three South Asian groups and in all families parents and young people were from the same ethnic religious background. However Pakistani families were the least represented in the final sample and the most difficult to recruit. As discussed in Chapter 11, the difficulties with recruiting Pakistani could relate to the routes adopted for snowballing, which led to mostly Bangladeshi and Indian families. In addition, Pakistani are particularly under the spotlight and therefore more reluctant in taking part to research. Minority Shi'a groups were also included in the families interviewed.

Generation and socio-economic background of families in the sample

The focus of the thesis was on second generation young people and first generation parents: overall most of the young people interviewed were second generation UK born (except two), whilst 22 out of the 27 parents were first generation migrants who were not born in the UK as also summarised in Table 5.4 and Table D.2.

Importantly, in selecting the families, I took into account their socio-economic background identified by the parents' jobs, employment status and qualifications. Overall, the sample reflects a good socio-economic balance: as summarised by Table 5.4, eight families were from lower socio-economic background and the remaining seven from higher middle class background. In the families from lower socio-economic background, parents had no qualifications (or had low qualifications from their country of origin), all mothers were unemployed and fathers were in lower socio-economic occupations. In two cases (Amina and Zahra) both parents were unemployed. All six young people recruited from school but whose parents were not reached were from families with both unemployed parents. I also had the chance to access very marginalised and isolated families selected trough snowballing: Tahir and Ali both lived in lone parent families with unemployed mothers with low English language skills. As detailed in Chapter 3, lone parent households are much less common and less accepted within South Asian communities and therefore more isolated.

As explained above, because of the characteristics of the selected areas five of the eight families recruited through schools were from lower socio-economic background and to increase the socio-economic diversity of the sample, I finally adopted

recruitment through snowballing. The families from higher socio-economic background included some highly qualified parents (including two parents with PhD) in high professional careers as described in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: The main characteristics of the final qualitative sample

Total Interviews	<u>**52**</u>
Young people interviews	25
Gender of Young Person	13 boys
	12 girls
Young people Location	15 London & South East
	8 Oldham & Manchester; 2 South East of England
Parental Interviews	27 parents (13 fathers and 14 mothers)
Family groups	<u>**15**</u> • 10 families included mum, dad & 1 young person • 2 families included mum, dad & 2 siblings (Haroon and Tania; Farooq and Sarah) • 2 families were lone parent families (mother & young person were interviewed in both cases) • 1 family only daughter and father were interviewed (Mum refused as she could not speak English) • 8 young people were interviewed but parents could not be reached (6 of them were recruited through schools and 2 through snowballing)
Ethnic background (all family members were from the same ethnic background)	• 5 Indians • 7 Bangladeshi • 3 Pakistani
Muslim Sect	The majority (13/15 families) of respondents were Sunni. Two families belong to a minority Shi'a sect: • Haroon & Tania family • Yasmeen's family
Generational status	**23 young people were second generation UK born**; 1 boy (Yusuf) and 1 girl (Zahida) were first generation both born in Pakistan. **22 parents were first generation** migrants born outside the UK in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India. 2 fathers (Mariam & Zahra) and 3 mothers (Davar's and Haroon & Tania's & Yasmeen) were second generation born in the UK. Yasmeen's mother was born in Bangladesh but she grew up in the UK and told me she considered herself second generation.

English Language skills	4 mothers (Hania, Davar, Tahir, Nasreen) and 2 fathers (Yasmeen, Asif) had low English language skills. They could understand the questions but found difficult to answer in English. The interviews were conducted with the support of an interpreter who was a family member.
Fathers working status – Low socio-economic background	2 unemployed; 1 worked at the Royal Mail (unloading mail); 2 worked in take away restaurants; 1 self-employed.
Fathers working status – Higher socio-economic background	1 self-employed (with UK degree); 1 finance officer for the council (Indian qualifications); 1 worked at a money exchange (Indian qualifications); 1 father worked for his wife as admin officer (qualified as a teacher); 1 scientist (PhD); 1 travel agent (Bangladeshi qualifications); 1 father worked in pharmaceutical sales (Qualified as a medical doctor in Pakistan).
Mothers' working status – Low socio-economic background	7 unemployed looking after children and home (with no qualifications). 2 of these 7 were lone mothers.
Mothers' working status – Higher socio-economic background	1 worked for a community centre (UK GCSE); 1 IT manager (with UK master degree); 1 higher education teacher (with PhD); 1 retail manager (Pakistani qualifications); 1 support teacher (UK qualifications); 1 legal consultant (qualification both India and UK); 1 worked in retail (Pakistani qualifications).

5.6 Data analysis

The survey data analysis

Quantitative data from the classroom questionnaire was analysed using SPSS. The analysis mostly focused on identifying differences and commonalities between the targeted group – South Asian British Muslims – and the other ethnic/religious groups. The type of data, mainly categorical/discrete, determined the statistical techniques and type of analysis carried out. Chi-Square test was used to determine whether differences in the responses amongst the main religious/ethnic groups in the sample were statistically significant.

The questions about identity status (Marcia, 1966) and religiosity (Maltby & Lewis, 1996) were analysed using factor analysis as detailed in Appendix C. Factor analysis is

generally used to uncover factors that cannot be directly observed and underlie other variables (Agresti & Finlay, 1997; Bartholomew, Steele, Moustaki, & Galbraith, 2002; Kline, 1994). In this study, factor analysis was applied to the two questions in order to explore whether the data supported the identification of cluster of variables, which reflected intrinsic and extrinsic approaches to religion and the four identity statuses.

The analysis of qualitative data: a thematic approach

The analysis of the qualitative data was carried out using NVIVO software. Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Aronson, 1994; Stirling, 2001), a process for encoding qualitative data which requires *'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in the data (themes)'* (Brown & Clarke, 2006, p.79). As specified in Appendix D, a theme is a pattern identified in the data that describes and organises the observations and interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998). In addition, themes capture important elements of the data in relation to the research question (Brown & Clarke, 2006; Green et al., 2007). In this study, themes originated by combining an inductive (directly from the data) and a deductive approach (on the basis of theory) in line with the idea of a 'hybrid thematic analysis' (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Therefore, the process of coding began with a preliminary codebook (or set of codes), developed on the basis of the theoretical framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) of identity defined in Chapter 2 and included the following:

- Self description (& tastes)
- Values (& priorities)
- Practices
- Beliefs (religious)

Once these first pre-defined codes were applied to the text, a number of additional inductive codes emerging directly from the data were assigned. The final themes were developed by bringing together deductive and inductive codes into wider thematic areas. More specifically, the analysis involved breaking down each preliminary code into sub-levels, which were emerging from the data. For instance, new sub-codes answered questions such as: what did the respondents firstly speak about when they described themselves? What did they like/not like? What did they value? What were their beliefs? etc. Other codes, such as those expressing strategies for negotiating

identities were also added to the preliminary list. Appendix D sets out the full list of codes used in the analysis.

In order to keep the richness of the different experiences, the study adopted a flexible approach to the analysis of multiple perspectives. Therefore the analysis involved a detailed exploration of selected themes and built up through several levels: the individuals (young person, mother and father separately), the family (young person, mother and father together), all young people, all fathers and all mothers. In Chapter 7 the focus was on the recurring and most significant accounts from parents which were brought together into overarching themes. In the case of Chapter 8, a 'between gender and generation' type of analysis was applied, which led to the development of family case studies looking at emerging themes within members of the same family group. Chapters 9 and 10 focused on young people's accounts and the insights from the interviews with parents were used only where relevant to integrate young people's perspectives. An approach of this kind enabled the examination of emerging themes from different perspectives, whilst enhancing a deeper understanding of both processes: young people's identities negotiation and parental transmission of values.

The final themes were the result of a step-based hierarchical approach to data analysis. Firstly, a number of accounts, which have been the preliminary unit of analysis, were identified through coding. Accounts often related to a single, or very few codes, and consisted of quite short sections of text about a very specific issue. For instance, I found that 'moderation' was one important account for both Omar and his mother. A second phase of the analysis involved linking several accounts together into themes which provide more depth about a topic. Therefore, themes are analytical tools in the sense that they report different perspectives, explore the different layers of a single topic and derive from the identification of relations amongst numerous accounts and also across different interviews. In the example about moderation, both Omar and his mother firstly talked about what moderation meant to them and then, through several other accounts, they showed how moderation was actually used in specific contexts. For Omar moderation enhanced self-control while drinking alcohol; for his mother it was an important element of her parenting.

In summary, from the hierarchical approach to data analysis, the following key themes emerged as central issues of the research:

- Strategies for intergenerational transmission of values ; parenting and Islam and parenting and gender roles

- Social mobility and migration: parental priorities and aspirations for their children

- Strategies for negotiating identities: the three typologies of conforming, contesting and combining

From codes to typologies: the analytical steps

In the analysis of the interviews with young people, I gave primacy to the role of the photographs in shaping the key issues of the conversations. The photographs proved to be particularly useful for eliciting self-description, stimulating discussion about what was generally important to young people, and encouraging them to describe people and places they were attached to. In the analysis, the photographs were used in combination with the text they contributed to produce. As Appendix F also illustrates, the photographs were grouped into the six following categories in order to support the development of themes:

1. Self portraits and family members

2. Self portraits and friends

3. Islam

4. Places

5. Objects

6. Music

Therefore the analysis of the interviews with young people involved three key steps. Firstly, the discussion about the photographs (when available) generated different accounts which expressed how young people talked about their interests and favourite activities such as football, cricket, meeting friends, their favourite rapper, clothing, studying but also praying and reading about Islam etc.. Secondly, the analysis focused on the identification of specific themes which brought together and made sense of the previous accounts. I referred to these specific themes as 'strategies of negotiation' because they described the activities/actions used by young people to negotiate different identities. For instance, the theme illustrating how some of the girls in the

study adjusted their clothing to appear at the same time 'modern and modest', featured a strategy that they used to negotiate different influences affecting their identity. Thirdly, these strategies of negotiation/themes were incorporated into three more general thematic areas, or typologies, which detailed profiles of the 'types' of strategies adopted by young people to negotiate influences on their identity in relationship to the parents' perspectives. In this sense, the typologies mapped the journey to national and religious identification for young people. Figure 5.3 illustrates the hierarchical stages behind the construction of the three typologies – conforming, contesting and combining- discussed in Chapter 9 and 10 of the thesis.

Figure 5.2: The development of typologies
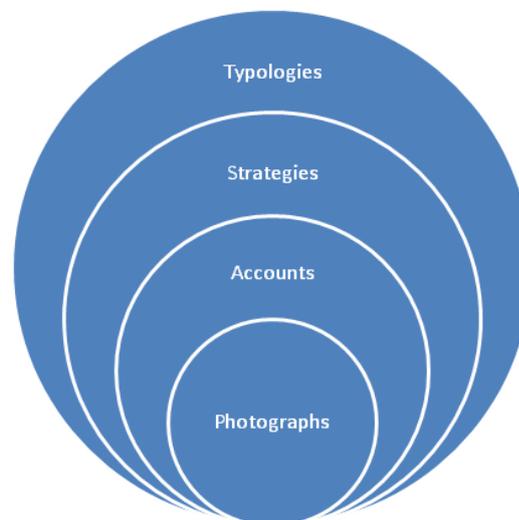
5.7   The researcher in the research: reflexivity

Reliability and validity

Critical realism argues that knowledge, and therefore research findings, is interpretive and constructed and should be considered as a representation of the social world rather than a final truth (Danermark et al., 2002). Therefore, assessing the validity and reliability of the research in the epistemological context of critical realism, relies on the

discussion about the credibility and plausibility of the analysis[7]. In qualitative research the reliability of findings is assessed by whether the processes used for the analysis is considered replicable (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). In this sense, I made sure that I provided a detailed description of the procedures I used to develop themes/strategies and typologies as well as a full list of codes. The use of Computer Aided Qualitative Analysis, in this case with NViVO, is a further factor that enables the replicability of the coding process.

In addition, in reporting and discussing my findings I made sure I referred to the specific context of the research study and its sample and did not generalise to any external population such as the South Asian population in the UK, or young British Muslims in the UK. While qualitative findings are by definition not subjected to generalization in statistical terms (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000), there were also limitations related to the nature of the quantitative sample achieved. In my discussion about the survey findings in Chapter 6, I took into account that the sample was not randomly selected and therefore not statistically representative.

The researcher as an outsider

In conducting, analysing and reporting on this research I had to take into account and reflect on the barriers and limitations of being a White European woman and therefore an outsider accessing South Asian Muslim communities. I also considered the particular implications of being a woman when interviewing fathers and young men.

Following Bourdieu's conceptualisation of reflexivity as the condition for *'situating and historicizing the space of one's point of view as a scholar and a sociologist'* (Kenway & McLeod, 2004, p.527) this study has taken into account the implications of the social and historical context as the background settings where the data collection took place. Reflexivity involves self-reference and self-awareness which serve to establish the role of distance between researcher as member of society and the researcher as analyst (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.37). The study's epistemological framework, critical

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[7] The reliability is the consistency of the findings and the extent to which the same results could be obtained if the same procedures were replicated. Validity explains how much the data captures what they are designed to measure, thus capacity of the sample to represent the population (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000).

realism, also supported reflexivity as it assumes that the production of knowledge is consequence of selection and interpretation.

While conducting the fieldwork and the analysis I tried to keep in mind my position as researcher and outsider. Criticism about white researchers working with ethnic minority groups has suggested that 'meaningful' data cannot be elicited because of power differences between respondent and researcher (Haw, 1996). However, I believe, the fact that we all speak from a particular standpoint, that includes our personal experience, upbringing, social settings, history and culture and thus does not necessarily imply that we can only research what is familiar to us. It rather involves taking into account the consequences of the researcher's positioning in the research itself.

There were differences between the interviews with young people and those with their parents. Young people seemed to be more used to relating to people from different ethnic/religious backgrounds. By contrast I felt, that it was fairly unusual for parents to have people from different background from theirs in the home. In a few instances, family members gathered in the room before the start of the interview looking at me with curiosity and asking many questions not only related to the study but also to my personal background: where I was from, how long I had lived in the UK, where my family was based. My dilemma at that point was whether I should answer the questions and, if so, how. The approach that I took was giving more general answers before the start of the interview and more details afterwards, in order to influence respondents as little as possible. Sometimes I felt people were waiting for my arrival as some sort of unusual event. However, I always felt very welcome: the families prepared food and offered me tea and on some occasions I ate with the participants and stayed in the house long after the end of the interviews. Some of them asked me to stay in touch and to provide them with the findings from the research.

There were some advantages, as well as disadvantages, to being an outsider. The respondents, either young people or parents, soon realised from my accent that I was not from a British background. I felt that having a foreign accent played in my favour and it helped to create a bridge between me and respondents. This was particularly true with parents with poorer English language skills, who told me they felt more comfortable with speaking to someone who was not a native English speaker.

Respondents also drew connections between their country of origin and mine, Italy, perceived as similar in terms of the importance of religion, care for the elderly, sense of the family, the emphasis on food and family meals, and a chaotic and corrupted political environment. I felt again, this benefited me as respondents thought that I was able to understand them better and showed me empathy. Another further benefit of not being from the South Asian Muslim community was the possibility of using my status and present myself as a 'naïve and neutral' outsider whose main interest was learning from them and listen to what they had to say. The idea of neutrality proved to be important because I was not associated with any of the distinctions between the different ethnic and Muslim groups and thus participants confided in me. This may not have been the case if, for instance, a Pakistani researcher had conducted the interviews with the Indian Muslims or a Shi'a with a Sunni.

Nevertheless, there were also several disadvantages in being an outsider that I had to take into account starting with difficulties in accessing the field and gaining the trust of the interviewees. There were also communication issues which made, sometimes, reciprocal understanding quite difficult. One young girl in Oldham, whose parents refused to take part in the study, said they would not have felt comfortable talking to me. The language barriers were another important limitation which prevented me from carrying out some interviews because I cannot speak Hindi, Urdu or Bengali. I only interviewed parents who had some level of English and could at least understand the questions. In a few instances parents were interviewed with a family member who acted as an interpreter. This had implications for the interview in terms of the clarity, length and particularly, it might have influenced the participants' answers. However, I knew from the beginning of the research that I had to be flexible because, in some cases, using an interpreter was the only way I had to interview participants. If I used an interpreter I made sure he/she was reporting as close as possible what the respondent was saying. I always addressed my question directly to the respondent as they could usually understand me quite well but were not able to express themselves properly in English. I also made sure it was clear that the conversation was about them and not the interpreter. My general feeling was that the respondents were quite comfortable with speaking in front of an interpreter. One father, who was not particularly fluent in English, asked his wife for help at first. However, during the course of the interview, I realised that he preferred to try to answer himself thus his wife left and at that point I

continued to interview him without the wife being present. Even though her absence affected the length of the interview I felt the husband put a lot effort into answering the questions and explaining himself the best he could. Sometimes the interaction between family members, such as husband and wife, during the interview provided relevant contextual information about family members and relationships. On more than one occasion, I managed to carry out the interview myself even if the English language skills of the respondent were not so good.

Visual methods were another way I dealt with the limitations of being an outsider and the photographs enabled me to prioritise the perspectives of young people.

Finally, I have to point out that my position changed throughout the conducting of the fieldwork and my initial feeling of being an 'outsider' gradually reduced as I became more confident in my understanding of the different cultural norms and religious values in the families.

5.8 Research Ethics

Informed consent

My fieldwork and data collection practice complied with the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (British Sociological Association, 2002) which sets out that participants should be fully informed about the aims and use of the research before deciding whether to participate or not.

Fieldwork commenced only after I had received the approval of the School of Social Work and Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of East Anglia. I ensured that participants fully understood the nature of the research, their role within it, and the intended use of the findings. Consent was negotiated at a number of stages. An initial contact letter was sent to head-teachers to explain the research and stress the anonymity and confidentiality provisions. When asking for their contribution, parents were sent a letter with details of the research. Prior to the interviews, young people and parents who volunteered were reminded about the purpose of the research and had the opportunity to raise questions and concerns. I and the participants both signed consent forms. I made sure that respondents were aware they

could terminate the interview at any time and that they were free to not answer any question they felt uncomfortable with.

Young people were also specifically asked for their written consent to enable me to use their pictures for research purposes. During the conversation with them I made a note of the images that they preferred me not to use.

Confidentiality and protection of participants

The consent form gave details about confidentiality issues. Research participants were made aware both in writing and verbally, at the start of the every interview that their personal identities would be protected and all information anonymised. Any potentially identifiable information was removed from transcripts which were labelled with serial numbers and kept securely. Moreover, as Table D2 (Appendix D) illustrates, pseudonyms were used and identifying details omitted in all interview extracts contained in the research and used for reporting trough the all thesis. Where possible, members of the same family were interviewed separately to guarantee that the anonymity of the statements was maintained and to allow them to express their opinions freely.

Participants were asked how they felt answering the questions. A letter was sent to every family which took part to thank respondents and to remind them about confidentiality and use of the findings. Key findings were also distributed to schools. I ensured that only anonymised results and findings were eventually shared with parents, teachers or carers, to protect the confidentiality of respondents.

As the research focused on individuals from a different ethnic and religious background from mine, I made sure I gained an in-depth understanding of their cultural rules and daily practices in order to avoid causing offence. The research involved investigating family life and therefore individual behaviours that participants might have regarded as personal and private. Therefore, I made every effort to ensure that they did not experience stress or embarrassment and that they felt comfortable with telling me when they did not want to answer. I felt that young participants found the interview as a new and unusual experience. In order to make them feel at ease the interviews were arranged in settings of their choice, as long as quiet and safe, where they felt

comfortable. Most of the young people were interviewed at school or home, and parents were interviewed mostly at home with the exception of two interviews conducted in their workplace.

Ethical issues and the use of photographs

The requirement of guaranteeing participants' anonymity need to be taken into account if considering dissemination of the images taken by respondents, particularly young people (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Flewitt, 2005; Masson, 2004; Wiles et al., 2008). In regard to the ethics of visual methods, the study was informed by the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association – visual sociology group (BSA, 2006). The statement provides guidelines for dealing with the connected to the dissemination of images, especially when depicting vulnerable individuals and the requirements to gain participants consent. Therefore, each participant who took photographs signed a specific consent form where they agreed to let me use the photographs taken as part of the study for the scope and purposes of the research including presentations and possible publications (including on the web). Consent forms are included in Appendix E. Some of the photos portrayed people, family or friends, who were not involved in the research. In these specific cases, consent will be re-negotiated with respondents in case of future public dissemination of the photographs.

However, in this study the photographs were used for data elicitation purposes and they do not require to be published as part of the thesis. Several young people specifically asked me to publish their photographs. However, in considering future dissemination of these images, I would really have to assess whether these participants might incur some risk of moral criticism or harm as a result of the publication (Wiles et al., 2008).

Chapter 6

Religious and national identities:

findings from the survey

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the survey conducted with 14-18 years old young people in three secondary schools in the London borough of Newham and one Sixth Form College in Oldham. The survey was exploratory in nature and aimed to provide context about young people's religious and national identities. In this regard, the survey examined young people's views on a range of issues from the importance of religion in life, religious practice, sense of belonging, religious and racial prejudice, social trust and main aspirations for the future. Additionally, the survey examined whether Marcia's model of identity statutes (Marcia, 1966) outlined in Chapter 2, can significantly contribute to the understanding of young people's identity particularly in relation to the influences coming from the family field.

The questionnaire drew from three main sources. Firstly, the questions about the sense of belonging, aspirations, volunteering, prejudice and social trust originate from the Young People Social Attitude Survey (YPSAS) (Park et al., 2003). Secondly, the question about religiosity was taken from Maltby's revised religiosity scale (Maltby & Lewis, 1996); and the final set of questions, used for the identification of identity statuses, were based on an edited version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status by Adams (Adams, 1998).

Overall, 560 young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds completed the questionnaire. However the limitations about the sampling process described in Chapter 5 do not allow generalisation and findings are restricted to the respondents in the study. Analysis has focused on comparing subgroups with a particular emphasis on the different religious groups.[8]

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[8] Please note that if the total responses for each question (n) was reported if they were consistently different from the total sample N=560.

6.1   Religious identity

The survey has examined different aspects of religious identity, beginning with whether young people defined themselves and their parents as religious and which faith or affiliation they described themselves as belonging to. The importance of religion in life, religious practice, and the relationship between parents and young people's religious affiliation was also examined. Based on questions about religiosity, this section also examines some of the reasons why young people, who defined themselves as religious, practiced their religion and prayed.

Importance of religion

Evidence from the survey suggests that religion was prominent for a high proportion of the respondents. Seventy two per cent of the 504 participants who answered the question considered religion as important in their lives, whilst only 16 per cent of them said religion was not important and 13 per cent felt religion was neither important nor unimportant.

There were significant differences about the importance of religion across different religious groups. Muslim respondents were much more likely than any other religious group to consider religion as important in their lives as illustrated by Figure 6.1 (Chi-Square=2.212E2; P<0.01; N=498). Conversely, Christians were more likely than the other groups to describe religion as not important. When looking more closely at the South Asian Muslim group, which represented the 33 per cent of the respondents[9], the importance of religion in life remained very high and almost all South Asian Muslims (97 per cent) reported that religion had a prominent role in life.

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[9] Some of the South Asian Indians were not Muslims as detailed in Appendix C.

Figure 6.1: Importance of religion by religious group (%)

Figure 6.1: Importance of religion by religious group (%)
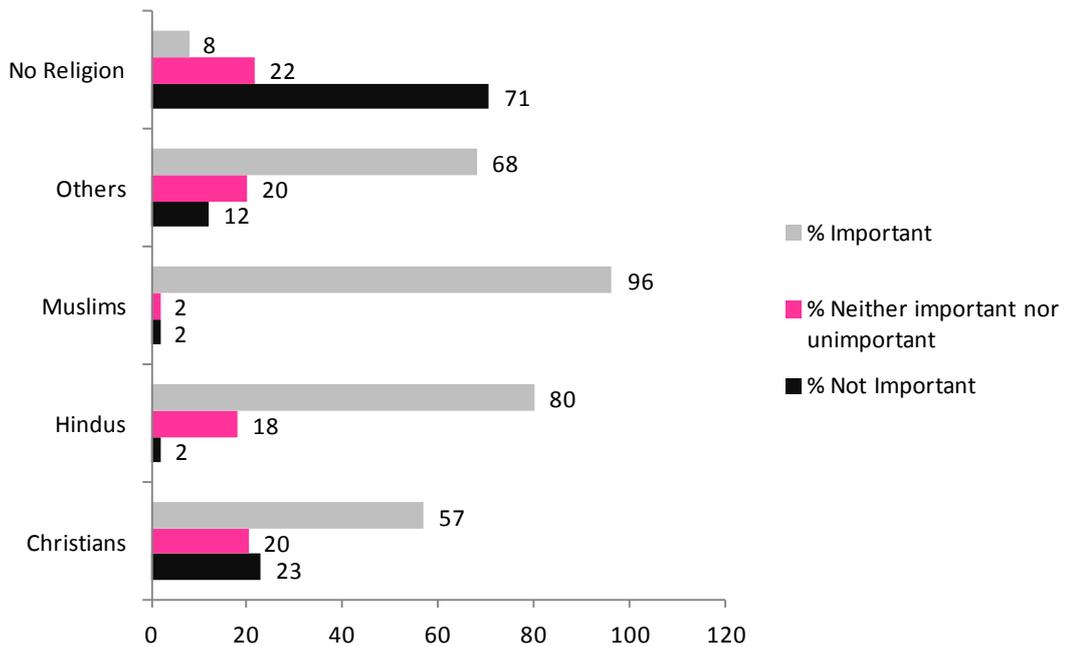
N= 498

The high importance of religion for South Asian Muslims converges with the trend previously identified by both The 1994 Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities and the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey. The 1994 Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities provided evidence that Muslims tend to prioritise religion amongst other aspects of identity and found the *'primacy of religion in self-description in personal contexts for South Asian Muslims'* (Modood et al., 1997, p.293). The 2001 Citizenship Survey confirmed that religion was for Muslim people amongst the two most important factors in their self-description together with family (O'Beirne, 2004, p.20).

In contrast, these findings about the high proportion of young people describing themselves as religious and attributing high importance to religion in life diverge from the national trend identified by the Young People Social Attitude Survey (YPSAS) in 2003. The YPSAS, based on a sample of 663 young people aged 12-19 years old, found that about two-thirds of them did not associate themselves with any religion (Park et al., 2003, p.37). The differences on perspectives between the current survey and the YPSAS relate to the differences in the sample composition. The national YPSA sample was predominantly white with over a quarter of the respondents from Christian

religious background[10] (Park et al., 2003). Conversely in the current survey, amongst the 543 who answered the question about their religious affiliation, 44 per cent described themselves as Muslim, 30 per cent Christian, 10 per cent Hindu, 5 per cent from other religious backgrounds and 11 per cent described themselves as not having any religious background (Appendix C provides detailed description of the sample). The ethnic composition of the sample showed that 22 per cent of the respondents regarded themselves as from White British ethnic background, 43 per cent as South Asians, 10 per cent as Black Africans; 7 per cent as Other Asians; 5 per cent as White Other and 4 per cent as Black Caribbean and Mixed background. The majority of Christians (40 per cent) were from a White British background and the majority of Muslims (79 per cent) were from the three South Asian groups. The three South Asian groups represented the majority of the Muslim respondents, while the majority of Christians were White British followed by Black Africans as shown by Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Ethnicity by religious affiliation (% rows)

	Asian Indian	Asian Pakistani	Asian Bangladeshi	Other Asian	Black Caribbean	Black African	White British	White Other	Other	Mixed Background	N Total
Christian	1	~	1	2	10	20	40	11	10	6	161
Hindu	66	~	~	27	~	~	~	~	7	~	56
Muslim	7	38	33	7	~	9	~	~	3	2	234
Other	34	~	~	~	7	~	24	10	17	7	29
No Religion	~	~	~	2	3	2	76	5	2	10	58
N Total	64	90	78	36	20	53	117	25	33	22	538

N=538

Alongside the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities and the 2001 Citizenship Survey, the current survey has confirmed that the ethnic and religious composition of the sample, with a high proportion of South Asian Muslims, affected the findings about the relatively higher importance of religion. Within the wider debate about youth and

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10 In the YPSAS nine in ten respondents described themselves as white; while five per cent were Asian, two per cent Black, and three per cent of mixed origin. (Park et. al., 2003, p.10)

religion detailed in Chapter 4, the importance of religion for Muslim young people challenges well established perspectives about the decreasing religiosity amongst youths (Collins-Mayo & Dandelion, 2010). In this regard, the implication is that youth should be looked as a diverse and complex category, which is constructed under specific influences coming from the social world.

Religious practice

Young people were asked how often they attended religious services, which is to say how often they go to the church, the mosque, the temple or the synagogue etc. Overall 498 respondents answered this question and 41 per cent of them reported attending religious services once a week; 12 per cent less than once a week; 6 per cent less than once a month and 24 per cent on special occasions while 17 per cent never practiced any religion.

There was a significant association between the frequency of attendance to religious services and the importance that young people attributed to religion. Almost all the respondents (97 per cent) who said religion was important were also attending religious services often and at least once a week (Chi Square= 188.5889; P<0.01; N=474). This relationship, between the relevance of religion in life and the attendance of religious services, is important for understanding individual interpretation and meaning attributed to religion. It shows that young people perceived the practice of religion as a crucial part of their religious identity, rather than looking at religion only in spiritual terms, which is to say as a set of guiding moral values and beliefs. Chapter 10 will provide qualitative insights into the role of beliefs and religious practice in the construction of a religious identity.

Belonging to a particular religious group was associated with how often young people attended religious services. The 2008-09 Citizenship Survey found that Muslim people were practicing more often than other religious groups: 80 per cent of Muslim young people in the UK actively practiced their religion compared to 32 per cent of Christians) (Ferguson & Hussey, 2010). Alongside these findings the current survey also suggests that Muslim young people, for whom religion was more important than for any other group, were the most likely to attend religious services (Chi-Square 94.792; P<0.01;

N=493) whilst Christians were amongst all religious groups the least likely to practice (or they practice very rarely).

Figure 6.2: Attendance to religious services by religious affiliation (%)
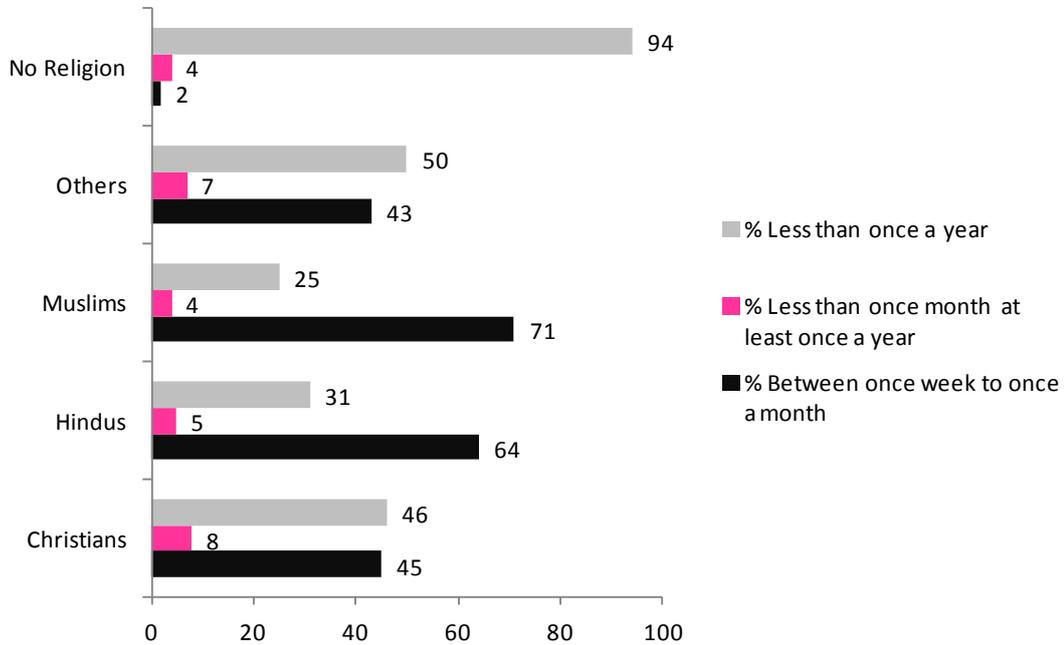
N=493

As discussed above, the particular ethnic and religious composition of the sample, with a high proportion of South Asian Muslims, led to substantial differences in comparison with other national trends about young people's attitudes toward religious practice. More specifically, these findings about the high frequency of religious practice differed from the YPSAS (2003) which, with a mostly white non religious sample, provided evidence of the weakening religiosity amongst young people. According to some scholars, the declining religiosity is particularly affecting Christians in many western countries and this phenomenon is referred to as the *'secularization of modern societies'* (Gilbert, 1980; Scourfield, Taylor, Moore, & Glliat-Ray, 2012). The YPSAS (2003) found that only 9 per cent of the young people attended religious services once a week, whilst the majority did not report having a religion (64 per cent) or never attended religious services (14 per cent) (Park et. al., 2003, p.37).

Importantly, there were significant gender differences in the frequency of attendance to religious services. In the current survey 59 per cent of Muslims were boys and 41 per cent were girls while, the majority of Christians and non religious were girls (63 per

cent of girls compared to 37 per cent of boys amongst Christians and 71 per cent compared to 29 per cent amongst the non religious group). Boys were much more likely to attend religious services between once a week and once a month than girls: 70 per cent of the boys in the survey practiced between once a week and once a month compared to 37 per cent of girls (Chi-Square=54.914; P<0.01; N=498). These differences between boys and girls can be explained by the gendered requirements in the attendance of religious services. For instance, in Islam men are expected to go to the Mosque weekly while women are not required to do so (Schimmel, 1992).

The intergenerational transmission of religion

Young people were asked whether they thought their parents were religious and 500 of them answered this question. It emerged that patterns of religiosity of young people and their parents tended to converge and young people, who described their family as religious, also considered religion to be very important in their own lives.

Sixty five per cent of the respondents described their family as religious and there was a significant association between describing the family as religious and the importance attributed to religion in life. Ninety two per cent of the participants who described their family as religious also reported that religion was important in their lives (Chi Square=186.50; P<0.01; N=480). This convergence was not as strong for respondents who described their parents as not religious and more than a third of them (34 per cent) still felt that religion was somehow important in their lives (while 42 per cent of them reported that religion was not important and 24 per cent said that religion was neither important nor unimportant) (Chi-Square=186.50; P<0.01; N=480).

Additionally, the survey results suggest that young people tended to adopt their parents' religion. Therefore, 99 per cent of Muslim young people said their father was from Muslim religious background; 98 per cent of Hindu young people said their father was also Hindu. Interestingly, this pattern was slightly different for young people who described themselves as non religious: 77 per cent of them said their father was also not religious, while 15 per cent still reported their father as being from Christian religious background. There were notable differences within the Christian group: 88 per cent of Christian participants described their father as Christian, which is slightly less than the proportions found for the other religious groups; 7 per cent of these Christian

young people said their father was not religious and 4 per cent said their father belong to other religions (Chi Square 1403.969; P<0.01; N=516).

As with fathers, the religious affiliation of young people tended to be similar to their mothers' religion (Chi Square 1627.047; P<0.01; N=531): 99 per cent of Muslim young people said their mother was from Muslim religious background; 95 per cent of Christian respondents described their mother as Christian; 96 per cent of Hindu young people said their mother was Hindu. Also in the case of the mother's religion, young people who described themselves as non religious followed a slightly different pattern. Seventy seven per cent of them said their mother was not religious while 18 per cent reported their mother as being from a Christian religious background. Therefore, young respondents whose parents were from a Christian religious background were more likely than respondents from others religious groups to describe themselves as not religious. This finding relates to what was said before in the chapter about Christians practicing less often and being less likely to refer to religion as relevant for their self-identification.

Religiosity: young people motivations behind being religious

The survey included a question based on a revised version of the religiosity scale by Malty and Lewis (Maltby & Lewis, 1996). The main reason for introducing the religiosity question was to gain insights about some aspects of religious identity such as motivations and orientations toward religion. As detailed in Appendix B, religiosity scales are based on self-report measures and were firstly developed to assess the level and type of motivations toward religion, particularly to test whether attitudes toward religion are mainly *extrinsic* or *intrinsic* (e.g. Francis & Stubbs, 1987; C. A. Lewis, Maltby, & Day, 2005; Maltby & Lewis, 1996). It is suggested that individuals with extrinsic religiosity, use religion as a means to fill self-serving needs, thus they have an instrumental approach to religion (Ji & Ibrahim, 2007). In contrast, individuals with intrinsic orientation toward religion consider religion itself as a driving force in their life and thus accommodate other needs around it (Ibid). Appendix B gives further details about the religiosity scale in this survey.

In the survey, young people were asked whether these 9 statements about attitudes toward religion applied to them. Following the analysis conducted by Malty and Lewis

(1996), factor analysis and reliability test were carried out to explore whether the nine statements could be meaningfully summarised by a smaller number of factors (See Appendix C) (Field, 2009). Principal component analysis was adopted for the factors' extraction and two factors that explained together a large amount of the total variance (43 per cent) were identified. The Cronbach's α test of reliability was respectively 0.6 and 0.5 for the intrinsic and extrinsic scales. Therefore, these findings suggested that the two extracted factors provided a meaningful summary of the data.

Further analysis in the form of *One way ANOVA* (Field, 2009) focused on comparing different religious groups and their orientations to religion and suggested that Muslim respondents were more likely to have intrinsic orientations than any other group. In order to explore in more depth if there were significant differences amongst religious groups in the ways they answered each item, the Chi-Square test was carried out (Field, 2009). Sixty-one per cent of the respondents felt they enjoyed spending time in private thought and prayer; while 65 per cent of them enjoyed reading about their religion. Muslims were the most likely to feel either that it was important to spend time in private thought and prayer (61 per cent compared to 23 per cent of Christians; Chi Square=98.129; $P<0.01$; N=431) or to read about their religion (85 per cent of them compared to 41 per cent of Christians; Chi Square= 144.574; $P<0.01$; N=444). Two other intrinsic aspects of religious motivation were important to the respondents who saw religion in introspective terms as a means in itself bringing together and harmonizing other aspects of life. Firstly, religion was strongly valued because it helped to answer questions about the meaning of life (69 per cent); secondly, 41 per of the respondents also felt that the statement *'my whole approach to life is based on my religion'* applied to them. Importantly, in line with the previous finding about the higher importance of religion for Muslim respondents, Muslims were also the most likely to say that religion was important because it offered meaning to their lives (91 per cent of them compared to 50 per cent of Christians; Chi Square= 159.279; $P<0.01$; N=442) and that their all approach to life was somehow shaped by their religious beliefs (61 per cent compared to 24 per cent of Christians; Chi Square= 126.188; $P<0.01$; N=438).

The One way ANOVA's results for the extrinsic subscale were not as consistent and religious groups tended to answer in similar ways to the statements characterising this subscale. In this sense, they had similar levels of extrinsic orientations toward religion.

However, the Chi Square analysis for each single item elucidates on important aspects of the extrinsic attitudes to religion. The first extrinsic item concerned with whether young people's attitude toward religion was affected by external judgments and public opinion and answered this question. It emerged that 86 per cent of the 434 respondents who answered this question, felt that the statement *'sometimes I have to ignore my religious beliefs because of what people think of me'* did not apply to them. Amongst other extrinsic motivations, there was a stronger sense of religion as crucial in offering support during difficult times. Of the 431 who answered this question, 56 per cent felt that *'what religion offered them the most was comfort in times of troubles'* and Muslims were the most likely group to agree with this statement (66 per cent of them compared to 50 per cent of Christians; Chi Square=68.048; P<0.01; N=431). Half of the respondents (49 per cent) disagreed with another statement *'I pray just because I was taught so'*, which reflects another extrinsic aspect of religious identity. However, there were significant differences amongst the religious groups and Muslim respondents were the most likely to agree with the statement that they prayed because they have been taught to: 55 per cent of them agreed compared to 28 per cent of Christians (Chi Square= 63.353; P<0.01; N=436). This particular finding suggests that Muslim young people were subjected to influences coming from external social fields. The following Chapters 7, 8 and 9, will explore in more depth these external influences particularly in relationship to the family field.

Non-Muslim young people appeared more concerned with behaving well regardless the origin of their moral criteria underlying their behaviour: only the 23 per cent of Christians disagreed with the statement *'it doesn't matter what I believe as long as I'm good'* compared to 64 per cent of Muslims (Chi-Square=75.155; P<0.01; N=437). The role of religion in shaping the sense of morality and behaviour was particularly relevant for Muslim young people and it will be object of analysis in Chapter 7 which focuses on the origin of this sense of morality by mapping the process of intergenerational transmission of values.

Religion was not seen by young people as contributing to extending their social networks. Three quarters (76 per cent) of the 436 respondents did not see religion as *'a mean to make new friends'*. In addition, young people were also previously asked about whether their friends were more or less religious than themselves. Thirty-seven per

cent of the 505 respondents who answered this question said they were as religious as their friends, while 19 per cent said they were more religious than their friends and 21 per cent less religious than their friends (23 per cent answered no applicable).

In brief, differences in the religiosity of Muslim and non Muslims were evident and the pattern of intrinsic orientation was stronger for the Muslim group. This is to say that Muslims regarded religion as a guiding principle shaping different aspects of their life, which links with the previous findings about the importance of Islam and the indication that Muslims prioritise religion more than the other groups.

6.2 National identity and citizenship

National identity and citizenship, in reference to young people, have been discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. This section covers a number of topics related to young people's national identity beginning with their national self-identification. It then examines some aspects of the concept of citizenship, considered in this thesis a fundamental component of national identity. In this context, the sense of belonging to Britain, civic engagement, social trust and perception of prejudice in the UK are explored.

National identity

Overall 483 young people answered the question about their national identity, which is 86 per cent of all the respondents in the survey. About a half of them (49 per cent) described their national identity as British; 21 per cent of the participants described themselves as English, 5 per cent as European; 3 per cent as African; 2 per cent as Pakistani or Asian; 17 per cent reported other national identities.

There was a significant association between belonging to a particular religious and ethnic group and the way young people defined their national identity. Minority ethnic groups, like minority religious groups, were more likely to associate themselves with British rather than English national identity. As shown in Table 6.2 below, the majority of those who described their national identity as English were from White British background (Chi Square= 1.740E2; P<0.01; N=477).

Table 6.2: National identity by Ethnicity (% rows)

	British	English	Other	N Total
Asian Indian	62	14	24	63
Asian Pakistani	70	5	25	77
Asian Bangladeshi	60	12	28	67
Other Asian	42	16	42	31
Black Caribbean	50	22	28	18
Black African	44	4	51	47
White British	38	57	6	104
White Other	9	9	83	23
Other	42	~		26
Mixed Background	33	24	43	21
N Total	235	98	144	477

N=477

Importantly, these findings about national identity reflect a similar pattern identified by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) (2005). The CRE report outlined how most White English in their study saw themselves as English, whilst it highlighted that the participants who identified most strongly with Britishness were those from ethnic minority backgrounds resident in England (ETHNOS, 2005). The CRE report explored the meaning of Britishness into more depth and found that its roots stem from *'the historical, political, economic, social, ideological and cultural reality'* (ETHNOS, 2005, p.11). Based on evidence from focus groups with people from different ethnic backgrounds, the CRE report found that minority ethnic groups associated the term Britishness with '*a symbolic space'* which is more than nationality or citizenship and reflected *'the coming together of very diverse people'* (ETHNOS, 2005, p.38). In other words, English identity and British identities were perceived as opposing singleness to plurality: with English signifying the local and indigenous and British identity symbolizing the diverse and multicultural (Ibid).

In the current study, Muslim young people were more likely than any other religious groups to describe their national identity as British (Chi Square= 59.045a; P<0.01; N=478). Of the 236 respondents who defined themselves as British, over a half (51 per cent) were from Muslim religious background compared to 24 per cent of Christians as shown in the table below.

Table 6.3: National identity by religious affiliation (% rows)

	British	English	Other	N total
Christian	38	32	30	146
Hindu	52	14	34	56
Muslim	60	8	32	200
Other	39	15	46	26
No Religion	42	46	12	50
N Total	236	97	145	478

N=478

The association of Muslims with the British identity is particularly relevant within the debate about national identity and belonging, which has been characterised by the pre-conception that the priority of religion as a source of identification for British Muslims could lower their sense of belonging to Britain (e.g. Choudhury, 2007; ETHNOS, 2005 ,p.38; Mirza et al., 2007, p.37). In contrast, results from this survey suggest that young British Muslims identified with British identity. The following sections about citizenship and belonging elucidate further about what the identification with *British* implied, while the qualitative findings will provide deeper insights into the construction of a Muslim British identity by focusing on the process of negotiating multiple identities detailed in Chapters 9 and 10.

Different reasons may lie behind the association of Muslims with British identity, starting with the fact that the survey targeted young people aged 14-18 years old who were mostly second generation migrants and thus UK born. Generally, the country of birth is a major determinant of national identification as confirmed by the analysis of the relationship between the country of birth and national identity which indicates that young people associate their national identity with the country of their birth. Unsurprisingly, young people who were born in the UK, regardless of their religious or ethnic background, were much more likely to describe their national identity as British than those who were not born in the UK (89 per cent of those who described themselves as British were born in the UK compared to 11 per cent on non British born). Secondly, in interpreting these findings about national identity, it is also important to take into account the context of the schools where the research was carried out. As pointed out by the schools and college when they agreed to take part in the study, one of the reasons to engage with the research was the relevance of issues about race and religion within the context of multicultural education. Therefore the

social environment of the targeted schools might have affected the way young people interpreted and responded to the questions.

In conclusion, underlying the identification with English and British identities there are '*power relations*' associated with ethnicity, religion, class, age, generation and gender (ETHNOS, 2005, p.11). These multiple factors affected the sense of British and English identity and implied differences in the sense of belonging, so that young people in the survey wanted to be associated with one identity or the other.

Citizenship and sense of belonging

Young people were asked how strongly they felt they belong to, respectively, their neighbourhood, they city or town; the UK; their country of origin (if not Britain); their religious group and their ethnic group. Figure 6.3 below summarises responses to this question.

Figure 6.3: Senses of belonging (%)
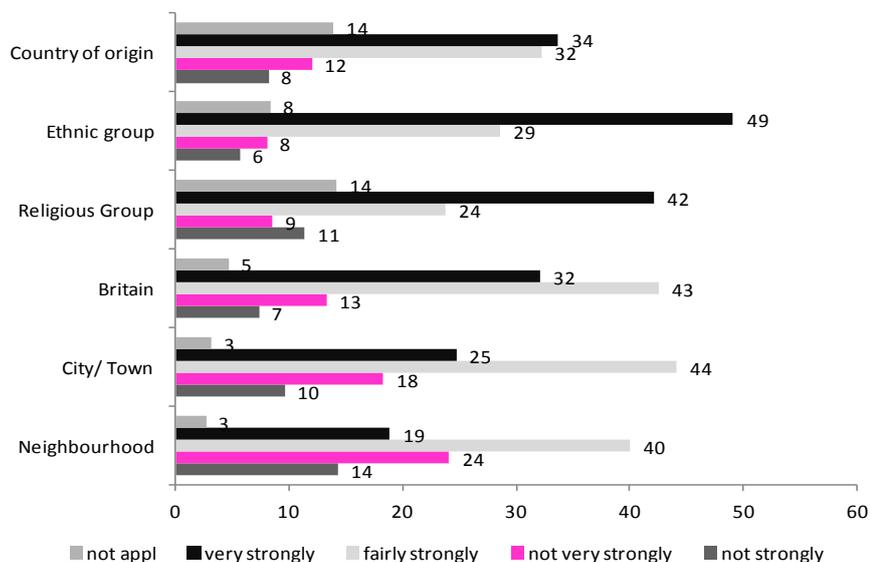
N=416 (country origin); 332 (ethnic group), 466 (religious group); 473 (Britain); 469 (religious group); 477 (neighbourhood)

The '*local sense of belonging*' of young people was strong for both the neighbourhood (59 per cent of young people felt they belong to the neighbourhood) and city or town (69 per cent). There were no statistically significant differences in the sense of belonging to the neighbourhood, city or town amongst respondents in Oldham and London.

Young people's national sense of belonging was also strong and overall 75 per cent of respondents expressed a sense of belonging to Britain irrespective of their religion or ethnic backgrounds. Once again, differences between respondents in Oldham and London were not significant in the context of the national sense of belonging.

Sixty-six per cent of the respondents felt they belong to their religious group and country of origin while and just over three quarter (78 per cent of them) felt they belong very strongly to their ethnic group.

There were some significant differences amongst religious groups and Muslims were the religious group who expressed the strongest sense of belonging to multiple affiliations. They were the most likely to say they belong *very strongly* to:

- Their neighbourhood (66 per cent compared to 20 per cent of Christians; 7 per cent of Hindus; 5 per cent of the respondents t from no religious background and 3 per cent of those form other religious backgrounds (Chi-Square= 64.398; P<0.01; N=473).

- Their country of origin (other than the UK): 50 per cent of them reported so, compared to 30 per cent of Christians; 12 per cent of Hindus, 6 per cent of respondents from other religious background and 3 per cent of the respondents from no religious background (Chi-Square=57.741; P<0.01; N=413).

- Their religious group: 66 per cent said so, compared to 18 per cent of Christians; 11 per cent of Hindus; 4 per cent of respondents from other religious backgrounds and 1 per cent of those from no religious backgrounds (Chi-Square= 205.012; P<0.01; N=413).

The strong sense of belonging of Muslim young people to multiple alliances provides important background and set the context to the themes discussed in the following chapters, particularly Chapters 9 and 10, which focus on the negotiation of multiple identities.

Findings from the survey highlight a polarization between Muslim and Christian respondents: the majority of Christians felt a low sense of belonging to their religious group: 65 per cent of them (N=462) did not feel a strong sense of belonging to their

religious group. This low sense of belonging of Christians to their religious group can be placed into the much wider theoretical context of the *'secularization of Christianity'* (e.g. Brown, 2000; Gilbert, 1980; Mascall, 1965; Norman, 2002). As Gilbert (1980) argued, Britain has become what he called a post-Christian society where Christianity has not exactly departed but has become *'utterly marginal'* and where *'to be irreligious is normal'* (Gilbert, 1980, p.XI).

Citizenship: civic engagement and trust

The interest in politics is a relevant factor for the conceptualization of citizenship and was addressed in this survey through to the role of parents in influencing young people's political ideas, as discussed in the following section of this chapter.

Not all the respondents in this study had reached the age that allowed them to vote. Therefore, based on The YPSAS (Park et al., 2003, pp.15-20) young people were asked about civic engagement, through a question about volunteering. Overall 466 respondents answered this question and half of them (50 per cent) reported they were involved in some voluntary work for different groups, organization or clubs. There were no significant differences amongst respondents from different religious and ethnic groups involved in volunteering.

Social trust is another important factor within the analysis of citizenship. This survey has revealed low levels of social trust amongst the young people, which is in line with the 2003 YPSAS's finding that less than a quarter of the young people nationally reported they trusted other people (Park et al., 2003). However, the measure of trust used in the YPSAS was very general[11] (Park et al., 2003, p.42) and this study sought to investigate the level of trust toward specific organisations or groups. Therefore, young people were asked whether they trusted their family, friends, the members of their religious group, people from their neighbourhood, religious leaders, their school and the government.

Overall 94 per cent of respondents reported trusting their family and three quarter (74 per cent) of them said that they trusted their family completely; in this case there were no significant differences across religious and ethnic groups or gender. Three quarters

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[11] The question in the YPSAS was: '*Generally speaking would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?*' (Park et al., 2003, p.42)

trusted their religious groups (75 per cent) and their neighbourhood (76 per cent). Ninety eight per cent trusted their friends 85 per cent reported trusting their school. Young people's level of trust toward the government (57 per cent) was particularly low as shown in the table below.

Table 6.4: Young people's levels of trust (%)

	Not at all	A bit	A fair amount	Completely	Not applicable	N
Trust their family	2	3	17	74	3	482
Trust their friends	2	14	55	29	~	479
Trust their religious group	10	24	35	16	14	469
Trust their religious leaders	18	22	25	27	8	461
Trust people in the neighborhood	20	36	32	9	3	473
Trust their school/College	13	30	40	15	2	472
Trust the Government	39	34	19	4	4	473

There were significant differences in the levels of trust and amongst those who trusted their religious groups completely. Muslim respondents were much more likely to trust members of their religious group completely: 66 per cent of those who trusted their religious leaders a completely were Muslims compared to 22 per cent of Christians who did so (Chi Square= 1,677E2; P<0.01; N=466). Muslims were also more likely to trust their religious leaders more than other groups: 72 per cent of those who trusted their religious leaders completely were Muslims compared to 13 per cent of Christians (Chi-Square=1.150E2; P<0.01; N=458).

Some differences between the level of trust of boys and girls were also significant and amongst those who trusted their religious group completely 61 per cent were boys and 39 per cent were girls (Chi-Square=40.035; P<0.01; N=469). Boys also accounted for 71 per cent of those who trusted their religious leaders completely compared to 29 per cent of the girls (Chi-Square = 42.119; P<0.01; N=461).

Finally, it appeared that living in a bigger city such as London reduced respondents' level of trust towards other people in the neighbourhood: London respondents were much more likely not to trust people in their neighbourhood than respondents living in Oldham. Amongst those who did not trust people in their neighbourhood at all 95 per cent lived in London compared to 5 per cent in Oldham; Chi-Square=147.264; P<0.01; N=473).

Racial and religious prejudice

Overall there was the strong perception amongst the young people in the survey, irrespective of their gender, religious group and ethnicity, that racial and religious prejudices are still present in Britain today. About three quarters (74 per cent) of the 476 respondents who answered the question, felt there was racial prejudice in Britain, with 28 per cent of them saying that there was a lot of racial prejudice. Similarly, 69 per cent of 472 participants who answered the question, felt religious prejudice in Britain was high and 23 per cent of them stated that there was a lot of religious prejudice.

These findings imply that the perception about religious and racial prejudice in Britain was a common concern across all the respondents in the survey who expressed similar views independently of their religious and ethnic background. In contrast, the national picture depicted by the YPSAS in 2003 was very different with 82 per cent of the young people saying there was not prejudice at all against those from other races (Park et. al., 2003, p. 48).

Aspirations and predictors of success in life

In order to explore values and beliefs of young people that are relevant for their identity, the participants in the survey were asked whether they agree or disagree with a number of statements from the YPSAS (2003) about their ambitions and ideas of success in life[12].

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[12] The questions 9 and 10 of the questionnaire, respectively about the predictors of success in life and aspirations, drew from Q242 and Q247 of the YPSA survey (2003).

Particularly, young people were asked to rate the three most important aspirations for their future. Over half (57 per cent) of the 528 who answered the question, considered *being happy* the first most important ambition in life. This was consistent with national findings from the YPSAS 2003 (Park et.al 2003, p.83-84) which indicated that half of the respondents considered happiness their main ambition. The other important aspirations identified by respondents were having good health (16 per cent), having a good job (11 per cent) and being successful at work (7 per cent). Differences by religious group, ethnicity and gender were not statistically significant for this particular question, which implied that all young people in the survey shared similar life priorities regardless of their ethnic background and religious affiliation.

Young people were also asked to rate how important several factors were in predicting success in life. Similarly to the YPSAS (2003), almost all the participants recognised that having an education (97 per cent) and working hard (96 per cent) were the two essential determinants of success. Also in this case there were no significant differences by gender, religion and ethnicity.

Additionally, about a third (30 per cent) of the respondents said that coming from a wealthy family was not important to succeed in life and, similarly to the YPSAS (2003), most of the respondents (76 per cent) felt that race was not an important factor predicting success in life. Overall 70 per cent of the respondents did not think gender affected the chances of success. However, there were significant differences between boys and girls and amongst those who said that gender is not important to succeed in life 60 per cent were girls 40 per cent boys (Chi Square= 43.272, P<0.01; N=528).

In brief, these last results from the survey indicated young people's attitudes towards success, their concerns about discrimination and levels of social trust encompassed religious and cultural differences.

6.1 Identity statuses: the role of parents in young people's identity development

Based on the identity status paradigm, this last section seeks to identify the level of influence that parents have had on young people's perception of a range of topics including their social relationships, values, politics or aspirations.

Marcia and the identity status paradigm

According to the identity status paradigm, developed by Marcia (1966), young people with exploratory identities tend to make more independent choices, whilst having committed identities leads to relying more strongly on parents or other role models.

There is a wide body of empirical research that applied Marcia's paradigm to the analysis of ethnic and religious identity (e.g. Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, & Meeus, 2008a, p.985; Graf et al., 2008; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). However, the identification of a unitary pattern is difficult and research findings are divergent reflecting problems in explaining the complex relation between ethnicity, religion and identity statuses (Phinney, 1990 in Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008). These difficulties have been largely attributed to the impact of social conditions on identity status (Graf et al., 2008).

Religious groups and identity statuses: an application of Marcia's identity statuses model

In this study, participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 how much they agreed or disagreed with 20 statements about different topics including respectively: politics, gender roles, friendship, dating and their expectations for the future. As detailed in Appendix B, these questions were based on a revised version the Objective Measure of Ego Identity (OMEIS) (Adams, 1998), a self-report measure of identity formation based on Marcia's identity status paradigm.

Following Adam's (1998) analysis framework, factor analysis was carried out to explore patterns in the data and reduce 20 statements about young people's attitudes into a smaller number of factors (Appendix C). The interpretation of the preliminary analysis that was carried out, including the scree plot, suggested that a model of four factors was a meaningful summary of the patterns in the data. The method used to extract the factors was Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which was conducted on the 20 items with an orthogonal rotation (Field, 2009, p.644). The combination of four components of this final model explained 45 per cent of the total variance and the items that clustered in the same component suggested that the 1st component represented the moratorium identity status; the 2nd component the foreclosed identity status; the 3rd component the achievement identity status and the 4th component the diffusion

identity status. However, the pattern in the data was stronger for the foreclosed identity status and less significant for the other statuses reflecting the difficulties in applying Marcia's model to a very ethnically diverse sample.

Table 6.5: Results from Factor Analysis

	F1	F2	F3	F4
Foreclosed				
About politics, I follow my parents' ideas	-.018	**.615**	-.104	.088
My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents' ideas	.053	**.561**	.105	.013
My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends	.114	**.708**	.181	.005
I would only date the type of people my parents expect me to	.003	**.692**	.050	.141
I would only date the type of people my parents expect me to	.080	**.730**	-.123	.163
Diffused				
I haven't thought much about politics so far	.028	.393	-.293	-.470
I have never really thought about men's and women's roles in a marriage	-.114	.256	-.131	.491
I don't know on what basis I should choose my friends	-.019	.306	-.244	.483
I'm not concerned with having a boyfriend /girlfriend at this point of my life	-.023	.267	-.066	.328
I haven't really thought about what I want to do in my future	.053	.141	-.689	.230
Moratorium				
I'm trying to figure out what will be the right political belief for me	**.318**	-.038	-.097	.496
I'm now developing my own ideas on men's and women's roles in a marriage	**.744**	-.065	-.098	.060
I'm exploring different ways to find the right friends for me	**.630**	.085	-.136	.188
About dating, I started thinking about what person will be the right one for me	**.698**	.051	-.019	-.072
I am trying to decide what will be the best thing to do in the future	**.433**	-.005	.364	.174
Achievement				
I have clear political beliefs	.071	.044	**.259**	.633
I now developed my own ideas on men's and women's roles in a marriage	.724	-.021	**.125**	.063
I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend	.513	.161	**.329**	-.110
I know now what I'm looking for in a relationship	.631	.094	**.242**	-.114
I know exactly what I want to do in the future	.170	.198	**.747**	.119
Percent of variance explained	17	13	8	7
Eigenvalues	3.4	2.7	1.6	1.4
α	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.4

Following the identification of the four factors further analysis (One way ANOVA and Post hoc test) was carried out to explore whether there were consistent differences in the identity statuses of the religious groups as detailed in Appendix C.

Foreclosed identity

Having a foreclosed type of identity implies a low level of exploration and high levels of commitment and therefore involves being particularly subjected to external views and influences. Results suggested that Muslim young people identified more strongly with the foreclosed identity status compared to the other religious groups. In other words,

Muslim young people in the survey appeared to be more strongly influenced than other groups by their parents' views on gender roles, friendship, dating, aspirations and politics.

Diffused identity

Young people with diffused identities were neither relying on role models nor exploring different possibilities to find out about the issues investigated in this question: politics, gender role, friendship, dating and aspirations. The diffused group appeared the most avoidant and young people who identified with this identity status did not show interest or initiative in developing their opinions further.

In this case, the analysis found some significant differences between Muslim young people and people from other religious backgrounds and from no religious backgrounds and Muslims reflected the characteristics of the diffused identity status more strongly than these two other groups. This finding seemed most likely to mirror a polarization between more and less religious young people while differences amongst Muslim, Hindu and Christian young people were not significant in this specific case.

Achieved identity & Moratorium identity

The results for achieved and moratorium identity statuses were not very consistent. Differences amongst religious groups were not significant for both these identity statuses, which share the common feature of being both high exploratory types of identity. This finding implies that religious groups in the sample had identities with similar levels of exploration.

Conclusions

The survey has provided an overview of important topic areas that contextualize the themes described in the following chapters. Firstly, in line with other research findings, this survey has confirmed that religion is central in the self-definition of Muslim young people in comparison to the other religious groups. This result is reinforced by findings about Muslim young people practicing more often and trusting their religious group and leaders more than other groups and, as a consequence, the sense of belonging of Muslim young people to their religious group was also stronger. Importantly, these

findings reflect a polarization between more religious Muslim young people and less religious Christians who were less likely to practice, trust their religious leader or consider religion important in their lives. In the wider theoretical context of the theories about the secularization of modern society (Gilbert, 1980) findings from the survey reflect on the patterns affecting different affiliations and groups within the same neighbourhood and community.

Secondly, Muslim young people tended to follow an intrinsic orientation to religion and therefore they were guided by the belief that Islam was an important determinant of their whole approach to life providing them with a source of meaning. Results from the survey indicate that religious beliefs offered essential guidance and influenced the behaviour of Muslim young people more than other religious groups. These other religious groups disentangled morality and religion and agreed that *'it doesn't matter what a person's beliefs are, as long as he/she behaves well'*. Muslim young people also felt more strongly than others that together with believing, practicing their religion was an important dimension of religious identity. The negotiation of practice and beliefs and its importance for the construction of a religious identity is an important theme discussed in Chapter 9.

Thirdly, the primacy of religion as a source of self-definition did not diminish young Muslims' sense of belonging to Britain and national identification as British. Within the contingencies related to the sample composition discussed in the chapter, it emerged that, Muslim young people were more likely to define themselves as British than respondents from any other religious group. The qualitative findings in Chapters 9 and 10, will provide deeper insights into this important finding which challenges perceptions about the primacy of religious identity for Muslim young people as a threat to their sense of belonging to Britain.

Fourthly, findings suggest that young Muslims were subject more than other religious groups, to the influences coming from the family field when making decisions and developing their views on a range of issues such as gender roles, politics, dating and future aspirations. Therefore, their identities reflected higher levels of commitment to external teachings and role models and lower levels of personal exploration, as suggested by the fact that they described their main reason for praying as *'because they were taught so'*.

However, the survey results mirror the problems, already encountered by other studies, with applying Marcia's paradigm to diverse ethnic and religious samples. Previous studies have identified two contrasting patterns defining the identity statuses of religious groups. In line with this survey, other research studies have come to the conclusion that ethnic minority and religious groups tend to have foreclosed identities with a low level of exploration and high level of commitment (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008a; Graf et al., 2008). This pattern has been explained by the fact that religious families emphasised strongly the sense of loyalty and obligation (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008b). Conversely, some other studies found that religious people may have moratorium identities, characterised by low commitment and high exploration (Crocetti, Rubini, & Meeus, 2008a). This second pattern is exemplified by young people evaluating cultural and religious values in comparison to the collective values they apprehend in society, which implies *'having to consider and reconsider different identity alternatives'* (Saroglou & Galand, 2004, p.993).

Marcia's notions of exploration and commitment underlying the four identity statuses reflect the dualism between young people's opportunities to explore and choose amongst different options as well as the social and structural constraints that may prevent these choices. This dualism between choice/exploration and constraint/commitment reflects the same dynamics of the question of agency and structure discussed in Chapter 2. In this sense, the foreclosed identity status mirrors the implications of having to align to the requirements set out externally in the family field. Importantly, the survey has revealed that parents had a crucial role in the transmission of religion and most young people adopted their parents' affiliation. The qualitative interviews will show how for some of the young people in the study conforming to their parents was only one step within a complex journey, which involved also contesting parental notions and values.

Finally, even though the analysis of the survey has mostly focused on comparing different religious and ethnic groups, the findings have also highlighted strong commonalities: most young respondents shared similar aspirations and prioritised happiness, health and work as their main hopes and ambitions for the future; they believed that the success in life was essentially determined by the one person's own actions such as getting an education and working hard. Importantly, all young

respondents showed that they trusted their family more than other relationships or organisations. They showed lower trust in the Government but still felt a sense of belonging to Britain, and they all shared concerns about some levels of religious and racial prejudice in today Britain.

Chapter 7

The intergenerational transmission of cultural capital and the role of Islamic capital in parenting

Introduction

This chapter presents parents and young people's accounts of the process and content of intergenerational transmission. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, the process of intergenerational transmission is a key element of wider socialization and refers to *how* (the process) and *what* (the content) parents transfer to their children during their upbringing. Importantly, intergenerational transmission is culturally relative and contextual as it depends on the general historical conditions, but also on economic, social and cultural resources available to parents (Brannen, 2006).

Bourdieu's concepts of field, strategy, cultural and religious capitals have informed the analysis and reporting for this chapter. Intergenerational transmission takes place within the context of the family which, following Bourdieu's theory, is a main social field and therefore one of the main agencies of socialisation (see Chapters 2 & 3) and a major influence on the development of a young person's identity. Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital was used as an overarching concept that explains the content of transmission and brings together the body of knowledge of parents, but also incorporates their competencies, educational patterns, values, beliefs and lifestyles (Geert, 2001). The concept of religious capital implies understanding religion itself as a social field where resources are at stake. Bourdieu considers religious capital as a body of symbolic resources in the hand of restricted groups which contribute to the perpetration of a social order. In the current study religious capital will be applied in reference to the use of Islam as a resource for parenting (Bourdieu, 1991). Finally, the term 'strategy' is the object of a wide debate in different fields of sociological analysis (Crow, 1989; Knights & Morgan, 1990). This study follows Bourdieu's idea that structural conditions orientate individual action and therefore strategizing results from a combination/adaptation between agency and structure. In this chapter, the term strategy is employed to describe different processes of intergenerational transmission.

Therefore, in line with Bourdieu's rationale, when transmitting values to their children, parents are informed by their habitus and therefore by their own culture, views of the world, system of values and also their social class and resources available, rather than by 'rational decision making' and finalist behaviour (Crow, 1989).

The different strategies adopted by parents were developed through thematic analysis by bringing together recurring and most significant accounts into overarching themes and include the following: strategies of intergenerational transmission, Islamic capital and the role of Islam in parenting and the differences in the roles of parents when transmitting values to their children.

7.1 Strategies of intergenerational transmission

Evidence from the interviews suggests that the parents in the study adopted a number of different strategies to transmit cultural capital to their children; these strategies were not exclusive but often overlapped and reflected the complex combination of elements which developed in different social fields such as those of Islam, South Asian cultures and British values.

'Being strict'

Being strict was a significant theme emerging from the interviews with parents and young people, who spoke about it as a strategy adopted to transmit a sense of duty and respect of the rules. It emerged that parents considered a firm approach to parenting as effective in preventing young people from *'losing their path'* in the sense of getting involved with people, lifestyles and situations which could increase their distance from South Asian cultures and Islam. Being strict was aimed to maintain young people's identity as close as possible to their family heritage, cultural and religious background. This is to say that being strict involved '*protection*' of culture and '*maintenance*' of tradition, but it also served to instil a sense of morality that enabled children to discern right and wrong according to a specific system of values:

> *'Have you been strict as a mother, do you think?*
> Yes I have. Because if I had of been too lenient he wouldn't know his boundaries and if I had of been as much as I love him, I have to teach him there are certain Do's and Don'ts. And love can't come in-between what is right and wrong. And if he has done something wrong he's punished. I would not let him

get away with it. He has to really regret what he did or said. And not do it again'. (Omar's mother)

The analysis reveals that parents from different socio-economic background adopted this strategy as the accounts of Zahida, Sarah and Tania's parents, from middle class background, and of Zahra, Ali and Hania from lower socio-economic background indicate. In addition, both mothers and fathers in the study talked about the requirement of being strict with their children at times, which was also confirmed by some young people describing both parents as strict. Zahida's mother elucidated on the origins of the parental practice of 'being strict' as partly rooted within South Asian traditions and, in her case within the Pakistani culture, but also affected by her personal history:

> 'My mother always supported us, corrected us there and then. She never praised us and me and my sister would complain that you never praise us. She said I don't need to. I know you're good girls but why should I praise you. That is good you learn to take criticism. I criticise (2 daughters) a lot as well and whenever they get married it will be easier for them to take criticism. Children who are not criticised cannot take it. It is very difficult. With me they're fine and even with my husband they're all right. Yes I do feel Zahida and my husband have lots of clashes, they're the same personality. They're two people but they think like one.'(Zahida's mother)

This point was echoed by Sakina's mother who also spoke about the origin of this strategy and how it related to her own upbringing as a child:

> 'Not strict but how do I say? We discipline our children, the main discipline comes from my husband and I implement that and obviously from my upbringing because my family was like because they are from Bangladesh and my dad was very conservative as well. (…) How do I say? We don't like changing partners or going with different men, you know there is no life for that (…)'. (Sakina's mother)

In this last case being strict was assimilated to 'be socially conservative' and applied to the context of prohibiting pre-marriage relationships, showing the importance that those norms had for the definition of moral behaviour. Other accounts suggests that strict parenting was felt as posing constraints on what young people were allowed to do and not to do. Particularly, the theme being strict included accounts about the need for parents to set out boundaries about whom their children socialise with, and in relation to drinking, smoking and the use of drugs:

> *'What sort of people are your parents?*
> My dad is a very strict person. He does say stuff I don't like him saying to me.
> Then I think about it, he's doing it for my own good. Stuff like that.
> *In which way would you say he is strict?*
> He does want me to go out but he doesn't want me to stay out too late, get
> involved with the wrong people.
> *Do you think this is all right?*
> I think it's right what he's doing but at this age you want to get out, have your
> fun because in the near future you won't be able to do that.' (Davar)

In the context of strict parenting, gender differences did not seem to be particularly relevant and parents tended to be strict with sons as much as with their daughters as indicated by the issue of young people's outlook and clothing style. As detailed in Chapter 9, Davar's father was very unhappy about his haircut and loose jeans, while Sarah's account also indicated the concerns her dad had about female clothing:

> 'If I do something wrong they'll (parents) be like mad, even my sister when she goes
> out and comes home she just wears clothes that my dad doesn't want her to wear,
> like maybe shorts and obviously you can't show your legs or anything and my dad
> will just go mad like how can you go out of the house like that, why are you doing
> that, why are you wearing so much makeup?' (Sarah)

Strict parenting also implied setting out a quite rigid system of guidance and the parents were not just 'providing direction' but, at times, they aimed to determine their children's behaviuor. Interview accounts have described different degrees of guidance exercised by parents, which shifted from mere advising to setting out strict boundaries and limiting choices. In line with the role of guidance in determining young people's educational choices detailed in Chapter 8, the following account illustrates how Tania's father considered parental guidance as 'the path' required to enable her daughter's to make the right decisions. Tania's father appeared concerned about his daughter ability to decide for herself:

> 'Well you can do this, so we discussed the options, that's our guidance role, to
> give them the path (…). So it isn't that children aren't capable of, but we feel
> it's our duty to do the very best and the very best that we can do is give
> guidance by giving options that if you do this like these are the options, what
> do you think? So we're laying out things for her and I'm sure she's perfectly
> capable of doing that if we weren't there, she would have to do that and, in
> fact, my upbringing and life has shown that when you don't have someone,
> father figure, life goes on, life doesn't stop, nothing stops, it's just different
> choices, you know, you just get on and you do it and you make your own
> choices and things happen, life happens. So likewise, you know, it isn't that.

Maybe, maybe we've made them a little bit dependent, because we haven't given them the independence that they would otherwise have, so I don't know, maybe there is a little bit of that, but as time goes like now is the time where she's getting the independence, because now she's finding her own job for this gap year.' (Tania's father)

Similarly, Samina's father highlighted how guidance is particularly required during young people's transition to adulthood when parents need to ensure that the children will stay on the '*right path*':

'I mean they need the guidance instead of just spend the time with them, just spending time as well as guide them as well. Like you say the teenagers are very difficult and so I thought this is a time where you need to put them in the right way and if they are in the right track then life starts from there. I mean after you are twelve or eleven years old after high school days you are playing around and messing about but when you were in high school that is when the serious things start you can go the right way or the bad way and that is where I thought to myself more responsibilities and be with them more than I used to.' (Samina's Father)

In the context of this theme about being strict - the idea of the existence of a right path to follow - set primarily by Islam but also by South Asian cultures, was significant for parents to define boundaries of moral behaviour. The right path came to signify the avoidance of drinking alcohol, smoking, taking drugs and going out but also a certain outlook which reflected modesty as discussed later in Chapter 9 and 10.

Being strict was also a response to threats that parents perceived were present in their local areas. Parents who could not speak English very well were also amongst those who lived in most deprived areas and the ones that were more worried and did not want their children to be out on their own. Ali's mother, a single parent from a Bengali background, explained that she felt unsafe outside her house in the local area in a highly deprived inner London borough:

'Small boys, fourteen, ten, twelve, taking and smoking drugs, not taking the drug but drug dealing. I am so scared.' (Ali's mother)

Similarly, other parents in London were scared of leaving their children wondering around in the local area on their own, which they perceived as generally unsafe:

'Yeh I'm scared of, when my children are going on their own that time I'm scared, my wife also scared'. (Amina's father)

The fear that their children could be harmed by groups of youths was also common to parents in Oldham as Zahra's mother exemplified:

> 'I do especially in the environment at the moment it worries me really sometimes when I see very young children. My children are very different, but when you see very young children even at nine o'clock sometimes when you go shopping or something and you see them hanging around on the street and then I think 'where are their parents and what are they doing?'(Zahra's mother)

Hania's father, also from Oldham, explained that there has been a change and an increasing number of young Asians been involved in criminal activities:

> 'I am now (concerned) you don't see anymore English kids, you don't see any local kids, white people but what you see is our own children. When I am saying our own children its Asian children growing in the area and they are following what those people used to do here like the English kids' (Hania's father)

In summary, being strict appeared to be a strategy adopted by parents in the study to transmit cultural capital. It mostly aimed to reinforce or set the boundaries of young people's behaviour and included different levels of guidance from prohibition of certain practices to direction about future. This strategy brought together elements of South Asian cultures with Islamic ethics and ultimately limited and impacted on the choices that young people had in terms of their lifestyle and modes of socialization.

'Being indulgent'

Alongside the idea of being strict, respondents' accounts have identified a complementary strategy, described as being indulgent in the sense parents being 'tolerant and liberal', communicative and supportive:

> My mum and dad are tolerant you see. You can speak to them you don't have to hide it. They (are) indulgent people who are there when you need, always (...) (Hamid)

This strategy drew from accounts showing different ways in which parents bonded and demonstrated their understanding of young people. In so doing, being indulgent reflected a more permissive dimension of parenting, emphasising inter-generational communication and parental warmth. The following account from Hania exemplifies

this pattern by opposing 'democratic' parenting, where parents are compared to the level of friends, to stricter forms of parenting:

> 'I think overall they have been the best parents they could ever be because it's like when I see my friends parents and how strict they are and it's authoritative parenting, and you know they are really strict and it just makes the kids so rebellious. I think my mum and dad were more democratic, you know they knew they had to discipline but at the same time they knew how to have a good joke and a laugh. I could go out with my parents feeling like I am going out with my friends because we are that close my family and I think we have all turned out alright.'(Hania)

This way of looking at the parent-child relationship 'in terms of friendship', to mean informal, upfront and trustworthy, was echoed by Hania's father:

> 'Yes sometimes yes I was straight in some point and in the other hand I am very easy with my children you know if you ask any of my children "How is your dad discipline wise?" they will tell you that one point I am very strict and in the other hand they can take me as a friend, they can talk with me like a friend.'(Hania's father)

Communication was another important element that fed into the 'indulgent strategy' theme. Communication was used as part of indulgent and less strict strategies, which described how parents spent time talking to their children as a way to explain why certain boundaries were set, what should be avoided and what the consequences of certain choices and behaviours were, as reflected by Sakina's mother:

> 'Come and tell me, so both of my children have been really open with me so far and we talk about everything and anything, sex, boyfriends, everything and I think that's what lacks in the Bengali community, they don't do that. (…) Yeah they don't have anyone to speak to at home so they go to friends outside and so what are the friends going to give? Bengali mothers don't like discussing things with their children and they think it is an embarrassment and I don't know why they see it like that. My mum never talked like that but now she does'. (Sakina's mother)

Sakina's mother account is in line with other perspectives emerging from parents but also young respondents suggesting that, generally, South Asian parents tend to be strict rather than indulgent. The following example about sex and relationships has a similar content to the accounts which defined stricter strategies of parenting described above, but it implied that parents had to explain to their children the reasons underlying certain prohibitions:

'My husband was so open with him (their son) and he said "look I don't mind you choosing somebody to get married but I don't want you going out as boyfriend and girlfriend, it is not allowed in Islam" because anything can happen when you are together with that person because you might get into other stuff, they might get pregnant and you know Islam is for everybody, men and women and no one should have sex before marriage (..) So my husband is really open with them and he talks to them about that kind of stuff and I talk to them as well about (relationships) because there is a saying that the prophet said "you should not be with the opposite sex because of temptation.' (Sakina's mother)

Indulgent parents also provided a certain amount of guidance but in this instance it was centred on providing the young people with the right criteria to finally decide by themselves, rather than pressurize them toward one direction or the other. The rationale for such criteria involved referring to their previous experience more than anything else. Yasmeen's mother, who provided an example of this type of strategy, explained how, as parents, they always tried to give their daughter evidence and facts to support their concerns and constraints, while leaving her free to do and experience things:

'It's to do with the way we brought her up. More of it is to do with how we are with her. We haven't said you have to do this. 'Do you want to do that?' No. Okay, fine. We've never really had any clashes of wills so there's no resentment there. We've never said to her, 'no you can't do this or you can't go there'. I've always allowed her to do what she wanted to do, within reason. She's never asked for anything which has pushed a boundary. She never ever. I've never had to say to her no you can't. We're comfortable with who we are. We're happy in our lives so I think that rubs off on them to a certain extent. I go on holiday and put my swimming costume on because that's what I want to do. Totally against Islam. But nobody knows me or can see what I'm wearing. It's being comfortable with who you are. Religion doesn't have any holding in there. If you use religion as I can't do this because it's religiously wrong then you're just repressing yourself. If you want to be happy.' (Yasmeen's mother)

The outcome achieved in the case of Yamseen's parents, was to instil in their daughter a sense of morality exemplified by her capacity of discerning right and wrong, which was in line with her parents' way of thinking. Instilling in their children a sense of balance and moderation were other aspects included in this theme of indulgent parenting:

'Is there a strategy that you have to get these messages to your daughter?

I try and talk to them. I try and explain things to them and you keep your fingers crossed but you have to keep a check on them all the time. You have to keep your eyes and ears open all the time. All the time.

Do you think that if you are too strict as a parent they might try and rebel against?
Everything in moderation. You have to be strict but you can't lock them up. They have to understand where to draw a line. You can do everything but you have to know where to stop. You have to teach your children. You have to keep your eyes open. (Yasmeen's mother)

The idea of moderation was mostly common amongst mothers (as Omar's, Zahida's and Hamid's mothers) and reflected the idea of balancing different life priorities such as family, religion and education:

'A balance I think between everything. You know they've got to work and they've got to play as well, they got to chill but the competition you have to remember the pressure is on the children you have to remember that (…). It is about a balance, it is about doing well in school but at the same time keeping your religion in mind, you know you have to have the right morals, the right ethics as well and bringing them up to understand what is right and what is wrong is important. Because you have to remember they are influenced badly, heavily by their friends. It is always but my friends are doing this, my friends are doing that, so it is finding that balance.' (Hamid's mother)

Parental warmth was a further aspect which characterised indulgent parents and it was particularly evident in the accounts of some of the mothers who spoke about their dedication and love for their children. Omar's mother exemplified this with her story starting with the difficulties in conceiving her son and then talking about their reciprocal relationship:

'He was in hospital a month ago. He was very sick and I was with him. My husband wasn't there and I was in hospital and I was crying on the corner, because I couldn't see him in this pain and we came back after two days and he came to me and said, I saw you crying mum, you were very upset for me and I said you are my child. If anything happens to me I won't be able to live and I think it suddenly dawned on him, that Oh My God, so he came and he hugged me and said don't worry mum I'll always love you I never realised you loved me so much and I'm glad because I didn't do it for him to see because I didn't want him to see that he was already so sick and he said, Mum I can't believe it and something changed in his psyche suddenly. Hang on the only one, at the end of the day it's my mother you know, it's my mother who will you know, truth is I love mangos. I adore mangos and we have a joke in our family. When mango comes I look and try and get the most sweet one you know so I'm looking the most and even for Omar it's like, if I'll have five pieces, I'll give him one and it's

like Oh! Omar give me yours also. So even my mangos I sacrifice for him and he says Oh! Mum forget it you know. I'll have to sacrifice everything. I think he knows that.

(…) So he has been a part of, literally I could say Omar is my right side. He is connected to me. It's really odd that I tell him sometimes I can feel you. I adore him, it's like when I want to kiss him, I smell you, I can smell you, and I can actually smell his cheeks at this age also. I say give me a kiss otherwise I'm going to die. Give me a kiss. It's a great connection with him and I just hope he doesn't forget us when he becomes older. Doesn't forget how much love he has been given, so he can give the same to his wife and his family and to treat his wife with love (…)'. (Omar's mother)

Omar's accounts also mirrored the depth and intimacy of the mother-son relationship as shown by how much Omar trusted his mum and felt comfortable to speak freely to her:

'So would you say it's different from the way you interact with your dad?
Maybe a little bit. Yeah like mum I can tell her absolutely everything so it's it is different like I don't think I can have that same relationship as with anybody else really it's just something sort of I guess a bit special.

You mean also personal things like relationships?
Whatever's going on in my life. (…) Well that's the thing it's just the ability to feel free to speak about any of that stuff like whether it's school, friends, family anything that's on my head anything I'm worried about she's always there'. (Omar)

Also parents form lower socio-economic background spoke about parental warmth which involved parents being supportive, caring and present in the lives of their children:

'A parent that supports the child, if they do something wrong yeh punish them, but you have to still stick by them because if you're just going to always shout at them then it's not going to happen and they won't change. A parent that's always there for the child, that's always supportive and never neglects them, because the child will just go wrong.'(Amina)

This sense of being there for the children was echoed in other parental accounts such as by Hania's father:

'Me as your parent regardless of what you do to me you are my child and I am always there for you and I know for a fact you are there for me as well and these two people in your life you will need they will never misguide you and they don't want anything in return all they want is you take all the benefit. So

that is the message I tried to get through to my children and every child that I come across and friends and whatever.' (Hania's father)

The supportive aspect of indulgent parenting involved listening and advising children and was also echoed in some of the young people's accounts as Asif demonstrated:

'My mum she's a good listener, she listens to me a lot whenever I need help I'll go to any of my parents and they'll give me good advice and they will help me in a way until I've sorted my problems out. If I have a problem and I go to my parents and I tell them, until I've sorted that problem they won't really do anything else about anything else and they're good advisers and they're both fair, they treat me and my sister equally. I can't think of anything else.'(Asif)

In conclusion, being indulgent was a strategy adopted by parents from different socio-economic background to transmit norms and values to their children. In this study the strategy emerged from accounts about setting the boundaries for young people's behaviour, while giving evidence of the consequences of certain actions, providing guidance, while leaving young people free to make the final choice. The strategy implied looking at parents and children's relationship in terms of 'friendship' and, on the emotional side it involved levels of parental warmth.

Relying on the extended family as a strategy for intergenerational transmission

Amongst the strategies used by parents to transfer the cultural capital to their children, the support provided by the extended family was very relevant. The idea of family included relationships beyond the direct nuclear family sphere (such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins), in line with South Asian cultures which place great emphasis on inter-familiar support. Several parents in the study spoke about family more in terms of value rather than an entity, and referred to it as representative of their background and origins and therefore relevant for identity:

'It is important to know your family members. I have lived with my great grandmother from all sides, I've seen my father's grandmother my mother's grandmother as well and I've lived with them. I tell her I don't want to take her to India and my brother goes to her and she says who is he? Family value is very important.' (Yasmeen's father)

Young people also recognised family as a relevant influence on their lives as interpreted by what Saleem claimed:

'The family is the biggest influence on what you become and do.' (Saleem)

Interviewees' accounts, both of parents and young people, suggest that the extended family provided a protecting network for children and thus acted as a form of support for parents. On one side the extended network of kin represented the primary context for children's socialisation and guaranteed an environment where habitus was shared amongst members and thus the transmission of cultural capital facilitated. Family members supported parents with decision making and also provided sources for role models that children could look up to:

'Have you ever been concerned that he may get involved in things like drinking, smoking, drugs or things like that?

Hopefully they won't be exposed to things like that because when we do go out and do things as a family, although he will go out to the cinema once in a while but that is all he does. At the moment everything is well under, not that we say that you can't go out but he is just not that orientated. If he does it is with his cousins. (…) We as a family are always doing things, going out and he has got cousins a year younger than him and they are really good mates so they hang out and the older cousins are always around, we are lucky that they are boys as well so there are good role models.' (Hamid's mother).

Sarah's father echoed this point and highlighted the importance of the extended family for his children's sense of belonging as well as a source of advice and support alternative to parents that was always available to children:

'When I say extended families, it's important that my children know that they belong, OK, that they have uncles and aunts, they have cousins that they can relate to, they can go and ask questions to, if they have a problem they can interact with them. You know if my daughter has a problem she can pick up the phone and say uncle I need your help, can you help me, or can I come and stay with you, can I talk to you. If they pick up the phone and say I'm going to go to Uncle Hamid's house, they can go, you know, because I don't have a problem with that, but it also means that they have somebody else to talk to. If he's a hot head, they can go and talk to someone else, they can talk to my brother, they can talk to their uncles, their aunts, so yeah, so that's very important, because it means that they have somebody else they can relate to, be it on the mother's side, or be it on my side of the family, so they have either, this big family, so they can go and talk to anyone they want to talk to, ask for advice, ask for help, you know, if something has happened, go and talk

to them, you know, because that's part of being a family and having the unity of a family, so it's very important yeah.'(Sarah's father)

This emphasis on the role of extended family was a specific characteristic of South Asian Muslim parenting as it represented the influence of South Asian culture with a strong sense of community and the Islam's focus on solidarity.

7.2   Islamic capital: the role of Islam in parenting

The relevance of Islam for parenting emerged as a significant theme and included accounts about how parents used religion to transmit their cultural capital to children (process), as well as how much they felt Islam was part of what they had to transfer to their children (the content). In reference to Bourdieu's theory, the religious field informs family and individuals' habitus. In the context of this study, Islam strongly influenced parenting by providing a significant source of values and beliefs from which a number of practices derived. In this sense, Islam was a unique and particularly salient source of support for parents. Islam was a determinant of the family as a unit as it created a sense of sharing through setting out common values and by bringing family members together through religious practices and particularly praying:

> 'It's a way of guidance for me and all my family. We all go together with it, follow it as one.' (Hamid)

Once again, the account about 'keeping the right path' re-emerged in the context of Islam which was described by parents as the way to discourage and to stop their children to 'go wrong in life':

> 'Personally yeah I think it is through my religion because most of the rules that my parents say they always refer it to religion, they always say if I don't do this then you won't be a good Muslim, so whatever they say and whatever rules they follow I think it's because religion is a big part of their life because obviously they are from Pakistan.'(Wajid)

Another significant account which fed into the theme about Islam as a resource for parenting was the description of Islam as *'a way of life'*. With this, several respondents explained that they meant their religion affected all different aspects of their existence from the moral sphere to the everyday practices such as eating and clothing, from gender relationships to their aspirations and the way they socialise. Therefore, having

an Islamic upbringing meant that parents transmitted a sense of right and wrong, of what was allowed or not appropriate on the basis of their interpretation of the Islamic doctrine. In this regard, having an Islamic upbringing exceeded the intergenerational transmission of religious teachings and practices such as praying, fasting during Ramadan or the wearing of the hijab for girls and rather it involved multiple aspects of individual habitus. Maria described what Islamic upbringing meant to her in terms of both religious beliefs and practicing within the family context:

> 'Yeah definitely because we all believe in Islam all our family, we quite firmly believe in Islam and we all participate in Ramadan together and everything. My mother and father have tried their best to bring us up in an Islamic upbringing and it has only ever benefited us.
>
> *Can you tell me what does 'Islamic upbringing' mean?*
>
> Like just teaching us and showing us what Islam is, what's right and wrong, just the general rules and then just probably going into the background of religion and god and just spreading the message to us to say that look kids this is the right way. They have never forced us but we have all voluntarily chosen that path because we have seen the rightness in it'. (Maria)

Accounts from the interviews have highlighted that Islam was important both as a strategy to transmit and as part of the content of transmission. It emerged that some of the parents felt in charge of transmitting religion to their children by talking about the key messages of Islam as exemplified in the Five Pillars but also by practicing all together. Sakina referred to her mother as the main source of religious guidance:

> 'My mum has placed such a huge influence on me, I mean even my mannerisms which I try to avoid but I can't help, because she's the only woman, she's the only female role model I've had in this household and so like when I was younger the first experience of Islam was just praying with her, just wearing the scarf and sitting down and praying with her and how she used to tell me about Islam and beliefs and heaven and hell and things like that and so you know when you're younger you accept it more, because whatever your parents say to you, you believe it but when you're older I think that's when you start questioning yourself.' (Sakina)

As part of the content of transmission, Islam was also relevant for those parents who weren't fully practicing who still felt they were in charge of transferring Islam to their children. As Tania and Haroon's father explained, he wanted his children to be better than himself:

'Well it's a case of right and wrong, we will say it's wrong to tell lies, it's not because Islam says it's wrong it's just wrong. That's what I was going to go on to say so maybe this will explain a bit further, in specifics we will ask them we will remind them to pray at least once or twice a day, in the morning when they get up have a shower, takes 2 minutes to do your prayers, in the evening we'll say that the human weakness is my own weakness which is I don't do it, but I want my children to be better than me so I will encourage my children to do something I don't do myself, you can call that hypocrisy but I'm trying to practice the tenants of my religion which is to teach my children about Islam and the practices that they should follow.' (Tania and Haroon's father)

He concluded that all he was doing was instilling the basis of practicing Islam and reminding his children to pray as part of his duty as a father; ultimately his children ended up choosing for themselves and practicing because they wanted to. Tania's father explained how today young people have access to different means to learn about Islam, including new technology such as internet, which provides a way to better understand the religious teachings by easing the access to the English translation of the Qur'an. One mother also recounted the differences between the way her generation and her children's learnt about Islam and understood their religion:

'When I was being brought up we never had no Islamic studies whatsoever, they just said we're Muslims that's it, and one of our grandparents used to say "don't do this it's not good for you" "why not?" "you are not supposed to do this" and no explanation of why "it's sin" but we didn't see the wisdom behind why is it forbidden or why shouldn't you do it, we never got that.'(Sakina's mother)

As detailed in Chapter 10, the consequent increased level of knowledge and understanding of Islam enabled young people to make more independent choices about practicing and in some cases to become more religious than the parents:

'When it's holiday time, weekend time and you say its prayer time he'll go and pray and he does that because he himself feels that he wants to do it, my duty is to remind him to do it, he's the one who now takes the responsibility of doing it and there will be a point where he will become independent in his thoughts to a point where he will just do things that even we don't do, he will become more religious, remember that term about being more Indian than the Indians, he will be more religious than the parents and this has happened, I have seen children become far more religious and why because today's children I feel have far greater understanding of their religion than we did, we don't understand what we're praying, the words we're saying, the children

have a greater understanding, at least they will also look and they'll see the meaning of'. (Tania and Haroon's father)

Importantly, in transmitting their cultural and religious capital, parents passed their knowledge of Islam as affected by their heritage coming from South Asian cultures. Even though parents were paramount for the transmission of Islam to their children they often sent them to madrasa[13] to learn how to read the Qur'an in Arabic and to understand the details of the Islamic doctrine. Therefore, the parents' role in the transmission of religion was mainly concerned with the less theological aspects and often more involved with the values, beliefs, sense of morality, behaviour and everyday practices attached to Islam.

Even though the importance of Islam for transmitting values was a common theme across all the families in the study, there were some differences in the ways and the extent parents used Islam to instil a sense of morality in their children. Accounts suggest that less educated parents from a lower socio-economic background tended to refer more closely to Islam, whilst higher educated parents felt they needed to integrate and support religious explanations with other sources of evidence.

Sarah's parents told me that they were religious and defined themselves as practicing Muslims, but explained that Islam was a fundamental part but not the only element to transmit a sense of morality in their children, as their mother explained:

'How do you explain to your children what is right and what is wrong?

I've always told them what my sisters have gone through, you know, I've always given them..examples.. yeh about life, you know.

From people they know?

Yes, so they know the consequences and they know what's happened and then they're always asking questions why did that happen mummy, what was the reason for it and I've always told them the reason and this is why it's happened and this is why they are where they are now, this is what's happened in the family and they realise it and they are aware of it and they know these situations happen, so I hope it's like a guideline for them so that they don't get into the same situation. If a problem occurs I hope they realise that it shouldn't go that far.

So, does Islam have any role in explaining what is right and what is wrong?

---

[13] Madrasa are the Islamic classes in the Mosque (Becher, 2008).

Not so much. I think everything happens in life because of your situation, you know, your job happens not because of your religion, because of what you can do, you're able to do, but Islam is a guideline not to go over the steps, but in life, say, something happened at work it wouldn't be because something Islamic is in it, do you understand, it's something that you've done, what you have done in your life to make that happen, make that situation. Islam is in our way of life, but it's the human, it's you at the end of the day.'(Sarah and Farooq's mother)

Omar's mother pointed out that Islam was only one aspect of the way she explained 'right and wrong' to her son and that 'evidence' was required including examples from the parents' own lives. The idea that 'I have to practice what I preach', expressed by Sakina's mother, was another way of transmitting Islam and moral values. Yasmeen's father, from middle class background, explained how as parents they use their lives and actions as examples to support their moral teaching:

> 'We referred to our acts, as you do she will do it. When we wanted her to go to sleep at 8 o'clock we went to sleep at 8 o'clock to say this is bed time, when she's gone we woke up again at 9 o'clock that's a different thing but we won't sit here and tell her 8 o'clock bed time go to sleep, we all go to sleep at 8 o'clock and when she's sleeping for 15/20 minutes then we'll come down and we found that she became an alarm clock 8 o'clock wherever she was she used to go to sleep. If I am sitting here and watching television and telling her what time to go to sleep she won't go. Right everybody is going upstairs, so it's your act that teaches, you don't have to say that this is right and this is wrong you just do it without saying it and she will know it'. (Yasmeen's father)

Yasmeen's parents had concordant views on what to refer to when transmitting a sense of morality on their daughter and the mother adopted two related strategies. As the father, she firstly reiterated the importance of setting the parent's behaviour as example; she then also recognised the need to explain to her children the reasons behind any prohibition they set out as parents. For instance, in relation to their prohibition of alcohol and smoking, she referred to the consequences on health:

> 'That is probably coming from a Muslim background but I think I'd rather she didn't think it was good. There's no alcohol in our house so I'd rather I thought it was coming because we don't want her to drink because it's not good for you, rather than from a Muslim background. She's never even raised, she's only 15, 14 nearly 15, going on 22. But she's never even raised the question about drinking. She has had things in classes at school. They have these life skills where they teach them about drugs and alcohol. She knows it's a no, no. But not because we've said it's against our religion. But we've said it's not good for you and it makes you do things that you really don't want to do. And that's where we've brought it up. I've never said to her, you can't drink

because you're a Muslim. I've never even said to her, you can't drink. But I would say to her you can't drink, because it's not good for you and because it plays, it messes with your mind.'(Yasmeen's mother)

Sarah's and Farooq's parents, who were a support teacher and a scientist (with PhD), also felt that quoting examples from real lives was effective in instilling a sense of right and wrong, which was therefore not based just on religious guidelines. Their father spoke about setting their own lives as an example even though he was aware of the impact of intergenerational differences:

> 'The guidelines are Islamic guidelines that we have. I don't expect them to behave as you'd see the classic English teenage girls do.
>
> *'How do you draw this line, how do you explain to your children don't do this or that?*
> As a parent I think for us at times it's difficult and at times, you know, the way we explain to them is how we have lived our lives but, of course, my lifestyle 20 years and 30 years ago was completely different to the lifestyle that the kids are living here now, the conditions are different, the environment is different, so the influence of the environment and the influence of their friends, their peers has an impact as well, but at the end of the day we have tried to show them and instill in them good moral backgrounds, moral in the sense that we ensure that their behaviour has an impact not for today, but 10 years later'. (Sarah's father)

These accounts about parents 'doing what they preach' suggest that parents often felt the responsibility of acting as role models for their children. On the other hand, young people's perspectives mirrored the effect and contribution that parents had as 'providers' of role models. Amina and Maria both considered their upbringing as influential on how they will eventually raise their own children. Amina spoke about the way she and her siblings were raised as a success because none of them had got involved with drugs, smoked or became pregnant, issues that were used to signify un-Islamic ways of life. Maria explained she would do things differently when she will have a family, even though she would still refer to her parents for advice as 'they will always have a say on what's going on' in her life.

Even Sarah, who as shown in Chapter 9 more than the others had a conflictual relationship with her parents, looked up to them and showed an understanding of the restrictions they posed:

> *'You also said you would like to have more freedom, but at the same time you understand your parents' way of being, how do you explain this?*

> Yeh I like to be like mum and dad. I know at the end of the day everything they're doing is right, even when they shout and everything they say I know it's always right, they always have a point to it as well. It's not wrong; they never do something that's wrong, even if they give everything to my sister. Yes.' (Sarah)

These accounts about the role of religion in upbringing show how Islam functioned as an extra resource in the hands of parents to guide, control and transmit values in their children. In this sense, Islamic capital was a specific element of parenting, which influenced both the content of what was transmitted and the process of transmission.

7.3   Parental roles in the transmission of values

The process of intergenerational transmission also implies the question of 'who transmits what?' or, in other words, whether parents had distinct roles about what elements of cultural capital to transfer to their children. In general, parents' roles within the family were defined by a combination of cultural norms and personal circumstances such as migration histories, education, work status and fluency in English but also structural conditions such as their socio-economic background.

This section presents themes that bring together the views of mothers and fathers about their roles in the family as well as young people's perspectives on the gendered division of labour in the home.

The complexity of the domestic division of labour and parenting roles

Even though most mothers and fathers in the study shared similar values and beliefs, sometimes their roles in the house differed on the basis of traditional models influenced by South Asian cultures which assigned them separate responsibilities.

The accounts underlying the theme of fathering indicate a variety of aspects that the father's role acquired across different families in the study. In Zahida's middle class family, the father was highly qualified and the main breadwinner and his wife was also working full-time. However differences were present in the way they related to their children and conceived their role as parents. The mother spoke about being actively and constantly present and mostly concerned with transmitting moral values and ensuring that their two daughters grow up as 'good persons':

'For me I think my priority is for them to be good human beings. To be good, kind people. That is more important.' (Zahida's mother)

In contrast, accounts from Zahida's father indicate that he was purposely withdrawing himself from some aspects of his daughters' upbringing:

'No and I don't think we've ever told them they shouldn't drink or should not wear a mini skirt. I think there was one occasion when one of them bought some fishnet stockings. I haven't said anything. I don't even officially know. It's between the mother and them. She never wore them, she was too embarrassed after buying it.' (Zahida's father)

As he claimed in this account, he wasn't there to decide what his daughter had to wear which was more of the mother's duty. He also spoke about how his daughter knew already about the boundaries of moral behaviour which were implied and didn't need to be explicitly discussed. In this case he referred particularly to the issue of wearing mini-skirts or fishnet tights. Zahida's father explained that he was taking a *'withdrawn'* role in relation to child-rearing mainly because he was less present due to his work schedule and commitments. However, there were other aspects such as education, where he felt his role was determinant in line with what his wife said:

'Yes for him education is very important. He wants them to be career girls. That is his priority. He feels that's all he can give them. He doesn't like to take help from anyone. Whatever he does he likes to do on his own and that is why he feels that is all he can give them is education and he does feel bad that he doesn't have the finances to put them through private education in very good universities'. (Zahida's mother)

The accounts of Zahida's father about his role in her upbringing related to what his daughter and wife said, and it implied that checking on educational performance and directing his daughters' educational choices were part of his main duty as a father. His involvement in his daughters' education was not just about checking performance but also on financially providing for it. He explained that the main reasons for working long hours was to be able to afford and send his daughters to the best university and, for this reason, he sent Zahida to have private tuitions in order to improve her grades in maths and science. He expressed concerns about taking on loans for religious and cultural reasons and was worried that he would have not been able to afford to pay for both daughters to go to university outside London where they lived:

'I think how am I going to pay for this? I mean you can say I only have two daughters. Pakistani families are much larger than this you know. I only have two and I don't sleep at night. What think I owe them, my daughters is that they can go and do the best university wherever it is. Anywhere they want to go. But the reality is if the go outside London it will be very very difficult financially to pay for the living cost and the fees will be very very difficult (...). And you know because of our religion, I mean I'm not even the most religious but Islam discourages to take on debts unless it's strictly necessary. In our culture we don't do it' (Zahida's father)

Similarly to Zahida's father, other fathers spoke about withdrawing themselves from some aspects of the everyday children upbringing to be mostly dedicated to provide for education. For instance, Omar's father was often abroad because of his job as manager of a small company but when at home, he constantly checked on his son's performance at school. Asif's father was the only working parent and had to juggle two jobs: one in a takeaway shop and another as a cab driver in the evening in order to be able to provide for his family and, he said, 'so Asif could go to university'. He explained he had really little time with his children and his main concern was that they did well at school. The accounts of these fathers, who spent little time at home, indicate that being withdrawn from the bulk of daily childrearing was the result of culturally segregated gendered roles in the family as well as their working patterns.

The theme about mothers' roles in the family includes more specific accounts about different aspects of mothers' roles inside and outside the domestic sphere and in relationship to fathers. Hania, for instance, exemplified how the status of the mother is looked up and valued within South Asian cultures and Islam by referring to an Islamic saying:

'My religion says a lot about the status of a mother as well. Our prophet, he said that in our religion that paradise lies under the feet of your own mother and so can you imagine heaven and how much of a status that your mother has and that alone just makes me think that my mum is my main aspiration.' (Hania)

Sakina also referred to the centrality of mothers according to Islam and spoke about her close relation with her mother:

'Yeah because my mum obviously she had to grow up really quickly at such a young age obviously when she married my dad and she had my sister straight away as well and the things she has been through in life and the things, the stories she has told me about how hard it was growing up and the things that

have happened to her. We are more best friends than mother, daughter and sisters and it's like we will do everything together at the same time and I just think wow.' (Sakina)

The accounts from Sakina and her parents suggest that there the division of labour in the family was gendered and influenced by South Asian culture. The mother, who grew up in the UK and had a job in the council, preserved a traditional view about gender separated roles and the main function of women as mothers and mothers as the children's main educators:

> 'Women who have a role to play in society because you are going to be a mother and if you are not a good mother obviously you are going to fail society, if your children are not good, what society you create, we believe that mothers are the foundation of children's education, upbringing everything and there is a saying "if you teach a woman then you teach the whole nation" because like I say the mother is the first teacher for the child and you know like in some communities they understand the value of having a mother who is educated and understands everything. Even in religious education because Islam plays a vital role in discipline and upbringing your child and ones behaviour and making ones character, this is very vital and if I don't know in Islam how one should be as a person to one's self, to one's family, to society, if you don't know how to do it then how are you going to be a good person?' (Sakina's mother).

Sakina spoke what she learnt from her father as the sense of ambition, discipline and a hard working ethic and she also recognised his effort in protecting his children. She looked up to his life as an example of determination and business acumen:

> 'So then my dad is playing the whole breadwinner role, bringing the what do you call it, getting the income and making sure everything's is there for us (…). He instilled his own boundaries and his beliefs within us as well, so there's so many things like we questions too like oh why can't we do this, like this is not something specific to Islam, but this is to my family as in, you know, why can't I go out with my friends and so basically what he was telling me was about protection again and he told me that this time of your life is where you're going to change as a person, with people you make friends with are going to have a huge impact on you, so you've got to be really really careful who you make friends with. (…) What he said was never ever, you know, rest on your laurels, don't ever be lazy, be determined and that's instilled in me the work hard ethic.' (Sakina)

Sakina's perspectives suggest how her habitus and identity were influenced by her family field. In this case, parental teachings reflected an approach to parenting which

combined encouraging high career aspirations and a hard working ethic, with quite strict moral standards and a confinement of women to quite traditional roles in the domestic sphere. Therefore, on one side, Sakina spoke about being about to start studying medicine in a prestigious London university and about how ambitious and determined to do well in her education she was. On the other hand, she held her mother's views about the woman's role in the house and her strong sense of religiosity implied also by the hijab.

In summary, qualitative evidence suggests that parenting roles were seen as both complementary and gendered. They were perceived different in their nature and segregated between the public (mostly fathers) and domestic spheres (mostly mothers). According to these accounts, women were not subordinated to men but rather they owned a different spectrum of power, which, de facto, was exercised through the control of the children.

However, interview accounts also suggest a different pattern: the socio-economic background and particularly the parents' employment status were important factors in shaping the parental division of labour within the family unit. Therefore, in the families where both parents were in work a sense of partnership in bringing up the children prevailed and gender roles were less defined according to traditional models.

In the case of the families of Yasmeen, Haroon and Tania's (siblings), traditional gender roles were challenged: the mothers held higher qualifications than the fathers and were, in both cases, the main earners. Haroon and Tania's father helped with his wife's business; while Yasmeen's mother held a managerial position in a male dominated work environment. In Haroon and Tania's family, gender roles were perceived as fundamentally equal as the father stated:

> 'We may be very much an exception or a minority but we pretty much have brought the children up together we're completely equal partnership in everything that we've done, other than when they were being breastfed, when they were bottled we both did it, when the nappies needed changing we both did it, when they needed to go to nursery we both did it, we divided if one parent was taking them...
>
> *Do you mind?*
> No we are a partnership because although they speak to her she'll discuss it with me, we will talk about it and so they will still get the same feedback, same

guidance, there are very few occasions when we will disagree (…). (Tania and Haroon father)

His wife's accounts confirm how decisions were taken by both parents together and how possible disagreement was overcome by parents being open and flexible to the view of the other, as in the case below where they had to decide whether to allow Tania to go out to a club with friends:

'(Husband) and me talked and I was saying no and (Husband) said yes, so very often this happens, but then when (Husband) said yes then I agree in the sense yes you can go, but I still say no, daddy's saying yes, but fine we respect that and sometimes it happens the other way around, I say yes and (Husband) says no, then he'll agree because I've said yes.' (Tania and Haroon mother)

Yasmeen's father, spoke about how he shared everything with his wife and how they had an equal role in the family:

'No we do common things, we don't have like this is your role and this is my role everything is everybody's, we don't have anything in the house which belongs to me or which belongs to my daughter, this TV is everybody's, this remote is everybody's, we've all got a mobile but all three mobiles belongs to everybody, I can use her mobile anytime and she can use my mobile anytime. That comes in the role as well. If something is wrong we both will say wrong, if something is right we both will say right. Equal role. (his wife) is here, I'm here 100% role is in my hand, I won't say this role belongs to your mum so wait till your mum comes.' (Yasmeen's father)

However, the accounts of Yasmeen's mother also indicate that she felt she had slightly different views on parental roles regarding their daughter's upbringing. In this context the parents' background and migration histories became relevant. Yasmeen's mother moved to the UK as child whilst her husband grew up in India. This implied that the father was more exposed to cultural norms and traditions that see mothers as the ones in charge of the children's upbringing. Therefore, the mother explained, she ultimately took a much more active role with Yasmeen's upbringing compared to her husband in line with tradition:

'The reason is because my husband was brought up old school. Because his parents were in India. He was in India for the first 20 years of his life. But yes, he's, not strict, but in ours it's probably a bit different. Rashid doesn't hold the, I'm the main parent. I'm the one she'll ring if she's ill, not because I'm the mum, but because I'm the main parent. He's taken a back seat on that. Because he's old school and it's the mum's job to bring them up. It's a different society. If you're born here then both parents take an active role. But

in his, what he's seen is that mums take the active role. So he has stepped back. But he does everything for her. He'll jump through hoops for her. But it's the mum who's the active one.' (Yasmeen's mother).

In Hamid's family, also from an Indian ethnic background and from middle class socio-economic background, parental division of labour followed more closely the traditional path which sees fathers as breadwinners and mothers in charge of the domestic sphere. In this case, the mother held higher qualifications than the father and completed a PhD, but she explained that she decided to give up that type of career and went into teaching to be able to have more time to dedicate to childcare.

In conclusion, parenting roles in the context of the South Asian Muslim families in the study, involved negotiating South Asian cultures, Islamic beliefs with British values and lifestyles. While some parents remained more attached to tradition, some others adapted to the career paths and the opportunities available. Working patterns influenced parental roles in the family: in some cases they led to a more gender balanced sharing of the responsibilities in the family, whilst in other instances they involved fathers withdrawing from the daily aspects of child-rearing.

Inter-cultural and inter-generational differences and parental roles

Most parents in the study (22 out of the 27) were fist generation migrants not born in the UK. Often the migration histories of mothers and fathers within the same family group were quite different and involved different cultural references and therefore cultural capital. Evidence indicate that these differences were quite strong in the 5 families where parents belong to different generations of migrants or where one of them had much longer experience of living and settling in the UK than the other. Even when parents were from the same migrant generational status, they often had different migration histories: wives arrived later in the UK and, in families from low socio-economic background they did not work and often had no qualifications. Unsurprisingly, parents who had quite different histories of migration, such as those of Sakina (her mother did not speak English while her father was fluent and grew up in the UK), or Davar (whose father moved to the UK as a child but mother could not speak English), expressed different levels of confidence and understanding of British values and society. In this study, women were mainly the ones with the lowest English

language skills (such as the mothers of Hania, Tahir, Davar, Ali and Nasreen confirmed). However in some instances, the mothers spoke better English than their husbands (like Yasmeen's, Sakina's and Asif's).

Hania's and Davar's fathers, whose wives did not speak any English, highlighted that problems of communication amongst Asian parents were hugely common and impacted on family roles. Particularly, the practice of marrying back in the country of origin implied that one parent, often the mother, was the first generation who moved to the UK quite late in life compared to the other parent. This pattern often led to one parent having poor English language skills which shifted the responsibility of child-rearing toward the other more fluent in English and more confident about British culture:

> 'In our Asian (families) because our father and mother sometimes there is a big gap understanding each other to start with. In English the wife and husband understand each other, they can communicate alright but our Asian people I have seen, I wouldn't say everyone, but majority I would say that they have been brought up here, they have got married over there and then brought the wife here and she doesn't know nothing about this country. So the whole responsibility bringing up the child it goes to father, if a mother grew up here and then she has been taken over there and got married there then the father comes here, the father doesn't know nothing, so mother has got more responsibility.' (Hania's father)

Hania reinforced what her father said about cultural differences amongst South Asian parents and highlighted how this distance affected the cultural capital transferred to the children and the development of habitus. For instance, her father valued education more than his mother who was more concerned about transmitting South Asian cultural norms, such as the importance of modesty and the maintenance of the family's reputation.

The relations between some of these parents in the study and their children reflected distinct levels of complexity: on one level there was the cultural gap amongst parents which implied different levels of understanding of British society. On the other level, there were the usual inter-generational differences, which more generally characterise the relationship between parents and their children. In reference to intergenerational differences, the account of Nilufer, from a very traditional Bengali family, reflected the

distance between herself and her parents particularly in the context of her aspirations for the future:

> *'In the future, when you become a parent yourself, will you look at your parents as role models?*
> I would do things differently, because nowadays generation has changed from generation back in the days.
>
> *Tell me about what will you do differently*
> What can I say? No, she (her mum) was always like even before she was married like back home people can't educate and my mum's from a poor background and yeah she used to do like house jobs and like things round a house, washing, cooking, she's done that all her life I think and with me I want to educate, get into a good job and carry on working and I'd allow that for my children too, I wouldn't want them to like stop educating.'(Nilufer)

Another respondent, Sarah, echoed Nilufer's thoughts and spoke explicitly about the lack of understanding amongst different generations:

> 'It's just, I don't know, it's just weird, like I don't think my dad would understand anyway. Like sometimes they'll think, obviously because times have changed now, it's not how when they used to be, when they were young in their country, it's not like that anymore. Here it's all like, it's just, I don't know, I think teenagers.' (Sarah)

Intergenerational differences between parents and young people combine with inter-cultural differences represent a specific element of South Asian Muslim parenting for the families in the study.

Conclusions

Based on thematic analysis, this chapter has provided important insights into the different strategies used by South Asian Muslim parents to transmit cultural capital to their children. In so doing, the chapter also highlighted different roles that fathers and mothers assume as part of their parenting and the influences of culture, Islam and British values on the process of intergenerational transmission. The South Asian Muslim parents in this study adopted a combination of strict and more indulgent parenting strategies when dealing with their children's upbringing that were not necessarily South Asian or Muslim specific.

South Asian Muslim parenting, instead, referred to Islam both as a tool for transmission and as an object of transfer. Drawing from Bourdieu's notion of religious capital, Islam can be perceived as a significant resource and, in this sense, a form of specific capital available to these parents and transmitted to their children.

Islamic capital supported parenting under different points of view: firstly it informed the family system of values and determined their lifestyle and every-day practice. It was also used to transmit a sense of morality and of duty, and therefore as a tool to control young people's behaviour and it was employed to inform aspirations and to generate social capital by strengthening the links amongst family members. The socio-economic background of the families affected the use of Islamic capital and higher educated parents tended to adopt it in their parenting in combination with other cultural and educational resources. Overall, Islamic capital provided a framework to control un-Islamic practices, which involved young people's social lives, leisure activities and also issues such as pre-marital relationships or other cultural concerns such as marrying outside the community.

In addition, the themes about parenting role indicate that the gendered division of labour in the family, originating from the South Asian cultures and partly Islam, was challenged by the experience of migration and settling in the UK. Most parents were first generation migrants, and only 5 families were mixed generations. Even within families with both first generation migrant parents, differences in the migration histories and in the experiences of settling the UK were present between husband and wife. Therefore, tradition and modernity overlapped and created a new 'fluid' cultural milieu. Some fathers tended to withdraw from aspects of the children's upbringing both because of their work commitments or the traditional gendered division of labour in the family, while some others tended to take up more responsibilities in the family because more fluent in English and more confident about British system of values and lifestyle. The case of Hania's or Davar's families, where the father took up responsibilities for the child-rearing as they felt more confident in guiding the children in the context of British society, involved shifting roles between parents. In contrast, in some instances, and particularly in families from a higher socio-economic background, the traditional role of the fathers was challenged by mothers gaining autonomy by combining professional jobs with family life. Some of the mothers (Yasmeen's, Haroon

and Tania's) in middle class families held higher qualifications than their husbands and were the main earners. By contrast, some other mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds were still socially isolated and had lower English language skills. However, this was not the only pattern and there were also some instances where mothers from lower socio-economic background could speak better English than fathers who needed them as interpreters and mediators (Asif's and Sakina's).

For the families in this study, South Asian Muslim parenting involved having to negotiate the structural influences coming from different social fields such as class, Britishness and British way of life, South Asian cultures and Islam.

Chapter 8

Aspirations and priorities of South Asian Muslim parents for their children: three case studies

Introduction

This chapter explores the priorities and aspirations that South Asian Muslim parents in the study held for their children, while taking into account young people's perspectives. In this context, the chapter presents evidence from three family case studies which exemplify significant themes: *'because education is everything'*; marriage as aspiration and the influences of parents' priorities and aspirations for their children. The case studies were developed by examining the accounts of the different family members (sons/daughters and parents) within the same family group.

South Asian Muslim parents in the study expressed their hopes and concerns about the future of their children, while young people often referred spontaneously to the role of their family in guiding, shaping and in some cases limiting their aspirations and plans. In the thesis, priorities and aspirations were two overarching themes described by young people as important to the construction of their identity. Priorities had a short-term connotation and mostly referred to the importance of education and the need for young people to put together the tools required for achieving future goals. Conversely, aspirations involved a longer-term timeframe and included career, social, personal objectives and other general hopes that parents and young people held for the future.

8.1 'Because education is everything'

In Distinction (1984) Bourdieu argued that education and the level of qualifications are determinants of the cultural capital and identifiers of social class. His analysis of several surveys conducted in France during the 1960s provided strong evidence of the association between cultural practices, education and social origin (Bourdieu, 1984).

Education is also an important component of the contemporary ethics of parenting even though parental investment and orientation toward education vary according to

social and structural conditions, particularly the class context. Research evidence suggests that middle-class parents generally tend to invest more resources than working-class parents do on their children's education. In contrast this study, in line with other research (Wilson et al., 2006), identified the specific influence of migration as well as social class in shaping parental aspirations and intergenerational social mobility.

Importantly, most parents in the study, irrespectively of their socio-economic background, described the benefits of their children having a good education as multiple and involving different spheres. As detailed in Chapter 5, eighth of the 15 families were from lower socio-economic background including two very disadvantaged lone parents families.

In the account of Hania's father education was relevant in the moral sphere and being well educated was also associated with being more respectful and having better manners:

> 'Because it's everything, education teaches you manners, teaches you respect, teaches you and makes you a better person and you become something extraordinary or whatever you want to be but if you don't have an education you don't know what you are doing to your life.' (Hania's father).

Education was seen as a means to an end which opened up opportunities in terms of career and life chances:

> 'That is more important. Education is very important. My father always told us although I'm not very educated myself (...). An earthquake can come. You can lose your house and jewellery. People can steal anything but one thing no one can take away from you is your education.' That is one thing I've told my daughters and I would like them to be well educated.' (Zahida's mother)

Additionally, education was regarded as making life more meaningful by setting clearer goals and was perceived as the main route to upward social mobility:

> 'Hania she wants to become a midwife and she knows what she needs to do, just carry on studying what she is doing and then she will achieve that and when she achieves that eventually she knows she is going to have a better life and she will have a good family, she will drive a good car, she will have a nice house and even she can support me if she wants to but if she doesn't achieve anything like that then she doesn't know herself what she is going to do. So education is vital and important for anybody, for any religion.' (Hania's father)

In this sense, the moral achievements of education were balanced by more materialistic aspects such as the wealth deriving from the high professional careers that education enhanced.

It emerged that getting a good education was, for the parents in this study, a priority they shared for both their sons and daughters, even though this was not always the case within the more traditional South Asian cultural milieu supporting gendered division of labour in the household. Hania explained how her parents support with her getting a good education was perceived as unusual within the extended family and community, 'because she is a girl':

> '*Do you feel (your father) is supportive about what you want to do?*
>
> My dad supported me a lot. Oh definitely you wouldn't get the normal dads especially being Bengali as well. A lot of people have criticised him for being supportive and say "how come you let your daughter go to college?" and my dad is like "why not?" and they will be like "you know Asian girls don't go to college" and my dad is like "since when? She has an equal opportunity like her brothers to go out there and be something that she wants to be. (...)
>
> *How do you feel when people say that Asian girls shouldn't go to College?*
>
> I tell you what it makes my blood boil.' (Hania)

Support was not the only way parents influenced their children's aspirations and choices about their future. Through their guidance, parents shaped the type of career and the educational choices that their children undertook, as reflected in Tania's father accounts:

> 'So we start to show her the implications (of doing more academic less vocational course such as biomedical science) and we're able to do that obviously she's a little bit more well we'll see what happens, because that's what kids do, they say well things will happen. Well things don't just happen, you know, you have to make them happen. So we made her thought about the process that occurs and we take her through stages and it took a long time for her to come round to the fact that, in fact, yeah OK maybe vocational is what I want to do. Because I want to be able to start work and then I don't want to be dependent on working for someone else, I want to have the opportunity of working myself in the profession that I'm in'. (Tania's father)

Tania followed her parents' guidance without showing signs of being particularly under pressure; rather she explained her final choice, physiotherapy, brought together her personal interests while gaining parental support:

> *'Why physiotherapy?*
> I wanted to do some healthcare, that field/area and my parents want me to do a professional degree so not something like biomedical sciences which was also an option I quite wanted to do that, but because of the whole job situation they were just a bit worried about me getting a job afterwards and so I settled on physiotherapy which I like an interesting degree and it's about helping people and it's got biology aspects in it, so it incorporates what I enjoy and stuff and they want me to do a professional one so it helps with that.
>
> *What about if you wanted to go to a drama school or something like that?*
> I don't but I think they would be fine with that, if there was something that I really wanted to do, they might be a bit worried because they're worried about jobs.
>
> *But they would support you do you think?*
> Yes and not in a defiant way, but if I really wanted to do something like that and they said no I would do it anyway.' (Tania)

However, guidance was sometimes perceived by young people as pressure. Wajid, in his last year at college, wished to take a gap year before studying criminology but talked about how parents pressured him to go to university immediately after the A-levels:

> 'The course, criminology, I find it interesting and I have researched it and I have done a lot of research into it and it does look really interesting but it is just that thing of am I actually ready for university or should I take a year gap, so it is that kind of thing. My parents are like "no you can't take a year gap, you have got to carry on or you might not go back after a year you might think I don't want to go to university anymore".' (Wajid)

Therefore, support, guidance, but also restrictions and pressure were some of the outcomes of parents prioritising education for the future success of their children. The following case study has been selected to illustrate how one family group managed educational aspirations and particularly to reflect on the emotional impact that the fear of parental disappointment had on young people.

Case study 1: 'Not getting into Cambridge'

The debate within Omar's family about educational aspirations and going to one of the top UK University highlights how educational aspirations – which affect individual habitus - were negotiated within the family field.

Omar's family lived in an affluent area of London. Both mother and father were originally from Pakistan whilst Omar was second generation born in the UK. Omar's

father moved to the UK in the early 1970s to study and once he had completed his degree he worked in banking until quite recently when he became self-employed and set-up his own business. Omar's mother also worked full-time for a small and very busy retail company where she was involved in different roles from management to overseeing the production.

Omar was an 18 year old only child about to finish his A-levels at the time of the interview. His accounts exemplified quite strongly the hopes, expectations and uncertainty of that specific transitional time and he talked a lot about finishing college, going to university and his future. Omar recounted how he applied to several universities and received offers from all of them except from Cambridge. It emerged that the rejection from Cambridge became a big family issue which was widely discussed amongst members of the extended family.

The nature of the family's relationships was mirrored by the in-family debate about Omar's educational future. Omar's parents invested a lot of income in a prestigious private school which involved them having to make sacrifices as the mother explained:

> 'He qualified he went to many schools and he passed the exams and he loved this school. And it was a sacrifice we made and we have only one son and we will send him to the best school ever. And 'Middleton School' was the best of all schools in where we live. And it has a fantastic report you know as schools go. So we sacrificed a bigger house, a bigger car just to send our son to a private school which is the best and he has come out fantastic. Touch wood.' (Omar's mother)

As Omar pointed out, the family's expectations of his educational performance were extremely high, particularly in the case of his father:

> 'I guess cos I've got the opportunity I'm in private school so like I have a much better opportunity to you know get excellent grades go to the top universities and stuff like that so in that way that's something that I don't think he had or many people in the family have had so because I have that sort of expectation that because I'm in that school I'm expected to do really well which I think that everybody sort of expects that of me. Like I don't really think of it that much because I just get on and do it but I mean there is that expectation which I think is more so from my dad than anyone else.'(Omar)

Omar described the sense of pressure deriving from his father's 'wanting him to be perfect':

> 'Yeah I think my dad's (...) wants me to be perfect which is quite difficult to live up to and I think maybe that's why my dad's a little bit more impatient so in

that way I've always found it maybe a little bit harder to deal with him, my mum's always been very level headed so.' (Omar)

This last account from Omar about being perfect relates strongly to the one of his mother who also highlighted the pressure coming from the father and the disappointment about Omar's failure in getting into Cambridge:

'My husband wants Omar to be better than the better of the best. He wants so much out of this child that it is hard and I understand he's an only child. He has come after many years lalalala, I want my son to have the best of the best. It's going to be a disappointment if he doesn't. I don't know how he'll take it if he doesn't do the best of the best.' (Omar's mother)

Therefore, in order to cope with the pressure, Omar adopted strategies aimed to maintain his self-confidence high:

'Yeah I've always felt a bit of pressure from my dad's side because of if I guess I was more sensible and never let that sort of bring me down or too much in that I'd try and use it to prove him wrong rather than to just say oh he doesn't believe in me so I won't believe in myself either. I sort of I used that to make me stronger rather than the other way around. So I think that's worked out for me to be better that way I mean maybe it's not good I don't think it's good for people to be exposed to that type of pressure or you know to be perfect or to be you know amazing but it depends on how you take it on' (...) I don't think I disappointed him I just think is hard to live at his standards.' (Omar)

The mother's accounts also reflect her concerns about the father's sense of disappointment about the rejection from Cambridge University. She explained that her husband had not yet accepted the rejection from and he was taking any chance to argue with the son about it:

'Omar is a Cambridge candidate and he had his interview and he didn't do well in his interview. But he got 100 marks and 99 marks in everything, he failed his interview. Because on that day he didn't answer the right questions. My husband can't forgive Omar for not getting into Cambridge. Do you understand? We have to go and see the Career Advisor in (Middleton School) and he said listen sir, they have only got a slot for this amount of people, on that Omar didn't do well. He didn't do well your son is you know the Headmaster wrote to Cambridge to say how come my prize pupil didn't get into Cambridge and they said, that day he didn't do the way he should have. So my husband comes home and says you see you can't take pressure. You need to learn how to work under pressure, you'll then get into Cambridge'. (Omar's mother)

These accounts about the rejection from Cambridge interpret the nature of the relationships between family members particularly the strong bond between mother and son and the more difficult relationship between Omar and the father:

> 'My mother is I have always been very very close to my mother. She's played a great role in obviously raising me and I think my dad would travel a bit and I don't know maybe it's just the mother's bond which I've always found I've always been very close to my mother. I'm not sure if I can explain it very well but I've just always felt that I could tell my mother everything maybe again because I haven't had any siblings like she is just someone like a confidante I tell her about absolutely everything and she does the same as well like she asks me for advice and I guess it works both ways. (...)Yeah like mum I can tell her absolutely everything so it's it is different like I don't think I can have that same relationship as with anybody else really it's just something sort of I guess a bit special.'(Omar)

As discussed later in this chapter, migration tends to have particular effects on parental priorities and expectations for their children pushing for upward social mobility. However the data from this family suggest that the emphasis on education had a different focus as Omar's parents were already from an educated middle-class background in Pakistan. In this case, the emphasis on educational success was part of passing down values that parents learnt within their own family's field back in Pakistan:

> 'I think first of all education is paramount in any of our standard of families that creates the basis or the foundation for your future life. If you have something in hind you can always do something with it and if you don't then you float around, so because of this education is very much important part of that'. (Omar's father)

Omar had a quite extended family network living in the UK with whom he had regular contact and which provided different levels of support. In the case of the rejection from Cambridge, the best options and alternative routes for Omar to take were discussed within the extended family and the pros and cons were carefully assessed:

> 'My brother called up and said, no way, don't let him lose a year, let him go elsewhere and he has to decide between (1 university) and (2 university). The decision is his, we do want him to go to (1 university) because my brother-in-law is also an Economist in (abroad) and he also said Omar university 1 would be a good bet and with university 1 you can go to Harvard'. (Omar's mother)

The family decided that Omar should go to one of the other universities from which he had received an offer, and in his interview Omar sounded very excited about this prospect. The older cousin's advice was determinant of this final decision and influenced the choice of the degree in economics that Omar finally decided to go for.

The accounts from this family illustrate the central role played by the extended family in setting priorities and developing Omar's precise aspirations, such as which degree to take:

> 'He's (cousin) very level headed and he's always been a very modest individual so he's definitely a role model I'd like to be when I was younger I wanted to be a doctor. He is a doctor and he's a fantastic doctor he was one of the youngest consultants ever so I mean academically he is brilliant and he's used that and now he's doing really well in his profession as well.' (Omar)

Omar's case exemplifies the importance of the extended family as the context where decisions were made, values were transmitted or learnt and where parents could gain further support with their parenting:

> 'With that we as a family also value family life so basically you know my mother in law lives here very close to us and my sister in law lives with her family five minutes away and we live here and I have a brother in law who has recently got married but he also was living very close. Now there is about ten or twelve of us literally three to four times a week we will meet and the reason we do that is we try and meet at dinner time at my mother in laws house and collectively we take food from our house, my sister in law brings some food and we all put the food together and we sit at the table together and we talk and with the children around and it gives us that thing rather than us telling children what to do it is also coming from their grandmother or their aunt and usually I felt the same when I was a child that the parents it's like they want to do it specifically against you but it isn't like that and that is why if my wife will tell her sisters children that is something that they have not done right they probably might have a different thinking on it than if the mother said "Don't do that, that's wrong" then they probably think my mother is really going against me.' (Omar's father)

In summary, Omar's family case-study shows how parental investment in education may affect family relations and also lead to psycho-emotional effects such as the pressure felt by Omar and his fear of parental disappointment. However, the strong emphasis on educational success also provided a source of motivation 'to aim high'.

8.2   Marriage as aspiration

Family is a very important social institution for Muslims, providing social, emotional and financial support to members, and within the family context, marriage acquires a particularly salient and specific role.

The Qur'an emphasises the importance of oneness which is embodied by one of the Five Pillars stating that 'God is One'. This idea of unity is also transposed in the context of family and the Qu'ran describes the reciprocal and complementary function of marriage as the bond which unifies two people, husband and wife, to create a single self:

> "He it is who created you from one soul, and from it made a spouse with whom he might find solace." (7:189)

> "Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them." (2:187)

Most parental accounts were in line with these verses and demonstrated a strong emphasis on marriage as aspiration for their children. In more formal terms marriage in Islam - Nikkha - is a contract which joins together two families determining their honour and reputation. Therefore the involvement of parents in the selection of their children's life partner is considered a duty from both a religious and a social point of view (Gilliat-Ray, 2010).

Different South Asian Cultures

The study suggests that differences amongst South Asian groups became more prominent in the context of marriage. The general feeling was that Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians share very similar sets of values, lifestyle, practices, and cuisine, and most importantly they are all tied together by Islam:

> 'Pakistan and Indian people are the same, they eat and sleep the same way. The tradition and culture is the same. It's only that they're two different countries. In India there are a lot of Muslims. India's top doctors and actors are Muslims.'(Saleem)

Hania's father also emphasised the common roots of the three South Asian communities and the bonding deriving by the experience of migrating and settling in the UK:

> 'Asian and Indian, Pakistani and Bengali we all look the same and our background if we go back to history we used to be one nation. Probably we are three separate nations now but if go to like Ghandi's days, if we go past those days we used to be one. So we separated from one country to three countries, so sometimes when English people say "you are a Paki" or "you are a Pakistani" you have got to accept that because we are from. I mean I was born Pakistani, I was born when my country was Pakistan and now my country is independent and it is called Bangladesh, so I could say to myself I

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am a Pakistani because I was born in 1962 and we got independent in 1970, so like eight/nine years old when I was Pakistani. When we came here we came here to work, earn money, support the family, so what we did we started bringing our families in you know the wife and the children (...)' (Hania's father).

However, it appeared that history was at the same time unifying and dividing the three countries, and differences rooted in their historical past were still present in some of the parental accounts. Sakina's father, from Bangladeshi ethnic background, elaborated that *'Pakistanis were really horrible to Bangladeshis'* after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and therefore *'Bangladeshis before used to hate Pakistanis'*. More similarities were identified between Indians and Bangladeshis rather than with Pakistanis. Pakistanis were associated with being more traditional. For instance, they were described as 'are more covered' as they did not wear saris but salwar kameez. Pakistani culture was considered to be 'hard', meaning less flexible compared to Bangladeshi culture that Sakina's father depicted as *'soft kind people that can live society easily'*.

As detailed in Chapters 9 and 10, young people showed a much lower sense of belonging to their ethnic group than their parents and appeared less interested in inter-cultural or inter-ethnic differences. Hania, for instance, expressed frustration toward the Bangladeshi community, which she considered as backward and closed minded and looked at other South Asians, such as Pakistani, as more 'cultured':

> 'It is quite upsetting because it's not like I don't get on with Bengali's it's just that I am quite different from the typical Bengali family. I think it is going to be quite difficult to find someone on the same level as me and that being the reason why I would rather marry someone who is Pakistani or Indian rather than them be Bengali because they are brought up too typical minded.'(Hania)

Religion, ethnicity and marriage

Marriage was the specific context where ethnic differences were perceived as more important by parents from either low or higher socio-economic background. Most of the mothers and fathers in the study had strong preferences for their children to get married to Muslims inside their own community and more specifically within the same ethnic group and even the same Muslim sect. However, parents expressed some levels of flexibility about the background of the children's spouses: for instance, no parental respondent spoke about dishonouring their children if married to someone from

different ethnic and religious background, even though most of them expected non Muslim spouses to convert to Islam.

The Qu'ran lays out strict rules about interfaith marriage and sets out that Muslims should only marry other Muslims. Marriage is allowed with people from Christian and Jewish religious background, but conversion to Islam is posed as condition and most often expected:

> "And do not marry the polytheistic ('Mushrik') women unless they come to believe. A female slave, who is a believer, is better than a polytheistic ('Mushrik') woman, even if winning your admiration. Do not give (your women) in marriage to polytheistic ('Mushrik') (men) unless they believe; and a male slave who is a believer is better than a polytheistic ('Mushrik') man even if winning your admiration. These people will, lead you to the Fire, but God leads to the Garden and forgiveness, by His leave". (2: 221)

Amongst the three main criteria - religion, ethnicity and Muslim sect- taken into account when deciding on the suitability of a potential spouse for their son or daughter, parents in the study prioritised Islam and hoped their children would eventually marry a Muslim:

> 'I have no problem. It doesn't matter which background they are from, European, Italian, French, whatever, as long as they accept Islam then I have no problem.' (Hamid's father)

As mentioned above, the Qur'an leaves some flexibility to Muslim men and allows them to marry Jewish and Christian women, referred as 'People of the Book':

> "Licit to you are chaste women from amongst the believers and chaste women from amongst the People given the Book before you." (5:5)

Conversely, much stronger restrictions are placed on women who are not allowed to marry non Muslim men unless they convert:

> "Nor marry your girls to unbelievers until they believe. A man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever...." (2:221)

This study reflects these beliefs and respondents considered the conversion to Islam as the condition for marrying a non-Muslim, as Haroon and Tania's father from higher socio-economic background indicate:

> 'Yes and generally if you marry outside then the next stage if you like of that is that the person should convert to Islam and then the children will be brought

up in an Islamic tradition and so on. What it does it accommodates, you accommodate at various levels'. (Haroon and Tania's father)

Additionally, it was explained that because the formal intergenerational transmission of Islam happens via the father, Muslim girls are expected to experience stronger parental constraints about who to marry and some respondents pointed out that, particularly in the case of non-Muslim boys marrying Muslim girls, conversion was essential:

'It doesn't have to be from my community, but he has to be a Muslim, because in that religion a man can marry a woman, but a woman can't marry a non-Muslim.'(Zahra's mum)

Sarah expressed strong concerns about her parents allowing her marrying a non Muslim and she said she simply would not dare:

'What about you, would you marry someone white that is not Muslim?

No I don't think I would, they'd probably have to be Muslim, I just wouldn't do it, I don't know, I just wouldn't dare, because obviously then I'd start thinking of my whole family, forget mum and dad like everyone else in the world, it just wouldn't be right

What about if he converts?

Yeah then I would consider it, but I don't know if my mum, I don't know. Then if he's a Muslim I think my mum would think about it, it's going to be hard though'. (Sarah)

However, in the study both young boys and girls spoke of conversion as the condition for them to have an inter-faith marriage. For instance Davar referred to the positive outcomes of converting a non Muslim spouse to Islam:

'In Islam it's not allowed (marrying a non Muslim). If you do get the person converted you get a lot of … I don't know the opposite to sins. Good deed. It's a very very good deed and your life will be very good.' (Davar)

As detailed in case study 2 below, respondents' accounts reflect that their main preoccupations behind interfaith marriages, were the need to preserve their religion within the family and the next generation:

'That's the way we look at it because our children, because our children we brought them up in Islamic ways and our cultures, we taught them our culture. So we believe if they get married to somebody that is similar or same you know same lifestyle or beliefs it will be easier for both of them whereas if my daughter is Muslim and she is getting married with a Christian then the argument starts there because she is going to say "do you want to change to

Muslim?" or he is going to say "do you want to change to Christian?" so the dispute is from the day one isn't it?' (Hania's father)

The sense of sharing deriving from marrying a Muslim and the fear that religious differences also imply cultural and values distance undermining the relationship, were described by several respondents as important reasons behind their support for intra-faith marriages:

' (...) the same religion, because then the values have already been taught, you know, the values of having a certain way of life and that's the way of life it should be, not more, not less, there's only just the one path and you do that together'. (Sarah's and Farooq's mother)

However, for Sarah's father, being Muslim was not a good enough condition when thinking about a possible spouse for his children. He hoped his children would marry someone who is a good Muslim, by which he meant someone who really understands the inner message of Islam particularly about respect within the relationship between a man and a woman:

'(…) Because the impact of marriage with different cultures can become difficult, there are difficulties, but it doesn't mean it's impossible and as a Muslim I would say to them it's very important that you marry a good Muslim, because a good Muslim will hold onto the values of Islam and will not ill-treat the young lady, because that's how Islam teaches you not to hurt, I mean for me to put my hands on my wife would be unacceptable, totally unacceptable, but a person who doesn't have those values, you know, you see so many young ladies, English women, girls married they get beaten black and blue. That's totally un-Islamic, you know, Islam teaches you to be kind to your wives, to show them love and be patient with them, because you know as a woman you go through different stages during your cycles. Now if I don't understand you, then that's part of my problem, so we have to understand and we've been taught, in Islam we're taught to understand the sensitivities of a woman, a woman is a very sensitive person, you know, you can change from the peak to the bottom, so if I don't understand that then I have a problem.' (Sarah's Father)

Secondly, together with intra-faith marriages, respondents from the all the three South Asian groups in the study also showed preferences for intra-ethnic marriages, which is in line with statistical evidence indicating that the majority of South Asians marry within their own communities (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). Davar's father, from quite a low socio-economic background, explained that marrying another Muslim, but outside the Bengali community, involved communication difficulties and cultural distance:

'Yeah so many things like one of my cousin's daughter got married to a Muslim but he's from the Syria somewhere you know I don't know see I mean nobody goes in their flat in the house anymore because of that you know, your daughters gone and married to a different culture because they don't know our culture, we don't know their culture you know how it works and it's hard and outside people maybe they understand husband and wife they do understand the feelings but not everybody'. (Davar's Father)

Additionally, marriage between different ethnic groups was also perceived as more difficult on a social sphere where external partners could face exclusion, as Omar's father from higher socio-economic background pointed out:

'No, even if it is outside the religion the acceptance is there but obviously there are other social aspects to it. You know the first thing that comes to mind is language, sitting together we start rattling in our own language and there is somebody like yourself sitting in the middle and she can't understand a word and so that becomes a problem and then basically the boy or the girl would say "I am not going to your family because you all keep talking in your own language" and it will become a contention between themselves. So to avoid that there are some that are more liberal and they don't care and so it all depends on that personal relationship between people'. (Omar's father)

Thirdly, in the context of what criteria were important to parents in thinking about their children's future spouse, the distinction between different Muslim sects, such as Sunni or Shi'a, was generally slightly less relevant than religion and ethnicity but still discussed by some of the parents in the study. Omar's father, from Sunni background, explained that marriage within different sects would have an impact on young people who would develop 'mixed views':

'It's because of the children, whether the children be Sunni or Shi'a and that is where the problem happens because generally if the mother is Shi'a she will influence the children, if the father is Shi'a yes he can influence but he will try to influence it because of the family. At the end of the day I think it is to avoid that particular thing of the children having a mixed view about thing, that is why it is avoided not because it is something wrong'. (Omar's father)

Belonging to the same Muslim sect was possibly more important to parents from minority Muslim groups such as Yasmeen and Haroon and Tania's families both from Shi'a minority group as demonstrated in the following case study 2.

Interestingly, restrictions about who to marry were valued by some parents independently from their socio-economic background, with professionals being as concerned as, or sometimes even more concerned, than other parents from lower

socio-economic background, about who their children should marry. For instance, some of the parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds expressed strong preferences for their children to marry Muslims from the community and supported arranged marriages rather than just love marriages as Zahida's mother pointed out:

> 'It's young people falling in love and getting married. Then you realise that's not it. Life is not that easy. You fall in and out of love and then you have a broken marriage. I don't think everyone should have an arranged marriage but it should be in moderation. When parents look for a boy or girl each parent knows their children. If a girl or boy is attracted you can't see anything else. You're not logical but parents will always see what's good. There's no guarantee. Any age, culture there is no guarantee to have a happy married life. It's a compromise and you have to compromise all your life regardless. It's understanding someone then life becomes very easy. These are the things you try and teach your children. You have to make an effort and bend a lot. In any culture you need to bend to make a good married life. You have to do things for your children. If I was working and it thought my career was very important and my husband thought his career was very important, how would we communicate? Someone has to bend and you have to have enough time for your children. You have to make a lot of sacrifices. When young people get married they are not willing to make any sacrifices.' (Zahida's mother)

In some cases middle-class parents were concerned to maintain both tradition and status by having their children married within the similar socio-economic group. A divergent voice came from Yasmeen's mum, who was a professional working as an IT manger and the main earner in the household. In contrast to the father, Yasmeen's mother appeared to be quite open to her daughter marrying a non- Muslim:

> 'As long as he's Muslim. It doesn't even matter if he's not. I'd love her to marry one of our culture, one of our, one from our mosque, but if it happens to be a different Muslim, or he happens to be something else, then so be it'. (Yasmeen's mother)

In line with Yasmeen's mother, there were some parents from a relatively lower socio-economic background, who appeared less worried about their children marrying outside the community, even though almost all still required the spouse to be Muslim. For instance, in both Noreen's and Asif's family only one parent was employed: Noreen's father worked for the Royal Mail loading and unloading packets and Asif's father worked in a restaurant and had a second job as a taxi driver. Noreen's father and Asif's mum both stated that they would support their children to marry whoever they prefer with the only condition that the partners had to be from Muslim religious background. Amina's mother, from a family where both parents were unemployed and

not fluent in English, posed no condition on who their daughters would marry giving priority just to their happiness.

The practice of arranged marriages was the subject of discussion with some respondents and was seen as part of the parents' duties to ensure their children had the best and safest marriage, while maintaining honour and family reputation:

> '*What is the power a parent has in this (marriage of children)?*
>
> You can just advise them, at the end of the day they have to do it. Arranged marriages and forced marriages are 2 different things. I think arranged marriages are good. The definition of arranged marriage is a mediator knows both parties and he mediates and says these are the qualities of your daughter, these are the qualities of the son and they both will match each other. Arranged marriage is not, right you have to come and marry this guy, that's forced marriage, that is wrong, but arranged marriages are good.' (Yasmeen's Father)

It was explained that arranged marriages, in contrast to forced marriages, were based on both partners' consent, but still implied a level of constraint according to some of the young people. For instance, Hania expressed her concerns about arranged marriages and she made it clear that she was not happy about the prospect of, eventually, marry a Bengali:

> 'My previous partner, he wasn't Pakistani or Bengali and because we got on so well I knew this wasn't going to go anywhere simply because he is not Bengali and it is awful that, it really is. I have got family in my family who have married Chinese and Jamaican or Pakistani and the things that they had to go through to be able to let that happen you just think it's not worth the risk.
>
> No even my mum and dad they are different and when those other people, my family, have got married they have supported them and so then I flag up the question "if I was to marry someone outside of our culture?" and they were like "no I don't think so."
>
> It's actually quite upsetting because obviously I have been brought up to be multicultural and have diverse friends, not by my parents but by my own as a person, and I should have that ultimate decision who I marry whether that is a white person or Pakistani or Indian, no matter what happens and then I think to myself I don't know why it has to happen like that.' (Hania)

In contrast, her father insisted on the importance of the family's acceptance of the partner for both religious and cultural reasons:

'Yeah well you still have a choice to say no or say yes to it. But like I say if my son or my daughter picked somebody outside who is not my religion I am not going to accept that and she or he wants to go ahead with it my point is why just because you like her or because you love him? Okay how much do you love each other? If my daughter changed her religion into his religion then my point is to my daughter why are you changing and why not him? Argument is there from the day one. If my daughter said that her boyfriend is saying to change her religion to his then I am going to say to my daughter "why are you changing and not him?" so she has got to think.

(…) Now secondly it's the culture, there might be a lot of issues in culture that you might accept something and you might not accept something, I might accept something and I might not accept something. So it's the differences there and we as parents we think let me choose your life partner and the way we look at that is more or less everything the same, background, same beliefs.' (Hania's father)

Similarly to Hania, other girls such as Nilufer, but also boys like Wajid and Omar, found it difficult to adapt to possible parental restrictions on whom to marry:

'I would want to basically be my decision. I mean fair enough parents are a big part of marriage but they shouldn't be able to decide for you because you're the one who is spending the life with that person not them, so the only way you will know if you can live with that person is if you get to know them, go out with them or do whatever'. (Wajid)

Maria stated how her family had the final decision on who she will eventually marry and she was willing to conform:

So will you fight if you meet a non-Pakistani Muslim and want to marry him?

I will fight for it but at the end of the day if my family says "no you can't marry him" then that would be the final decision, yeah'. (Maria)

Young people were left with the difficult task of having to negotiate parental restrictions and their own wishes, which meant ideally finding someone 'they loved' but who was also accepted by the family:

'I think for me the most important thing is someone who I really enjoy myself with or who I really really love so it would be more to do with that but in the same way it has to be someone who my family accepts as well so for me it's not just one or the other I have to find that sort of equilibrium or balance between it.' (Omar)

Case study 2: Marriage and the continuity of religion and culture

Haroon and Tania's family, from a high socio-economic background, synthesised a number of themes which were relevant in the context of marriage as an important

aspiration that parents held for their children. The continuity of tradition and the different perception between mothers and fathers about the requirements of possible spouses were negotiated within the family context.

Haroon and Tania' were respectively 15 and 18 years old. Their family lived in a predominately white and quite affluent area in the South East. The mother was a self-employed legal adviser and the main breadwinner in the family, while her husband worked with her as administrator. Both parents were first generation migrants: the father was born in India but grew up in Uganda, whilst the mother was born and brought up in India. They belong to a minority Muslim sect which is part of the Shi'a group. The father moved to the UK in the early 1970s because of the events that affected Uganda at the time after the dictator, Idi Amin, took power; while the mother moved to the UK to complete her postgraduate studies after specialising in India. The migration histories and biographies were relevant to both parents who spoke widely about their childhood and families and, within these personal trajectories, about the issue of marriage. They had what the mother described as a love marriage; however they were firstly introduced through their transnational extended network of kin:

> 'Anyway, the first 6 months (in the UK) were depressing and no family, but I was making gradual friends and other people and after that I felt fine. I met then (husband) (...) usual you know when you're going to a place, everyone around your extended family is well wishing you and saying aah by the way I know of a family in London, here's the number, but you never use that do you, it's just in the drawer or somewhere and you think I'm not ringing someone, but it so happened that she rang them, or she gave them saying oh my cousin has come to England, can you just go and check all's well, we did give her a number to contact you and she's probably not, but see how she is and everything. Anyway, so (...) his mum said that he should go and call on me and just look on and invite me for the weekend so we get to know, so he made contact initially and then invited me to his family and then started inviting me to any of the social do's for the community, so I get to meet people and so on and I think what happened was gradually our friendship grew and I went to his family and I went to loads of other people and I think from the same thing I got some other people I know they have taken me as their daughter and I married off from their house with his family I grew close to (husband) and I started then liking him'. (Tania's mother)

Because all the main requirements for an intra-ethnic wedding were present, (mother and the father were both Muslim Indians from the same extended family network), the mother gained her family's acceptance quite easily. There were still some discordant elements such as slightly different social classes, but the mother emphasised how her

family, and particularly her father, always proved to be particularly open minded and unconventional. One example of this was her father's support with her leaving home to study in Bombay and then moving to London:

> (...) 'Before coming to England my mother was obviously wanting me to find a match and get married, so she was trying to get me to see some boys, some from England as well who I met in India and I said to her I'm not interested, I wasn't interested in getting married. So I would see them and be polite to them, because they've made the effort, but really try and tell them I'm not interested, don't be wasting your time! Because I didn't want to get married then, but here when he proposed and I wanted to, I picked up the phone and I said look I've met someone and he's proposed to me and I told my father a bit about his details and I said ask me anything you want, but he said no, if you've made the right decision I'm happy with your decision, you're the one who's going to live with it and whoever it is it's fine by me. I couldn't believe he was saying this. It's fine by me, I have no questions for you, you know, I said I can't believe this! He said yeah, I said give me to mum and then I spoke to my mum, my mum had 120 questions! Like what's he doing, what's he earning, where is he living, what's his mother, what's his father, which sect is he, you know, because in Muslim there are so many sects.' (Tania's mother)

Her personal experience also shaped her view of her children's future and the mother acknowledged that she would not have problems with her children marrying outside their sect while she thought her husband would have had stronger concerns about it. She described her preference as her children marrying a Muslim but her priority being that they would marry 'a good human being' with the recognition that, even within her sect, there was corruption and misbehaviour:

> *Will it matter the sect in the context of your children's marriage?*
>
> I personally don't think so. I think I would like my children to marry Muslim preferably and I would like them to marry good human beings first, very important being, I think their qualities have got to be right to me, because you've seen lots of people saying you want a (Shi'a minority group), you want this, and when they get married things don't work out and they are not the right people and I know Shi'a who drink and Shi'a who smoke and Shi'a who gamble. So to me the first thing is they've got to have a right good human being who's got good values right and then, of course, I'd like them to be Muslim because then their children can be Muslims and they can practise Muslim. The advantage if they are from a Shi'a there's an advantage, if they marry someone who's from Shi'a then all the cultural nuances and traditions and so on will mean something to them and they are quite different, otherwise it won't mean anything. Now this is my perspective which is completely different from my husband who will want them to marry a Shi'a and he says to me you shouldn't say this to children, because you're sowing seeds to them which he wouldn't want.
>
> *What about if they marry someone who is not Muslim?*

Well we will have different views. My husband and me I'll say to my children I'm there for them for life no matter what, which means if they marry someone if it's a decent boy that's fine by me, I am going to be there, they're my children. I would have concerns about their lives as to how which direction they're going and I know that both are fairly grounded in the sense they pray and they keep their fast and they like to keep that and if they were marrying somewhere outside, I think they would find it difficult and their children would, so they know the issues about it and the thing is we have loads of family members whose children have married outside, not even Muslim they've married Hindus, they've married. (Tania's mother)

As she stated, this was very different from what her husband said; he asserted that religion, ethnic background and sect were all deeply relevant in thinking about the future of his two children and particularly in the context of marriage:

'Well why wouldn't you want them to get married to someone else (...). Getting married to someone from another religion, well why would you want them to get married to someone from another religion? Why would I not want my children to marry another Muslim? Exactly what's wrong with that? There's no prejudice, that's what I was looking for, there's no prejudice about it. Certainly I don't think that's even a question of prejudice (...)

I want my children to be happy and I want them to carry on with their traditions, both in terms of the values and traditions that we were brought up with, that we have brought them up with, we want them to carry on with that. Why would we want them to do anything different, anything new?' (Tania's father)

The continuity of traditions was the main reason for the father to hope that the children will marry someone from similar background and the same community. As he explained, moving to the UK, bringing up his children in such a different environment from where their families were originally from, implied the risk that the children would be detached from their family's original culture. Most importantly, the father pointed out that the current social change had already eradicated his children's generation from the context of the parents and created a gap between them which could grow bigger if effort was not placed in keeping culture and tradition alive:

'(..) world and life and things do move, things change, but sometimes because you've moved away with a certain picture of something you get stuck in that picture, you want that picture forever to be, you don't see change, your change is far more gradual. So they use the term to describe that, you are more Indian than the Indians.' (Tania's father)

Tania and Haroon loved India; they enjoyed spending time there and had a good relationship with the family back there who they visited frequently. Tania was about to take a gap year after her A-levels and do some volunteering work in India. Both Tania

and Haroon did not seem worried about marriage at this point in life but they were confident that there would not be impositions on them from the family:

> 'I'm not forced into an arranged marriage, my parents have told me they'll be happy with whoever I marry and hopefully that will still be the same when it actually comes down to it but I think generally it will. Some of the people in our community and in our family have married white and non Muslims and it's been fine for them, like I understand it's difficult because it's hard to bring them into the community.' (Tania)

To conclude, the family highlighted important elements of how the process of negotiating change and tradition affected parental aspirations and priorities for their children: the mother was challenging traditional family roles by being the main breadwinner of the household; whilst the father's posed very strong emphasis on continuity with some traditional practices including those related to marriage. Tania and Haroon showed very little concerns about possible parental restrictions and felt they would be free to act with parental support.

8.3 What influences the priorities and aspirations that South Asian Muslim parents have for their children?

Migration

A following stage of the thematic analysis aimed at investigating what was underlying the development of parental aspirations. One important theme indicated that parents projected onto their children the opportunities they missed out in life because of the difficulties endured during migration, which implied long time for settling in the new country while handling family responsibilities such as caring and work:

> *'About your children, what things are important in bringing them up?*
> Study, career. They do something better because we didn't have the opportunity.
>
> *What would you like your children to do professionally?*
> My son wanted to become a doctor. My daughter said she will be a teacher. As long as they do something good.
>
> *What do you mean 'good'?*
> Good career. Be a doctor, engineer, teacher. I don't want them to be like me, housewife or working in a restaurant. ' (Asif's mother)

Young people, on the other hand, felt compelled to meet parental expectations, particularly as they were aware of the sacrifices parents had made to support them, as Asif demonstrated:

> *'So is it going to be difficult for you to decide what to do after school?*
> I know what I want to do. I want to be a doctor, so those people that can't afford medicine around the world so I can give them that medicine for free
>
> *So it's quite important that you do science at school?*
> Yeah.
>
> *How did that come in your head to be a doctor?*
> It was my parents' dreams, so I'm just following my parents' dreams.
>
> *But do you like it?*
> I like it as well.
>
> *So in the future are you going to university?*
> Yeah.' (Asif)

This point about meeting parental expectations was reinforced by other young people, such as Saleem and Wajid, who explained how migration reduced their parents' opportunities in the UK as first generation migrants had to deal with barriers such as poor English skills or lack of qualifications:

> 'When the Muslims from Bangladesh and Pakistan come here they all started off in factories. My dad studied in Sheffield but after that he never went to college, he regrets it. He says "why don't you try and have an easier job than me. Sometimes you don't have money and you think how you're going to feed your kids, why don't you try and get a better job so you don't have to think about the money?" They talk about their experiences and they know all the trouble they went through they don't want their kids to go through. When they talk about the older Muslim generation they're most the uneducated ones. We need more educated Muslims so they don't get attacked. Young people need to get educated. When you're educated you give a better answer.' (Saleem)

The interviews suggest that parents' migration histories led young people to develop a sense of responsibility explicated in 'having to do well in life' in order to give something back to the parents. In this regard, education was particularly important as Wajid demonstrated:

> 'I don't think they (his parents) are as happy as I think they are but my parents have always had that thing of 'we have come from Pakistan and you were born here and so you can go to school, college and university and do all them things.

Basically do what we couldn't do' I know that's the right thing to do, that is what you would want for your own kid to make sure they have got a future.' (Wajid)

Importantly, as Hania pointed out, parental aspirations were not gendered and as a daughter she had a strong sense of gratitude toward her father:

'Because as long as you have got the dedication you can do anything and my dad told me that and because he couldn't really go to university and get a degree or anything because he had my mum and my sister and from such a young age and because he was living on his own over here he did struggle a lot and he made a lot of sacrifices. I feel like it is my duty to make sure that he feels like they were all worth it because of me obviously getting my degree and that.' (Hania).

The case study below exemplifies a pattern between migration and intergenerational social mobility and illustrates how parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds held very high aspirations and prioritised educational success of their children. These parental aspirations had the effect of motivating young people do well in education.

Case study 3: Migration and parental aspirations

Zahra's family lived in a suburban area of the North West. Both parents were originally Pakistani but the father was second generation born in the UK while the mother moved to England when she got married in the late 1980s. They had 4 children, two boys and two girls, of whom, they said they were very proud because of their high educational achievements. Zahra, the targeted young girl, was the third one in the family, she was 16 years old and she was studying at college doing psychology, biology, sociology, chemistry and maths and she planned to go into dentistry. The eldest daughter was in her third year of medicine, their oldest son was a first year dentistry student and the youngest boy had just started at comprehensive school.

In contrast, the father had no qualifications and had been out of work because of health issues for a number of years; the mother had some education in Pakistan but no UK qualifications and had never worked. Both parents had some regrets about not having studied in the past but their reasons were different. The father talked about failing at school and drew a line between priorities, such as education, and Islam. He saw in Islam a further incentive to stay in 'the right path', focus and concentrate on the studies:

'I did study when I left school but I only went to college for a year, so I've not really, I didn't pursue further education.

Why was that?

I just fell behind really, you know, not that I got in trouble or anything, just I wasn't really at the level you see, so I stopped and then started working.

Looking back, if you could go back, would you have liked to study?

Of course I would yeah, I regret, you have your regrets, you know, but like I said, I wouldn't put the blame on my parents but I wasn't really guided sort of, but whereas my children they've been guided from early days and I think guidance is the main part you play in life with your children and obviously you're guided, you're not misguided.

What is the most important message that you try to get across as a father?

The message I would put forward to my children is obviously do good in life, don't get yourself involved with bad people and I think education plays another part you see, you know, if you're educated, you graduate, you're going to have a good job at the end of the day, it's for your benefit, you have to decide, so for a better future I think education is a long term sort of thing and obviously they will progress in life and they will see prosperity'. (Zahra's father)

The father drew a connection between Islam and education, he saw Islam as providing the pre-conditions to be successful in life by setting rigid moral standards and supporting a strong sense of duty:

There is a connection you see, I think there is a connection, because Islam forbids you from doing a lot of things which are bad and obviously if Islam is forbidding you from doing bad things, you stay on the right path you see and I think staying on the right path you learn differences between good and bad and I think Islam is a guidance for a better life yeah, so there is a connection there definitely I think there is. (...) To do well in life yeah and stay out of trouble, etc.' (Zahra's father)

The mother recounted her upbringing in Pakistan and the fact that her parents used not to invest in their daughters' education. She said that, looking back, she wished she had studied something but she knew that would have been impossible for her at that time because of the cultural restrictions attached to being a girl. She admitted that having missed out on her own education had become a driver for her children to get a degree and do well in their studies:

'Like I said, back in that time they used to think girls are not going to do any job or anything so it's alright they should learn housework and stuff like that and so that is what I actually did, learn how to cook and stuff like that Then I decided if I get married and I have children, daughters, I am going to make sure

they get a good education and be a driver as well because I am not driving myself and I wanted them to become a driver and get a good education'.

Would you have liked to go to university? Get an education

I would do yeah, I would have yeah.

What would you have studied if you had the chance?

No never actually thought of it because I knew I was not going to be able to' (Zahra's mother)

Zahra's parents exemplify the 'immigrant paradigm' that is to say that migrant families, from relatively low socio-economic background, hold higher aspirations than those considered the average aspirations of native families from similar socio-economic background:

> *Is education something particularly important to you?*
>
> Education is everything. It is very important. Like I said, I missed out on it and whatever I missed out myself I want my children to have that and I said to a friend of mine, I don't know about you but for my children, especially my daughters I want them to be driver and I want them to get a good education so they can get a good job. For example, if they get married God forbid if it doesn't work out they won't be stuck, they can live their life as normal people, because I've seen it happening in our community. Poor girls they get stuck with children, husband just goes off and if you're not driver and you don't have a job what can you do? So I don't want that to happen to my daughter. I mean whatever happens, I believe whatever's been written is going to happen, so you can't change that, but what you can change is get them educated and if they are driver they can do their own stuff I think it's very important.' (Zahra' mother)

Finally, Zahra explained that she always had an interest in science and that she had already thought about her future career options, considered medicine, but finally decided she was going to do dentistry as it felt like *'a more practical approach'*. Zahra was very close to her mother who was, she said, an important influence in defining her and the siblings' ambitions. She recognised how the fact that her mother did not have the opportunity to gain an education had motivated her and her siblings to do well and work hard:

> 'My mum is a big inspiration for me to be honest she has always encouraged us from a young age to work hard for what we want because she is unemployed herself because she came here at the age of nineteen when she got married to my father but she was never really given that opportunity to gain an education. It's what she has always wanted and so she has encouraged us from a young age that if we want something then we are going to have to work for it and she's really understanding'. (Zahra)

This case study has shown how the experience of migration affected aspirations and priorities and broke down more common patterns attached to social class. In particular, the lack of opportunities open to parents, made young people more conscious and responsible about their commitment to education and future career and pushed for upward social mobility. Alongside the findings of the survey about young Muslims having externally determined identities rather than explorative, this last case study also elucidates about pathways to adulthood which were well pre-defined in the family field.

South Asian cultures

Related to the experience of migration, elements of the South Asian cultures affected priorities and aspirations in the sense that it filled them with content about, for instance, what professional careers were mostly appreciated by families. Interviewees explained that being self-employed was more accepted that other types of careers which led to being employees as Tania's father explained:

> 'So you can't say that we, we haven't pushed her into it, because she hasn't gone for it, but we have tried to explain to her the relative values of things like that. She wanted to do some bio-mechanical science, we tried to say well alright this is where our guidance role comes in, you really want to think about a profession that is vocational, something that will allow you to stand on your own two feet, so if you go and do bio-mechanical science then what's going to happen at the end of it, what are the opportunities? ' (Tania's father)

Similarly, Zahida's father seemed unconvinced of his daughter's choice of international relations and expressed his preference for her to study law because of the possibilities for self-employment:

> 'No I don't like it. Although I'm sure international relations will have a future, a very good future, you need to be employed. You can't be doing it on your own. Then we went to University of Nottingham and she's been on the internet to the various universities and it seems she has come around to do her grades better and try for Law. She's going to retake some of the exams and is working very hard'. (Zahida's father)

It emerged that law and medicine, together with pharmacy, were amongst the professions regarded as most 'respectable' and favoured by the parents in the study, as Hania reflected:

'It seems South Asian parents have some preferences (about their children career choices)

Definitely pharmacy, medicine and probably law. (...) When we were very younger like five or six years old he (the father) used to go "medicine, pharmacy, medicine" and I don't really understand why. I think because doctors and pharmacists they are more Asian orientated and I think that's probably because that is seen as being successful and you know being a midwife isn't seen as being successful compared to someone qualifying as a doctor or pharmacist. Probably that actually because a lot of my friends in college, especially my tutor group, there is like four Asian lads and they are getting into Medicine or Pharmacy if not both.

So it is something about the reputation of that particular profession?

Definitely I think that plays a really big part. I mean there is white boys in my class who are doing their typical drama or performing arts, it doesn't have to be boys it can be girls as well and I have never met a white boy who is doing medicine at all. I have seen some doing music or travel and tourism but mainly medicine is done by Asians.' (Hania)

Other important influences on the development of priorities and aspirations came from within the family field, and particularly from the siblings and other members of the wider network of kin who acted as role models and provided guidance. There were several cases where parents referred to cousins and other relations for advice on their children's career and educational choices as also shown in case study 1. Nasreen, whose parents were not educated, also spoke about her cousins as her sources of determination:

'*Where did your determination come from?*

General friends and family. The majority of our cousins are into education and do really well. I think of them as models, they make thing about what I will do in my future'. (Nasreen)

Even though she was only 16 years old at the time of the interview, Nasreen appeared very determined to go into medicine and become a GP and spoke about her sister, a law graduate, as a major source of inspiration:

'Yeah and she's (sister) very supportive as well like (..) for my GCSEs she supports me all the way and she goes you have to do better than me like even though she's a lawyer, but she wants to push me ahead of her, that's why she's really important'. (Nasreen)

Conclusions

This chapter has explored the priorities and aspirations that parents in the study had for their children and included the young people's perspectives about the impact parental expectations had on their own plans for the future and lives in the present.

In line with Bourdieu's idea that education is a crucial element of cultural capital, findings revealed how parents in this study mostly identified the future success of their children with good performance at school, access to prestigious universities and eventually professional careers.

Parental emphasis on children's education transcends cultural and religious particularism and was shared by families from different social class backgrounds. In line with this, education as the highest priority, was not gendered and parents in the study expected both boys and girls to get high qualifications and move into 'respectable' careers. However, it has to be noted that 11 out of the 23 young people in the sample were selected through schools and overall 20 of them were in education while two dropped out but said were about to go back. Possibly, the composition of the sample has affected the strong emphasis on education.

It emerged that migration promoted intergenerational upward social mobility and elements of the South Asian cultures provided further content for the future professional trajectories of the young people in the study. The findings are in line with the idea of the immigrant paradigm, a concept which has been developed to explain the misalignment between the condition of immigrant - generally associated with lower socio-economic background, lower aspirations and poorer school performance - and the strong emphasis on educational success, which most often characterises immigrant parents.

Marriage was more of a South Asian cultural specific aspiration and most parents expressed concerns about their children's future partners being from a different ethnic and religious background. The preferences for intra-ethnic and intra-faith marriage reflected the need for maintaining the continuity of religion and South Asian cultures. These preferences were shared by some of the more educated parents in the study, from higher socio-economic backgrounds whilst some of the other parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds demonstrated higher flexibility on who their children should marry.

In this sense, findings from this chapter are in line with those emerging from the survey, and highlight how the South Asian Muslim young people in the study had a less '*exploratory*' path to adulthood than comparable youth and more pre-defined set of aspirations and expectations about their future.

To conclude, findings suggest that multiple factors shaped parental vision of future and aspirations for their children, which were influenced by the experience of migration, the socio-economic background of the family, Islam and the cultural milieu of the parents' country of origin. The three depth family case studies display the complexity of these constraints within family groupings.

Chapter 9

Negotiating identities: conforming and contesting parental culture and Islam

Introduction

This chapter examines the different ways in which young British Muslims negotiate influences affecting their identity, particularly those coming from their religious affiliation and their national self-identification. The chapter presents qualitative results together with some insights from visual methods which, in the form of photographs taken by young people, provided the initial focus of the interviews with them and in some cases, the starting point of a process for the construction of three typologies. As detailed in Chapter 5 (methods), these typologies consist of overarching themes which interpret different strategies of identity negotiation. This chapter focuses on two of the typologies and explores how young people conformed and contested parental culture, while a third typology' 'combining', will be the object of the following chapter.

By negotiating and re-negotiating different aspects of identity as reflected by habitus it will be argued that South Asian Muslims in the UK identify with their own religious and cultural values while they also adjust to those of the wider society in which they settled. In the study the different approaches to the negotiation and re-negotiation of identities take the form of strategies and reflect the impact and contribution of parents through the intergenerational transmission of values on their children's identity. The chapter places emphasis on young people's beliefs, values, tastes and practices which were previously defined as the important indicators of identity as displayed in the model 'habitus and identity' (Figure 2.1) in Chapter 2.

9.1 Conforming strategies

The typology about young people's conforming to parental culture combines a number of strategies (wide themes) built upon accounts that reflect inter-generational solidarity. These strategies were used by young people when negotiating between the

influences of family, religion and British values as incorporated by the idea of 'Britishness'.

A strategy about understanding, accepting and sharing parental culture and Islam

As shown in Appendix F, several young people took photographs of themselves going out and socialising with their friends and spoke extensively about relationships, going out, smoking, drinking or taking drugs. The emphasis on these specific topics reflects issues of contemporary youth described in Chapter 4. Importantly, the analysis suggests that for the young people in the study negotiating identities implied bridging these secular practices with Islam and South Asian cultures. Parents also addressed these issues with regard to their concerns about their children going out or having pre-marital relationships and when they explained how to transmit a sense of morality.

As detailed later in this chapter, for some of the young people drinking or being in a relationship were causes of intergenerational conflict, whilst others were deeply critical of these kinds of practices and aligned with their parents' moral standards. Even this second group of young people in the study, who were not interested in going out 'partying' or drinking did not conform passively to the restrictions set by their parents, but rather they reflected on and then assessed the benefits of following certain norms as the account from Tania's illustrates:

> 'Maybe it's because I've been brought up like that but I don't feel like I'm missing out on anything. I don't know how I'd think if I was brought up thinking drinking and smoking is fine, but at the moment even if Islam said you could smoke it ruins your health so I don't want to do it, drinking you lose your mind you're not in your right senses. I don't know how far I could ever get if I had a bit of it who knows what I'll become next, who knows if I'll want more if I become addicted, even if it's just a few glasses I do want to be in my own mind. Maybe I would drink but I don't want to drink at the moment so even if Islam suddenly changed or something and said or "you can drink and smoke and you can wear skimpy clothes and not really wear anything", I don't think I would wear short trousers and things, I don't think I would do that. I guess it's a lot about not doing things but if I did smoke and drink I don't think that would make my life better' (Tania).

As described in Chapter 8, Tania lived in an affluent seaside town. Her mum was the main earner and the father worked for the wife. Tania was in her last year of secondary school and after the A-Levels she was going to take a year off to volunteer in India

before start studying physiotherapy. Her parents were quite flexible about her going out, and as the mother's account below indicates, even though they were worried they allowed Tania to go to clubbing. Their reasoning for allowing their daughter to go out to a club was that they felt confident they instilled the right set of moral values which would prevent her from 'crossing the line' and, for instance, getting drunk in a night out with friends:

> 'She wanted to go to a nightclub, (...) in London and this was her first thing, my baby going to a nightclub, and I would have preferred her to go to a nightclub in (town where they lived), where I could be there for her if something happens, or be out there if she wants to come home, but this nightclub is in London. So I was concerned also because it was around the exam time and whatever, you know, and I didn't want her to be disturbed, but some friends were going, some weren't going. But we let her go yes she went.' (Tania's mother)

Tania's family exemplifies the interplay between South Asian traditions and British lifestyle. As detailed in Chapter 8, Tania's parents, particularly the father, provided strong guidance and determined Tania' s future career choices. They also expressed strong preferences for both their children to get married within the same ethnic and religious group and within the same Muslim sect.

The combination of Tania and her parents' accounts illustrates that the way Tania was socialised in the familial context involved strong parental trust. She was given the freedom to try things out while, at the same time, her parents set clear boundaries of behaviour, very high expectations and placed great emphasis on communicating their values including modesty, moderation, decency, respect and a strong sense of their roots and tradition. This specific family field contributed to Tania being quite critical of activities such as drinking, using drugs or casual dating and she was not particularly interested in clubbing or going out, activities that would typically appeal to other young people of the same age group:

> 'To most of the UK teenager population yes, (this town) it is boring but I don't like going clubbing I'm not really into that I've been a few times and I don't really like it that much so in that respect it's not party town or anything, but I like it here.' (Tania)

This positive attitude toward a quite contained social life was a recurrent theme across a number of interviews with young people and it involved an inner criticism and in

some cases condemnation of drinking, drugs, clubbing and casual dating. This way of thinking encompassed gender differences and social class and was shared by other young people in the study, including boys like Omar, an 18 year old British Pakistani from quite an affluent socio-economic background; but also by Sakina in London and Zahra in Oldham, both from a lower socio-economic background than Tania and Omar.

Omar's accounts also show how conforming involved active construction and was not done passively. Omar elaborated justifications such as the need 'to prevent intoxication of the body' and the 'loss of control of human inhibitions', as the reasons behind the religious prohibition of drinking:

> 'It's hard to prioritise but the reason of drinking it's not said specifically drinking it said intoxication so then that's I think the reason such rules are made were because there's no way to control your inhibitions (...) all intoxications were banned because no matter if you just avoid it you cannot have any consequences where you lose your inhibitions and you don't know what you're doing and you do something you'd regret and that's the reason it's banned in religion'. (Omar)

Similarly, another reason for these young people to dislike drinking, smoking or taking drugs was the idea that these activities undermined their health, as Zahra, a 16 years old girl from British Pakistani background, explained:

> 'Well I think that the restrictions that are placed upon you are for yourself meaning I wouldn't want to get drunk anyway because of the lack of control, the outcomes of it, what you are doing to your body, the harms. I think the fact that there are restrictions it's for your own benefit like drugs are intoxicating and just the effects that it has on you and like a lot of things happen whilst you are being in that state. So it is for your own safety and own benefit yeah.'(Zahra)

Sakina revealed a different aspect of conforming to her parents, and particularly her father's will. In her case conforming was a result of understanding that the reasons why parents prohibited certain activities was primarily the result of a desire to offer their children protection. The understanding that parents were acting to protect her led Sakina to ultimately agree with parental restrictions bringing about acceptance and respect as her account demonstrates:

> 'My dad was the one who started talking about values and systems and your morals and so he not only installed Muslim morals in me, but his own morals as well. He instilled his own boundaries and his beliefs within us as well, so there's so many things like we questions too like "oh why can't we do this?", like this is not something specific to Islam, but this is to my family as in, you

know, "why can't I go out with my friends?" and so basically what he was telling me was about protection again and he told me that this time of your life is where you're going to change as a person, with people you make friends with are going to have a huge impact on you, so you've got to be really really careful who you make friends with. So he was trying to make sure that I choose right who my friends are and also never forgetting who I am and where I come from'. (Sakina)

However, this last account illustrates how in some instances protection was just another way for parents to exercise control over young people. The link between protection and control involves a specific view of young people as under threat of the negative influences of society.

Sakina's father added to what she said about conforming to parental culture and explained how to instil a sense of sharing by combining different parenting practices used to enhance children's understanding of the boundaries for moral behaviour. He explained that parents should act as examples to their children and put into practice themselves what they expected their children to follow. Therefore, communication was paramount in ensuring that children really understood the reasons behind the forbidden practices and Islam was used to reinforce parental control when parents could not be there with their children:

'(...) so that's another thing we tell our children whatever you do it's going to reflect on this life and the next life, but also being aware that even when we're not around you, someone else, God can see you so instilling that in children we try to do that'. (Sakina's father)

Moreover, Sakina's father explained that transmitting a sense of ambition in the children contributed to them being more conscious of what they could lose if they misbehaved. This was reflected on other parental accounts as Ali's mother demonstrates:

'No I'm not scared now, because the basic is there, so my daughter goes anywhere and I'm not scared. My daughter go anywhere, I'm not scared. My son is good, he goes anywhere, I'm not scared, because I know he and she understand life and they have ambition. Because if the child gets ambition right, you know, very important' (Ali's Mother).

Sakina's sense of sharing and continuity with parental culture was reflected in her criticism of what she described as the 'British pub culture' and casual sex relationships:

'Never no (never being interested in pub culture), I mean... Because you've never done it, you don't really like it. I mean to be honest I walk past pubs and

they stink! I don't mean to be offensive, but they really do. I don't really like the smell and then you see pictures and you see videos of people throwing up and acting so obscenely after a night out and even though it's really funny and you have a great laugh, but then you think what does it say when the only way you can have fun is to forget about what you're doing and just to make a fool out of yourself really and I'm sure, I mean my friends we go out, I mean yesterday we had a party and we were dancing and everything, but we were sober and we were just high on happy and happiness and life really in general. I thought why can't you just do that, but also like, you know, the whole Asian aspect, one last thing, which is just my opinion but I just have an issue with men just having a girlfriend one after the other and just sleeping with them, just having them.. it's so casual, it's so normal for..'(Sakina)

The conforming strategies described so far indicate how some of the young people in the study associated British culture and lifestyle with practices such as drinking, going out or having pre-marital sexual relationships and opposed those practices in accordance with what they learnt from the family field and Islam. These strategies were developed by comparing and contrasting young people's accounts with those of their parents. This interplay between parental and young people's accounts enabled looking at how identity and habitus developed in relationship to the family field.

Willpower and the right path as a conforming strategy

Several young people's accounts reflect the complexity of negotiating public and domestic fields and the implications of ultimately conforming on their identity. The idea that effort and endeavour were required in order to reconcile social life with family responsibilities emerged in relation to specific accounts about the use of willpower.

Ali, a 16 year old Bangladeshi boy described *willpower* as an inner strength that enabled him to align to his mother 's moral standards, informed by both South Asian culture and Islam, while remaining involved with British youth culture:

'Willpower is something that's human behaviour. It's not made up. When I was in primary school and we were doing this campaigning on stop smoking and we had to create a leaflet and the book was called Willpower and that's where it got it from (...)'. (Ali)

Ali took several photographs of himself having a night out with friends holding a bottle of what he explained was alcohol. There were also photographs of himself and his mum and younger sister, with friends and of a combination of hair products, types of haircuts

and clothes that he referred to as 'style'. The discussion about the photographs revealed that negotiation between the public and domestic fields was a major determinant of Ali's habitus and identity.

Ali explained that he lived with his mum and younger sister and, since his parents got divorced, he had no contact with his father. He then spoke about his social life and revealed his friends drank alcohol and used drugs. He knew people who were in gangs and he liked rap and expensive oversized clothes. Compared to other young people in the study, who reported to conform to Islamic principles and South Asian culture, Ali demonstrated a higher level of complexity because he remained very much involved with a lifestyle which put Islamic moral standards into question. When asked about his friends he explained that 'no-one is perfect' and that people make mistakes, while he was not the one in charge to judge. He also hoped his friends would eventually distance themselves from practices that he considered as part of 'being young'. Ali pointed out that relying on his willpower enabled him to move away from a situation when things turned against his principles and beliefs such as not smoking or drinking when others do:

> 'It's not difficult (not to drink or smoke when others do). It's all to do with will power. You can do it. Anyone can do it. It's possible. Anything's possible. (…) It's all on your willpower and what you think is right. If you focus on one thing and steer on the right path, you don't have to think about other things.' (Ali)

In this account Ali reflected in his own terms on a very crucial topic of Islam: the idea of a right path. The Surah Al Fatihah, the opening of The Qur'an used as the introduction to the everyday Muslim prayers, set out the importance of following the right path as mostly marked by believing in one God:

> "Lord of the Day of Judgement.
> It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help.
> Guide us to the straight path,
> The path of those upon whom Your grace abounds,
> Nor those upon whom anger falls,
> Nor those who are lost" (Al Fatiha, The Qur'an)

In this study respondents often referred to the right path as the requirement to follow the specific principles guiding human behaviour which come from the Islamic creed but also partly from the South Asian culture. More specifically, the right path, in the sense described by some respondents, involved avoiding alcohol, which was particularly

relevant in the interviews with some of the young people. Ali admitted that at some point in the past he had left the right path; he started smoking and drank alcohol because of, he said, peer pressure, but ultimately decided to stop doing this:

> 'Yes. I've managed to do that (stop drinking). I drank once. I drank a few times in the past but … I just done it. It was peer pressure. My friends done it, it looked cool so I thought let me try it, what the heck? But then I realised I don't need to do it so I just drifted away from it.
> No I don't find it hard to avoid it'. (Ali)

Ali's accounts of willpower and the right path show how he negotiated the divergent public and domestic fields and ultimately they appeared to justify how he conformed to aspects of Bengali culture as well as Islam. For instance, he asserted that 'it was up to him and his mum' to give consent and make sure his younger sister will marry the 'right person'; his accounts also indicate how he prioritised Islam:

> 'Religion is the most important thing in my life and I think Muslim is what makes a person. It's part of their culture, part of how they're brought up, part of their moral beliefs (...).

> It's not necessarily hard to follow your own religion. You're brought up when you're little you should be doing this or that at this stage. I don't think nothing should be able to change your view or way of thinking about your religion'. (Ali)

The interplay between Ali and his mother's accounts elucidated aspects of their family field and uncovered what was underlying Ali's identity negotiation. The mother was a lone parent and spoke about the isolation in a community where divorce was still perceived very negatively. She explained that not having a career or a husband, made her two children the main focus of her life and her accounts suggested that her parenting was based on communication, trust and the transmission of a sense of responsibility to her children. She asserted that communication involved spending time talking in depth about values, beliefs and behaviour. As in the case of other parents in the study, she was confident that her children understood the message and behaved accordingly:

> 'My son goes out now he has not got exams. He's free and grown up. And I am confident about my children, they are not doing anything wrong'. (Ali's mother)

On the other hand, Ali was determined to make his mother proud of him and said that he aspired to go to college and become a teacher. He pointed out that 'even though

she is a woman' his mother was his main role model, showing how a sense of traditional masculinity was negotiated with the recognition that his ultimate model was not a man:

> 'Most of these values have come from my mother. I don't live with my dad. Its 13 years they've been divorced. My mother's taught me. She's brought me and my little sister up for 13 years of our life and she's guided me in the right way and I love my mum and I see her as a role model even though she's a woman. I still see her as a role model in my life because she has given me a lot and where I am today with education, my life, whoever I am, all my success and achievements so far, all the credit goes to my mother'. (Ali)

The accounts of both Ali and his mother reflect the transmission of a strong sense of duty from mother to son. This was reinforced by the lack of a father in the house which made Ali to feel he had to take over the 'male role in the family':

> 'Yes. I'm the man of the house. I do the shopping with my mum. Help her out at home as well and help my sister study as well Yes it is hard. It's fast paced and to get along you need someone to support you as well financially and emotionally. I haven't had no contact with my dad since then. That's it'. (Ali)

In conclusion, the particular characteristics of Ali's family field – lone parenthood, lack of contact with the father, isolation from the Bengali community in their local area, his mother's unemployment – and the public field of his social relationships shaped Ali's habitus and identity. The interaction between domestic and public fields determined his emphasis on staying on the right path as well as the search for a justification - willpower - to reconcile the influences coming from divergent social fields.

'Everything in Moderation'

Moderation is an important topic in Islam and a recurrent theme in The Qur'an:

> "O People of the Book, do not be fanatical in your religion except in truth. Do not follow the whims of people who strayed before, and made many stray, and stray once again from the right path". (5:76)

The recent global events, particularly since 9/11, have affected the public perception in many Western countries of Islam as intrinsically radical and extreme. However, as exemplified by these verses, The Qur'an emphasises the importance of being moderate and, in this instance, it connects moderation with the concept of 'right path'.

In the study, a number of respondents spoke about the importance of moderation as 'The way to Islam'. In the particular case of Omar, moderation was used as a strategy to

reconcile domestic and public fields. As shown in Appendix F, Omar took several photographs of his birthday party and spoke extensively about his social life; young people drinking, including him, were present in some of those photos. Like other young people in the study described above (i.e. Zahra), Omar looked for the reasons and rationale behind religious impositions with a focus on the prohibition of drinking alcohol, which he identified with the need to set boundaries for self-control.

The Qur'an mainly addresses the issue of alcohol in three separate verses and it links it with Satan, sin, and the need to avoid intoxication when praying:

> "O Believers, wine and gambling idols and divining arrows are an abhorrence, the work o Satan" (...) (5:90)

> They ask you about wine and gambling.

> Say: 'In them both lies grave sin, though some benefit, to mankind. But their sin is more grave than their benefit.' (2:219)

> O Believers, do not come near to prayer when you are drunk until you know what you are saying" (...) (4:43)'

The idea of moderation was elaborated through the relationship between Omar and his mother and, alongside the theoretical model set out in Chapter 2, it showed how elements of the structural sphere are internalised by individuals and affect their system of values and everyday practices. Omar's accounts indicate how he internalised structural elements coming from Islam:

> '(...) As much as it might be good or fun to do all of those things (such as drinking) it's only to moderation that you can enjoy them at best. That's another thing my mum taught me always moderation. (...)

> Moderation, never have too much of anything. So you always have things, enjoy what you have but don't expect too much of it or if you're enjoying yourself enjoy yourself but don't just you can't always enjoy yourself enjoy the moment so it's sort of like that sort of have everything in moderation so not too much of anything and not too little of everything'. (Omar)

Omar argued that what Islam urges is 'to be moderate'. Similarly, according to his mother, moderation originated within the structural conditions associated with Islam which promotes a way of life that seeks to avoid extremism and enhance balance:

> 'Islam is such an easy religion. It is such an easy religion. That's what people make it to be, fanatic. We do not believe in that. We are Islam in fact says finalism is not allowed. You are not to be obsessed with anything. Even love too much is bad for you. Too much food is bad for you, too much sleep

everything moderate. And I try to teach my son the same and I try to practise the same, be moderate. Not too much either, not too much of anything'. (Omar's mother).

The empirical ground where moderation seemed to be particularly relevant within Omar and his mother's accounts was the issue of drinking. When applying moderation to the context of alcohol Omar explained that the Islamic principle about being moderate signified 'to be able to drink but never get drunk'. Through moderation, Omar showed how he managed to feel at ease with his friends rather than a 'social outcast', as he described the feeling of exclusion attached to not drinking. At the same time, he conformed to his parents who both admitted drinking occasionally but 'only moderately'. Omar's conforming strategy about moderation particularly reflected the pattern of transmission emerging from his mother's interview who also talked extensively about the issue of drinking alcohol:

> 'So he said I know my limits. I can't stand people who are drunk. I despise people who drink a lot. I'm telling you that is something you will never see in my life and I hold you to it. I said, well, I'm going to hold you to it. Because if I ever see you drunk Omar you will lose all respect for me. (...) when I say my prayers I pray to God that you are allergic to alcohol. He said that's nasty. For your own good son. So you know you have to do these things and I said Omar if you become drunk like all these children who drink and get drunk and throw up and he said mum, I detest it (...)' (Omar's mother).

Omar and his mother's accounts indicate how they used moderation for different purposes: while the mother saw moderation as a parenting strategy to set out moral boundaries, her son adopted it as a way to reconcile Islam with the secular practices typical of British society such as drinking.

In summary, the case of Omar illustrated how the solidarity between mother and son was constructed and negotiated: it showed that conforming resulted from Omar's active construction of his reality and it involved exploration, consideration, thinking and decision rather than an unconscious process or passive acceptance of parental rules.

9.2 Contesting strategies

Contesting strategies challenged elements of South Asian cultures which young people associated with their parents' cultural heritage. Young people tend to grow up, develop

interests, behave and express themselves in ways that can be very different from those of previous generations. Research literature on intergenerational conflict suggests that the cultural gaps between parents and children weaken their bonding and ultimately can cause young people to develop behavioural problems (Ingram, 2011).

The recurrent accounts about contesting South Asian cultures and values reflect the complex experiences of Muslim young people in the study when trying to negotiate between Islam, family, South Asian cultures and British values, practices and lifestyle. In some cases, this process led young people to experience a sense of not 'fitting in' completely and implied questioning on an everyday basis which social field, whether public or domestic, they feel they belong to more strongly. As detailed below, the main objects of contestation were the gendered family roles, arranged marriage and restrictions on going out, drinking or clothing.

The distinction between South Asian cultures and religion as contesting strategy

Young people's distinction between culture and religion was a salient theme that brought together a number of accounts challenging elements of parental/South Asian cultures. In these accounts young people accused their parents' culture of yielding to bad stereotyping of Islam and, in this sense, the theme about the distinction between culture and religion was included into the contesting strategy. Specifically, questioning the pre-conception that Islam supports unequal gendered roles reflected by patriarchy was a main preoccupation in the context of this theme, together with challenging other practices generally attached to Islam, such as forced marriages and inter-faith and inter-ethnic marriages.

Hania, lived in Oldham and was from British Bangladeshi background; her father was self-employed and fluent in English, while the mother moved to the UK later in her life and never learnt to speak English. Hania highlighted how their parents confused culture with religion in the specific context of clothing:

> 'Yeah because that is another frustrating thing because they (the parents) confuse their culture with their religion whereas with me it is completely separate and that is how it should be because your relationship is very different. There is different people who are Muslims, you have got your Arabs, your Pakistani's, your Bangladeshi's, African's, even whites, converts and you notice that's different culture isn't it however your religion is just the same.

Whereas what mum and dad tend to do and I try and narrow it down and tell them that isn't right is confuse your culture with religion. I will give you an example, there is a picture in there with a shalwar kameez the clothes and my dad will confuse that as it being Islamic dressing but in actual fact it is Asian Bangladeshi or Pakistani dressing. Islamic dressing would be absolutely anything, anything goes for Islamic dress, like from this because although its Western, it's still can be carried off in an Islamic way because its loose and its covering and modest because as long as its modest its Islamic and that is one thing that my parents have found difficult to come around'. (Hania)

The distinction between South Asian cultures and religion was also relevant to Saleem who talked about the importance of consent in marriage and explained how forcing young people to get married to a partner chosen by the family was not actually Islamic but rather a cultural practice diffused in the three South Asian countries:

'Islam says that if the wife says no and does not believe in her marriage then the marriage is false, it's wrong. The culture thing is always your parents say you need to get married to him or her then you have to. That's not Islam. Islam says you can't force a person to marry unless the woman and man agree you can't get married. They use the culture as agreement to back themselves up. They say it was religion but it wasn't religion'. (…) The main problem attacking Islam now is people's tradition. They don't know Islam and the traditional cultures was wrong and against women so they're using patriarchal ideas they think that's Islamic and that's not Islamic. Everyone who is not a Muslim thinks that's an Islamic idea so they keep attacking Islam but it's not. It's tradition and culture, nothing to do with Islam. That's probably the biggest thing that attacks Islam'. (Saleem)

This last account by Saleem was echoed by other young people in the study who explained how they felt confident about their knowledge and understanding of religious teachings, while criticising their parents for misunderstanding what Islam really conceives. Several young people explained that parental misunderstandings were related to the way parents learnt about Islam. As Saleem pointed out, most parents and people from that generation read the Qur'an's verses only in Arabic and possibly in their country of origin without being able to speak or understand the Arabic language. The lack of knowledge of Arabic and not having read the translation could eventually lead, according to some young people, to confusion with regard to religious teachings and cultural practices:

'Yes. I learned from a proper scholar what some of the misconceptions are from normal people. When my parents say something and it's wrong I say this

is not right. This is how it is. they say we've been doing it wrong all the time'. (Saleem)

Some of the young respondents expressed their desire to understand the meanings behind the Quranic verses and therefore, they explained, they read the English translation and researched the different Qur'an Surah in the internet:

'Can you read Arabic?

Yeah.

Can you understand it?

Not all of it, but that's why I use the Internet so I can search for the bits I don't understand and translate it' (Asif).

Saleem was also very committed to learn Islamic teachings and theology into more depth; because of this, he was reading and getting help from scholars in the mosque:

'What about the Qur'an in which language did you read it?

Arabic. Now I started studying it in English. I need to know what it says. (...)

(...) when the media attacks you and you don't know the answers you always say something wrong and they could jump on you. If you don't know the answer it's best not to speak. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire it all went wrong, Islam. As soon as the empire fell most people forgot what Islam was. If they don't study it, that's the main reason they're getting attacked. People who call themselves Muslim don't know what Islam is. They like it. They want to be in Islam but they don't study (...)

So how did you learn?

Books. I want to learn. I go to the youth group so if I need help with Islam they have scholars. Most extremists and fundamentalists get people who are not educated but we know we've got educated people from high class universities.'(Saleem)

Young people used the distinction between culture and religion as negotiation strategy. However accounts about this distinction were also present in several parental interviews. Culture and religion are in many respects interwoven and reciprocally influencing and the distinction between the two was often difficult to sustain by some of the parents. The analysis suggests that with culture, some parents referred to the body of costumes which constituted a common heritage to include history, language and values embodied by the traditional practices that characterised their belonging to the three South Asian groups (Indians, Pakistani and Bangladeshi):

'Culture and religion is different. Religion and culture is completely different. Bangladeshi culture is completely different.

What is Bangladeshi culture?

Bangladeshi culture is, you know, you can dance, you can sing, you can, you know, Bangladeshi culture basically is mixed Indian culture and Pakistani culture all are mixed right, this is not religious. They're completely different (...) when you come here you can.. this is our culture this is Bangladeshi culture, you know, we can, you know, so religious and culture is completely different.

That's why I'm saying that this is different, you know, culture in Islam is completely different.' (Sakina's Father)

Dancing and singing at weddings, food and the issue of the niqab[14] were amongst the quoted examples of cultural practices by parents. Young people tended to emphasise other aspects of South Asian culture such as gendered family roles and the idea of marrying within the same ethnic group or Muslim sect. Culture was finally associated by respondents, both some of parents and young people, with the countries of origin: Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Respondents drew connections between these three cultures as well as highlighting the differences. Bengali and British Bengali respondents spoke about how Bangladeshi culture contained elements from both Indian and Pakistani heritage because of the history of the country. For instance, dancing and singing in weddings and wearing the sari[15] were not considered to be modest Islamic practices but rather the effects of the influence of Indian Hindu culture. Pakistani culture, instead, was generally depicted as more rigorous and traditionalist by some of the non-Pakistani parents. Hamid's mother, from Indian ethnic background, spoke about Pakistani culture as gendered and overall different from hers:

'Like the role of women, you often hear about, I have a Pakistani neighbour and her role in the house is very different from my role in my house. In her house her husband sits and demands bring me this, bring me that, dinner on the table and then I will come and sit down at the table, in my house I'm afraid that doesn't work. We both together in the kitchen, we both cook together, if he is at home he will cook with me and help in the kitchen. It is not expected that I will do something and he will do, there is a division of labour and it is cultural, it is nothing to do with religion, just cultural. In most of our family, especially my husband's family all the men help cook, clean, anything else they do it. My brother in law will come here and he said something to me the other

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[14] Niqab is the veil used by Muslim women to cover the all face (Tarlo, 2010).
[15] Sari is an outer garment worn mostly by women of India and Pakistan, which consists of a length of lightweight cloth with one end wrapped about the waist to form a skirt and the other draped over the shoulder or covering the head (Becher, 2003).

day there is a bit of dust, pan and brush clean it up put it away didn't think anything of it. Pakistani men, no they will leave it the women will do it, it's the women's job. But that is totally cultural and nothing to do with religion. Because in Islam it actually says that the man is supposed to help the woman, it doesn't say that just the woman is going to do all this and they like to misinterpret it I suppose.' (Hamid's mother)

Some of the young people in the study contrasted South Asian cultures with their attachment to British values. These values were incorporated into the idea of Britishness which, in the context of this specific strategy, assumed a positive connotation and signified opportunity, freedom and change:

'(Meaning of) being British? I think freedom you know we might think we are really restricted with all these new laws coming in but if you are going to compare to Bangladesh I mean this is freedom this is what being British is, you know democracy'. (Mariam)

Zahra instead emphasised respect as the main element of her being British:

'I think (the meaning of being British) it would probably be that sense of freedom that you get because its like everyone can be their own person for example you get people in college that for example are male but dress female and people have frowned upon perhaps but it doesn't stop that person from being who they want to be and I think it allows you to be yourself more. I think it has made me more tolerant of other people as well.' (Zahra)

In the context of this specific theme about culture and religion, Islam was more strictly associated with the doctrine and teachings of the Q'uran that oversees and regulates the life of all the Muslim people in the different countries. The Q'uran appeared to tie together different Muslim identities which developed in a variety of cultural and social milieus and set out the essence of what being Muslim ultimately meant to respondents. Thus, even though Islam as a religion was dictated by the 'Book' and was the same for all Muslims, the way their Islamic identity manifested itself varied according to culture and upbringing, as Tania, explained:

'(Islam) It's a big religion Islam and not everyone can do the same thing and be brought up the same way. I get what you're saying. Although we're all Muslims if say you didn't know much about Muslims and you went to Saudi Arabia which is like Muslim central and you went there to find out about Muslims it would be a completely different experience, it would be completely different to what someone in America or India or here would say about what Islam is but to them they're a way of life and that's how they've been brought up, that is Islam and so when you're trying to explain what Islam is and you're trying to look at a certain group of people. It's so big that there are so many different ways to go. It's not something that you can say oh..I guess that's all to do with

culture, but it's very different to what being a Muslim is but it does influence where you live and where you're brought up'. (Tania)

In brief, the evidence suggests that separating culture from religion enabled young people to move more easily between their British and Muslim identities and reduced the perceived distance between the two systems of values by directing any possible criticism toward South Asian culture. South Asian culture was associated, by some of the young people in the study, with the traditional views on gendered roles in the family or arranged marriages. According to young people, these practices were perceived as constraints and were justified by some of the parents by using 'unconvincing' arguments which tended to confuse religion with culture.

Dealing with going out, drinking and believing

Contesting strategies included a number of accounts describing the conflictual nature of intergenerational relationships. Differently from the group who conformed to their parents as described above, there were several young people who were keen on going out, drinking, smoking or taking drugs. In order to justify the contradictions deriving from conducting a social life which challenged the moral standards set out by both South Asian cultures and Islam, these young people developed a range of arguments and justifications which fed into the themes defined as contesting strategies.

Going out was one of the most common arenas for confrontation between young people and their parents. Wajid, an 18 year old British Pakistani boy, described his conflictual relationship with his parents:

> 'It's mostly about timings and like what I do when I go out because I go out with friends but my parents see it as a bad thing, like that I shouldn't stay out that late. (...)
>
> It's always confronting them to be honest, it's always like that confrontation thing. It's always like mainly arguments but we have like come to an agreement. We sometimes do agree on things like let's say I come home late and I say "I am eighteen now" and then I ask for the independence I say "can I have that extra hour or two" it is not going to be like an everyday thing but I ask for a bit more and if they say yeah then that's fine but if they say no then I try asking again'. (Wajid)

Wajid spoke about his desire for more independence as he saw in the lives of his non-Muslim friends. Similarly, Sarah, a 17 years old from British Indian background, repeatedly spoke about her desire for going out and how this led to confrontation with

her parents. She recounted the frustration of asking permission to be out with her friends and how this was usually denied; when she compared her freedom with that of her friends she felt much more constrained:

> 'Like when I go out like I really want to go out, I will like ask them and sometimes they're like no and I go why and they'd be like because I said no and I say why, I'll just keeping asking and begging them to go out but she won't stop and then they'll start and they'll be like "because you've been out, you've already been out enough, you need to stop, you went out yesterday as well, you've been out every day, or you came home late the other day and so you can't go out today" and then I'll just keep saying no but please "please please" and then I'll hit their limit and they'll start shouting and just sort of going mad!' (Sarah)

In these last two cases, the conflictual dimension of negotiating identities took the form of negotiating choice and constraint, freedom and restrictions. In order to resolve this sort of conflict some young people created a divide between private/family and public/social fields. This pattern was apparent in Wajid's account:

> 'To be honest there is obviously a contrast, so my parents it's more a different background to outside and so what I try to do is keep them separate. If I go out I don't have that Pakistani culture I have the whole do what I want but at home it is more that thing of because I speak Pakistani to my parents. It is always that culture mix I reckon'. (Wajid)

Drinking and taking drugs were attached to the ways some of these young people socialised and spent time with their friends. These behavioural patterns and more generally the lifestyles associated with these practices are general parental concerns but were even more difficult to reconcile within Islam and South Asian cultures, which both set very strict moral standards and emphasised the sense of control.

The interviews with five Bengali boys in London, revealed how their lifestyle was particularly difficult to accommodate in the traditional family field, which did not allow going out or staying out late in the evening and for religious reasons, forbade drinking and smoking. Three of these young boys also admitted they were involved with a local gang but told me they never had serious troubles with the police. In order to reconcile these two contrasting - public and domestic – social fields these young boys were prepared to deal with constant tensions and discussions with their parents. It emerged that living in an Inner London borough was a very important determinant of their

identity. The young boys spoke about their experience of the local area and the issue of gangs:

> 'It does start off with drugs. Everything starts off with drugs. There's groups of gangs everywhere. Bethnal Green, Manor Park, Globe Town. Gangs like that (...) Back in the days it used to be obviously Bengalis, Whites, Blacks. They used to have their own conflict. Nowadays everything has changed Bengalis fight Bengalis, Whites fight Whites, Blacks fight Blacks.' (Davar)

In contrast, Pervez felt there was a racial element within the gang culture and he described living in the local area as 'tough':

> 'I've experienced a lot of racism. Even gang violence is a really big problem, teenagers, boys, girls, when it comes to drugs, drug dealing, drinking, they go violent. When it comes to racism people don't like the looks. They don't like the culture like you. I'm Bengali, Muslim my religion is Islam. When you see a black or white boy you don't like the looks of them, they're in your area, they're from another area like Hackney and you live in Bethnal Green, they come in your area that's where the problem creates. Me individually (…)' (Pervez).

Negotiating identities implied for some of these young boys becoming less religious, even though none of them wanted to completely renounce their religious identity as Davar explained:

> '(Islam) teaches us how to be a good person. How to respect others. Not just yourself, respect not just your Muslim brothers and sisters, respect every other culture, every other religion'. (Davar)

Those who saw themselves being or becoming less religious seemed to be aware of the consequences and could not avoid a sense of guilt, as Davar pointed out:

> 'You say to yourself 'I'm not going to do it, my religion does not allow me to do that'. But when you see someone doing it, it just goes out your head and you go do it. It's quite hard. Yes I feel guilty then I pray sometimes and ask for forgiveness.
>
> *Do you see your future as being more religious or, rather going to the other side..you know what I mean?*
>
> Probably going on the other side'. (Davar)

Maintaining a Muslim identity for these Bengali boys implied developing 'coping strategies' comprising justifications and discourses to defend their being 'Muslims no matter what':

> '*Do you consider yourself Muslim?*

I would but everyone is not perfect in this life. This life for us is a test.' (Pervez)

One of these Bengali boys, Tahir, justified his smoking, drinking or taking drugs by saying these types of practices were 'being part of this 21st century society' and therefore unavoidable amongst young people. Tahir's argued that 'everybody makes mistakes' and 'no-one is perfect'. He also spoke of his hopes for God's forgiveness, which acted as justifications for making choices and behaving in ways that were forbidden by Islam.

These strategies of negotiation which emphasised the conflictual nature of young people and their parents' system of values also implied a specific perception of British society as the place where, the *'forbidden activities'*, such as drinking or smoking, were possible and enhanced. In this sense, being British was attached to being free to go out, getting drunk and dating. Tahir spoke about the social opportunities attached to being British:

> *'And what about being British, what do you like about here?*
>
> Facilities. Education wise. Socialising wise. It's much more better. The environment.'(Tahir)

Parents showed different levels of concerns about their children getting involved with drinking, taking drugs or smoking. The ones who were less concerned were confident they got the right message across and that their children would not turn to drug or alcohol. Others were mostly worried because of peer pressure and also what they saw in the local area or in the news. Davar's father explained he was only marginally concerned about his son getting involved with these issues, whilst he felt he was not doing anything different from what any other young person of his age would. He was aware of young people drinking and drug dealing in the area:

> 'Yeah crimes. What the police doing I don't think it's nothing cos everyday when I came from work I work in a restaurant most of the time and actually when I came about 11 12 o'clock 12.30 in the evening late night you know the crack dealing goes on in this street everyday and what are they doing. I even talked to the council about there putting cameras and they did actually put up cameras but there's only one right and so you know this Apollo Estate it's quite big and people comes out you know there's two buildings over there, the red building I think there's some peoples who deal drugs I think so cos otherwise you know all the people come to the car and goes buying things you can see it's drugs'. (Davar's father)

The intergenerational gap, typical of the relationship between young people and their parents, was in the case of this study exacerbated by cultural differences between first generation migrant parents, originally from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, and mostly UK born children as described in Appendix D. The cultural distance made it particularly difficult for some parents to handle problems like drug taking or drinking. Sakina's father pointed out how some of the parents in the Bengali community did not have a clear understanding of what the effects of drugs were like and were not able to recognise whether someone was under the effect of substances or not:

> 'No, they don't know what drugs are.
>
> Our community they don't understand last 10 years they don't understand what's the drug, you know, (...) they don't understand what the drug. That's why the child goes outside and take the drug and come home and father and mother don't understand what the drug'. (Sakina's father)

Finally, these strategies developed to bring together everyday practices such as drinking and going out, while maintaining a Muslim identity, highlighted quite strongly the difficulties associated with dealing with domestic and public fields which are intrinsically different.

Deciding what to wear

As portrayed by the photographs in Appendix F, clothes of different types, from jeans, trainers and tops to the more traditional shalwar kameez and the hijab, could be seen in many of the photographs taken by young people in the study, and reflected other possible arenas of intergenerational confrontation which affected boys as much as girls but often in quite different ways. The confrontational nature of parents and young people's accounts, about what is generally appropriate to wear, led to including these accounts into the contesting strategies.

Sarah's accounts about clothing reflected some elements of conflict related to the constraints set out by her parents. She explained that, because of her parents, she could only wear certain type of clothes. Therefore she was used to adapting her personal tastes to both cultural and religious rules, which Sara felt, set out that women should dress modestly and always be covered. Thus, for instance, she wore leggings and long sleeved t-shirts underneath dresses to avoid showing her arms or legs. She spoke about her father as being very strict about clothing and compared her

experience with that of her sister who managed to escape parental constraints more easily:

'Is it ok to wear tights according to your parents?

I don't know, depends kind of what tights, like sometimes she'll (sister) wear leggings, or like she'll wear three-quarters and then my dad will get angry like why are you showing your legs. Well like sometimes my dad's not here to see what she wears when she goes out. When she comes home then they'll see it and then they'll get angry, or she'll run upstairs and quickly change and then they won't know!

So not showing the legs is it something related to your religion or rather your culture?

Religion. You're not allowed to show anything really'. (Sarah)

For the five Bengali boys, clothes were a means of bonding and indicated the sharing of tastes and interests within the group. Davar, Tahir, Pervez, Mohamed and Ali were into rap music and tried to adopt the outlook of the American rapper Lil Wayne which involved wearing oversized baggy trousers, big unlaced trainers, chain necklace and bracelets, big designer sun glasses:

'Clothing wise we just want to look good. You don't want to look scruffy. Before I used to wear tracksuits and tops. What happened I was born here, these are my childhood mates. In year 5, you know my mum and dad's just split up and I moved to my dad to Forest Gate so I broke up with them and came back to my mum. That's how I met them again. I used to hate jeans I used to wear tracksuits. Now it's more like to look smart'. (Tahir)

These boys' haircuts were also particularly elaborate with Mohican asymmetric cuts and drawings made with a razor on one side. Davar revealed that his parents, mostly his dad, did not like his style at all:

'I could say stuff like my hair for instance, it's mainly to do with culture in Bengali people. Culture like they could say to my dad I saw your son the other day in the road, what's going on with his hair? Obviously my dad will feel ashamed of that and would have a go at me for that'. (Davar)

On the other hand, the father's accounts reflected his concerns about the son's hairstyle and clothing:

'The way his hair cut is my son you have seen it Mohican okay I said this is wrong and explain it to him. In Islam it's not right at all right and as a normal person it's not right as a normal person if you're like say you wanna go to university you can't put your haircut like that you know proper universities like Oxford. Oxford people don't have these Mohicans they can't do that. This is

the right way and okay you got a Mohican you can go to these small universities they don't bother you about what you wear what you do right but a proper school a proper way you can't do that.

Ah I don't know I don't know where this (haircut) comes from. I know about the trousers you know they put on like that I know the trousers where it come from, it's from the prison a prison called I don't know forgot is it it's a president name a prison in American Lincoln or something, Lincoln prison, it's from there it's a prison when they had chains on their hands on the legs on the neck and the trousers dropping right and they can't pull it up because you know they can't put their hands there. His hands have to be like this so it's dropping and there this is a style came from there. And imagine that style it's everywhere in the world. Sick this is sick'. (Davar's father)

Davar's accounts about haircut and trousers summarise the importance of physical appearance for these boys. Conversely, the father was very critical of Davar's style and concerned about the fact that the son appearance could limit and undermine his acceptance and inclusion into 'normality', which was exemplified by having a good education and being a good Muslim. However, Davar's father concerns in relationship to his son did not involve the honour of the family usually attributed to girls. Ultimately, Davar's strategy to reconcile the differences between public and domestic fields, involved contesting his father's restrictions on what to wear and accepting the deriving tensions. Davar said he would continue wearing the clothes he liked and added that he had no intention of changing his haircut because his style was too important for his identity and for the relationships with peers. However, when I went to the house to interview the father I noticed that Davar had his Mohican hair down and he was not wearing the usual baggy jeans, rather trousers of a more regular cut which seemed to reflect, once again, the distinction between private / domestic and the public field in the lives of these young people.

Contesting strategies about relationships and love

Sex and relationships were another arena for intergenerational conflict. Islam forbids sex before marriage and most of the parents in the study expressed strong concerns about their children being in relationships at a young age, whilst, as highlighted in Chapter 8, they prioritised a good marriage and future family as important aspirations for their children. On the other hand, some of the young people's accounts reveal they that they had to hide from their parents that they were in relationships. This had an

emotional impact on them: some expressed a sense of guilt and then developed justifications to make sense of their choices.

Pervez, a 16 year old British Bengali boy from London, spoke about his relationship with a 15 year old British Bengali girl. During the interview, he explained how he met her through his family networks, got her number and fell for her straight away. At the time of the interview, they had been together for 10 months but her family did not approve of it and Pervez preferred not to give details on this. He said he still hoped they could have a future together but 'their families were there to decide'. Pervez's accounts reflect the contradictions and the efforts to reconcile quite strong traditional views with his social and personal life. He described himself as religious and said he felt women should be covered as it is mostly a sign of respect to Islam and a way to avoid attracting men's attention. He said he was in favour of women wearing the hijab and he expected his young sister to start wearing it from the age of 7. He also pointed out that Islam forbids relationships before marriage and described the way things should be according to the Islamic creed:

> 'It's important to cover yourself. In this life if you do, like I said haram is really bad. The girls got the hair up, wearing jeans, showing their arse, doing this doing that. Not a problem. Other people are going to be tempted to come to you and when they come to you in Islam you're bound to not have a relationship. That's a sin. If you love the person you tell your mother, in the future I love this girl, I want her in my life and you're not allowed to see the girl, you're not allowed to chat behind your parent's back. You can't see her, kiss her. When the right time comes then you can get married. The proposal works out engagement, the marriage'. (Pervez)

However, Pervez knew his reality was very different from what he learnt from his family and what Islam set out. His girlfriend was not wearing the hijab, he explained partly because of her family upbringing and partly because she was attending a Catholic school and had to wear a standard uniform. His account of how he dealt with being in a relationship knowing he was going against the principle he previously described, involves the recognition once again that '*life is a test*' and we do make mistakes but similarly to other accounts from Tahir and Davar, he hoped that by admitting his faults he would one day gain God's forgiveness:

'My way its temptation. There's exceptions. You got into a relationship, it's hard, you fell in love. I know it's wrong but Allah forgives you if you understand your mistake'. (Pervez)

The parental attitude toward dating was a general concern for young people, both boys and girls. Zahra for instance could not disclose to her family she had a boyfriend; she explained that even though her boyfriend was a practicing Muslim he was not from a Pakistani ethnic background and this was likely to be an issue for her parents:

'Well my boyfriend is Mungali Arab and so my mother would prefer me to get married to someone who is Pakistani, so that is going to be an issue and yeah hopefully I will be getting married to him, so yeah it is going to be quite an issue.' (Zahra)

Omar had a less traditional family and had introduced his girlfriend to his parents. However, he pointed out that his family's concerns were not just general but rather culturally and religious specific:

'Yeah they (his parents) know her (his girlfriend), they've met her and stuff so it's interesting that's the first sort of like girlfriend they have like known. Well whatever but yeah it's cool like they've been a lot more relaxed about it than I thought but it's still quite a weird situation with my parents you know you can't really talk about everything and stuff.

I guess this could be the case for most parents right?

But I would expect that with any parents of course. But I mean it would be less so if it was a white British parent they'd be much more relaxed and stuff like there are sort of still well I'm still Muslim and it's still certain things and you don't want it I don't want to be seen that I'm going and spending too much time on it my mum was always scared that I'd just when I was younger or whatever because I always had quite a lot of friends and obviously boys and girls she always thought oh don't get too distracted by girls it will stop you from your studies and stuff like that so I mean I think this has been good to show her that fine I've had her through A levels and stuff and I've still done well in my exams so it's not a girl which would stop me it's just me so it's just gonna be part of me that I'm gonna have girlfriends and stuff'. (Omar)

On the other hand, the interview with Omar's mother complemented her son's accounts and described her way of dealing with the relationship. She consulted other family members, her mother in particular, and together they decided not to take the relationship so seriously:

'The whole family gets involved. Omar had a girlfriend and when he told me, "Oh Mamma I like this girl". Immediately I called up my mother and told her, Oh My God he has a girlfriend what do we do? She said, well we'll deal with it. I said, Good how serious is it? And then my brother was called and then my sister was called and we

all had a talk and we analysed the situation and we said, we'd leave it and let him handle it as long as he's not too involved. We don't mind.' (Omar's mother)

These accounts about relationships and love demonstrate another cause of intergenerational conflict reflecting the influence of different social fields – family and peers – and of the structural conditions as expressed by South Asian, British cultures and Islam.

Contesting and conforming: looking closer into the two typologies

Based on thematic analysis, this final section aims to 'look inside' the two typologies - contesting and conforming - to investigate whether there were shared characteristics and common patterns into the young people's accounts which fitted into the two models. This stage of the analysis involved looking at the data in light of the attributes set out in Chapter 5 which included gender, ethnicity, geographical area, parents' employment status, generation and age.

The analysis indicate that, overall, the strategies grouped under the two typologies, conforming and contesting and only reflected minor gender differences and included accounts from both boys and girls. This is to say that to some extent, both boys and girls in the study conformed to and sometimes challenged elements of parental culture and South Asian tradition.

However, within this more general pattern, more specific differences have emerged: the typology about conforming showed that some of the girls managed to resolve more easily than some boys, their 'conflict' with parental culture and adopted conforming behaviours. Conversely a group of boys (Davar, Tahir, Wajid, Pervez) showed more strongly the conflictual dimension of their relationship with their parents' system of values. It appears that the higher propensity of these young boys to adopt conflictual identities related to the stronger effects of peer pressure, the influences of the local area and generally their way of socialising, which were objects of the interviews with them:

> 'Yes. I do consider myself a Muslim but again the area that I'm living in has changed me. Obviously I still have faith in my religion but in my religion we're prohibited to drink and have drugs. Smoking is allowed but drinking, having zoots, that's not right. Obviously living in an area like this you see someone doing it, you think that looks quite nice, let's try that. You have it once and you

think 'I'm not going to have it again'. But then again you see someone else have it and you think 'let me take it again' (Davar)

The analysis also suggests that, within each family group, the different experiences of mothers and fathers migrating and settling in the UK affected young people's negotiation strategies. Young people who were contesting had parents who, even though they were both first generation migrants, had quite different degree of understanding of British values and lifestyle and different level of English. As detailed in table 5.4, most parents were fist generation migrants while young people were mostly second generation born in the UK. However, as also described in Chapter 3, the migration histories of fathers and mothers were often different: parents did not come to the UK together and the general pattern was that mothers arrived later and often did not work, which affected English language skills and general integration into British society.

As the analysis suggests, Davar was amongst those who were contesting: his mother did not speak English and never worked, compared to the father who grew up in the UK, was fluent in English and had a very good understanding of British culture and values. Similarly Tahir, who also contested, had a mother who could not speak English and was socially very isolated. The cultural differences between parents were particularly strong in the case of Mariam, who amongst the girls in the study was the one who was most strongly contesting parental culture and was critical of her mother's system of values. Her father was born in the UK and was from mixed ethnic background (White English mother and Bangladeshi father), while her mother was born and brought up in Bangladesh:

> 'I think to some extent it (being British) is where you are born because I was born here but then my mum has been living here for twenty years but then I wouldn't think she was British, she might have a passport but I wouldn't say she is British because she hasn't adapted to the values and I have. I mean I am not saying British as in going and drinking and clubbing Brits but I think it is where you are born and I think it is adapting to some of the norms and values. I mean there is some people like my mum she has been living here for god knows how long yeah and she won't speak English and I know she knows basic, I mean my dad speaks English and he was born here but she will speak in Bengali. I think that is really annoying, I mean you have been living here for thirty years, I don't even know how many years I think she came here when she was eighteen and she is past forty now, she is forty two but I think.

> *Why do you think she is not learning?*

> I think it is culture, I think that she classes herself as Bangladeshi you know while I will be sitting down watching Gordon Brown she will want to watch her Bangladeshi TV and the prime minister or someone down there. I don't blame her obviously she was born there, her family is still over there. (Mariam)

Zahra, who mostly conformed to her parents' wishes, represented a very specific case where parents had very different migration histories but very similar degrees of integration and understanding of British society. Her father considered himself second generation because he grew up in the UK, whilst her mother moved from Pakistan to the UK later to get married in her early twenties. However, differently from other mothers in the study, Zahra's mother was completely fluent in English and, she claimed, she had a very good understanding of British society and values; so that there was a quite strong continuity between her and her husband's parenting. The mother explained how she adapted to living in the UK:

> 'I had some education in Pakistan but when I actually came to this country I felt that it was really important because unless you can speak English you can't actually do anything. I just picked it up really, I didn't go anywhere to learn or anything I just wrote my knowledge and I used to watch TV carefully and my husband helped me. If I said something wrong he would say "you are not supposed to say it like this you are supposed to say it like that. (....)
>
> I left all my family back there and just before I came, 5 months before that my mum passed away, we were totally shattered I would say. My mum died on 24 December 86 and then my dad passed in May 87. I came to UK on 28 October in 87. So I found it very very hard. My husband was there to support me but still I found it hard. I couldn't speak the language that was a kind of barrier for me and then yeh I did work then in a factory where they used to make underwear and stuff. I did find it very hard at the beginning (...).
>
> *How long did it take you to adapt?*
>
> Well actually it took me about 2 years. (...) slowly slowly I made friends where I lived it was alright there. Those were the hard years of my life I think'. (Zahra's mother).

Intergenerational differences in values and beliefs and the deriving 'conflict' are often common characteristics of the ways children and parents interact with each other and do not relate to the ethnic or religious background of the family. In the study, parental migration and settlement histories added a further level of complexity in terms of 'cultural distance', to the temporal dimension which more generally characterises the intergenerational gap between parents and children.

In summary, young people's accounts underlying the two typologies suggest that distinct parental migration and settlement histories - (which implied mother and father having different levels of experience and knowledge about British society and English language skills) - affected the continuity of parenting and ultimately impacted on young people's habitus and identity.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored a number of strategies used by young people to negotiate between religious and national identities while taking into account parents' contribution and influence on these processes. Young people and parents' accounts were firstly grouped into wider themes, referred to as strategies, which were then used to develop the two main typologies, contesting and conforming to parental culture and religion. These typologies describe young people's processes of negotiation with regard to parental influences.

Because habitus results from social interaction, the experiences shared with other groups of individuals determine also shared dispositions and thus similar habitus. As this chapter has demonstrated, the habitus of young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds develops within multiple different social fields: family, school, peers and the related influence of South Asian culture, Islam and 'Britishness'. In this context, negotiating identities meant reconciling the sense of belonging to these different social fields under the influence of the structural conditions such as those coming from British society, South Asian culture and Islam.

Young people appeared as active constructors of their social reality and identity. The research illustrates that those who conformed did not passively accept parental restrictions. By contrast, young people firstly challenged what they perceived as impositions, they then investigated them in order to understand how these restrictions would affect their lives, and only then, they eventually adopted them. This convergence, between parents and young people, seemed to finally generate a new intergenerational sense of sharing which set out high moral standards and promoted a way of life away from certain practices such as drinking alcohol, going out and also dating or marrying outside their religious and ethnic community.

The two typologies also implied different perceptions of British society and being British: some conforming accounts showed a sense of criticism about being British associated with 'pub culture', going out and getting drunk. By contrast, contesting involved looking more positively at these same practices and associating being British to freedom and self-determination with regard to issues relating to their social life.

The continuity or discontinuity of parenting was particularly affected by the migration histories and cultural background of mothers and fathers. The analysis suggested that contesting accounts were more present in the interviews with young people whose parents had quite different levels of familiarity with British society, including different levels of English language skills, experiences of working and integrating socially in the country.

Chapter 10

'All together they are me': combining Muslim, British and South Asian identities

Introduction

This chapter explores how young British Muslims combined multiple identities and seeks to identify the strategies they developed to do so. In this sense the idea of combining identities refers to a number of themes about how young people brought together elements of 'being young' with the British and Islamic traditions, as embodied by the idea of *British Muslim youth*.

The influences deriving from specific elements of the structural conditions, such as religion and youth culture, affected the everyday lives of these young people both in terms of the things they do, or practices, and the discourses used to explain and justify how and why they do certain things. In this context, the idea of *fluid identities* (Basit, 2009) appears appropriate to describe the interplay between multiple alliances and loyalties which are different but not necessarily exclusive one of the other. Therefore, this study has involved investigating young people's tastes and interests by looking at the activities that characterise their everyday lives and that were relevant to them, for instance listening to music, watching movies, reading books or going out but also religious practice. As the concept of habitus suggests, these everyday practices reflect how individuals internalise elements of the social world such as the influence of British Muslim youth culture.

The chapter will focus particularly on young people's accounts and insights from visual methods, which had a significant role in developing this typology. Parents' perspectives will be used, where relevant, to integrate the views of young people. The chapter starts with exploring elements of British Muslim youth, which involved examining young people's personal interests, practice, tastes and beliefs. It then looks at how young people managed *'to be modest and modern'* and thus how they fitted religious practice in their everyday life using the particular example of wearing the hijab. The chapter concludes with the analysis of how young people talked about the complex processes of combining national, religious and ethnic identities.

10.1 British Muslim youth: combining Britishness with Islamic religious practices

This first section particularly draws from the discussion with young people about the pictures they took prior to the interview and describes important aspects of their identity as reflected by the influence of British youth culture and Islamic tradition, which came together into the new theoretical construct of British Muslim Youth. The photographs elucidated about young people's favorite activities, general tastes and social life and reflected elements of the secular youth culture. At the same time, young people took pictures of objects and situations which, they explained, symbolised Islam.

Secular interests: music, movies, books, sport, politics and other activities

Young people explained that pictures of IPods and of pop and R&B singers or rappers represented music, which was relevant to their identity. Most of the young people, both boys and girls, were interested in music and listened to R&B, pop, hip hop and rap from Bejonce, Shakira, and Lady Gaga to rappers such as Lil Wayne, Eminem, Snoop Dog and 50 Cent, who were the most quoted artists. Young people's personal tastes were mostly influenced by peer culture and social life rather than other aspects of their identity or structural conditions:

> 'I think my interests in like music and films and books is just what I like basically, I don't think it has anything to do with whether I am female, Muslim or British, it's just like what I like individually. I am reading at the moment Dan Brown's The Lost Symbol because it is about legends and stuff and it is something that I am very interested in and that is my personal interest. I just like doing my own thing basically and being able to evaluate what is right and wrong and just doing what I want to do'. (Maria)

Musical tastes transcended any difference amongst youths from other ethnic or religious backgrounds and were a quite common characteristic of 'being young' in more general terms. In other words, these particular music styles interpreted a relevant part of youth as identity and created a sense of sharing with the other non-Muslim young people.

There were other perspectives that highlighted how music functioned as a way of self-expression to overcome personal and emotional barriers as Tahir demonstrated:

'My name is Tahir. I'm 16. Everything about me is music. I'm really into music. I listen to every type of music. Mostly rap but RnB. (…) I can't express myself by talking to people, I express my feelings with music. If I'm in love I'll make a song about love. If I'm sad I'll say everything is bad about my life. I use that music.' (Tahir)

Music was particularly important for a group of four Bangladeshi boys in the sample from a quite disadvantaged background; three of them dropped out of school and looked for other routes to success. This group included Tahir who recounted his personal journey and how he got involved with music:

'I got into music because in year 9 I started a bad path. I started to blaze a lot, do weed, I used to bunk a lot. That's why my education wasn't that good. In year 10 I was started to bunk a lot, my attendance and grades went down. I was in higher in every subject, English, maths, science. I was in higher. I was doing quite well but because of my attendance I went down to foundation. Somehow in English I stayed in high for that. In year 11 I started to realise but that was too late. Year 11 is half a year then its finished so I tried my best. If I could, I would go back and I wouldn't mind being a lawyer. You need very good degrees, grades which I'm not sure I'm going to get. That's when I started listening to music. I found it easier. Some things I really like and I won't get bored of it. Then I just made my own tracks. That's how it is. I just made music my career. I want to become a rap artist and if I don't I wouldn't mind. I would say I would become a security guard, bouncer or maybe even a policeman. My heart's more into music. I don't see nothing else for me in the future other than music and become a rap artist. I'm really determined. My whole heart's in music. That's it'. (Tahir)

Tahir and Davar were the ones that most strongly wanted to have a career in music; they were 'rapping' and, together with Mohammed and Pervez, referred to the Black American rapper Lil Wayne as their role model. These young boys showed me pictures of Lil Wayne downloaded from the internet; we watched his videos during the interviews and talked extensively about him.

Figure 10.1: Lil Wayne
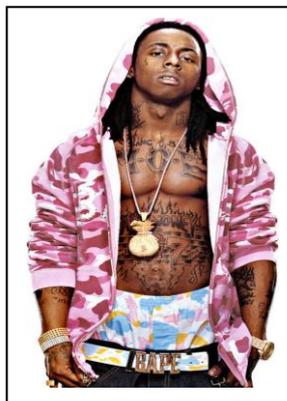
According to the accounts of these young people, music was a way to fulfil their aspirations and it symbolised an alternative way to achieve success in life, wealth and higher social mobility. These young boys expressed concerns about being able to meet their aspirations through the standard routes such as education. For them, Lil Wayne embodied a parable to success: someone from a minority, poor and marginalised background who found a way to break down certain barriers and to become famous worldwide. The pop singer Lady Gaga also occurred in several accounts and was admired by quite a few young people. However, in this case the emphasis was on her music rather than on her image, style and personality which was seen as 'excessive' by both Ali and Mariam:

> 'Her (Lady Gaga) music obviously she is a bit crazy in the videos but that is her style but if you just forget whatever and just listen to the music, I just the love the beat and everything. I love the music.' (Mariam)

This discrepancy in the way the male rapper and the female pop singer were described by young people, may mirror gender biases, which justified being controversial more in the case of the Lil Wayne than Lady Gaga.

The pictures taken by young people also reflect the importance of technology to the way they listened to music:

> 'Yeah you have got my IPods and my mobile phone and I have had these two for a few years now but I have had a phone just recently because my dad didn't let me have a phone until I was seventeen, that was another story. Music and communicating with my friends and technology, obviously technology is everything now isn't it? Getting your downloads, texting and going on Facebook on your mobile phone, that's modern'. (Hania)

Technology was not only relevant in relationship to music, but it affected the way young people kept in touch with each other, communicated and also how they researched information. Young respondents took pictures of IPods, mobile phones, laptops and PC's. Importantly, technology also had a role in their knowledge about Islam and overall understanding of religion as detailed in Chapter 9.

Together with music and technology, young people spoke about movies and took pictures of their favorite books and sport. In these cases there were gender differences:

girls spoke more about their favourite movies and books than boys did, while boys were more into sport.

The Twilight Saga, the Stephanie Meyer's series of novels which have been turned into four movies about a love story between a teenage girl and a vampire, were present in many accounts and photographs of the girls. Most of these girls admitted 'not being crazy about Twilight' but a lot of them talked about it and explained they watched it out of curiosity and because of the influence of other friends. They told me that the success of the saga was marked by the outlook of the popular young actors and the captivating plot about the difficult love story. Some of the young people also mentioned Harry Potter amongst the books they recently read, whilst some others revealed more 'grown-up' tastes and read from romantic to real life novels by authors such as Erica James, John Grisham, Jacquelina Wilson, Cecilia Aherne, Robert Muchamore to the Reluctant Fundamentalist by Mohsin Hamid as Mariam pointed out:

> 'I am not sure what it is but Cecilia Aherne she is an amazing author and when I was younger I read the entire Robert Muchmore series, he is a fantastic author. Just loads, when I was really young I used to just read Jacqueline Wilson, Tracey Beaker series and that was really good.'(Mariam)

Unsurprisingly, boys were more involved in sport than girls, particularly football and cricket, while few of them liked rugby. However, as some of the interviews took place during the 2010 football World Cup some of the young people, including girls, spoke about the team they supported. Ali did not support England as he explained, he did not like the way they played, and he was instead supporting Spain. Sakina was supporting Germany because of what she thought of as 'a true testament of diversity', or a very multi-ethnic team which included a Turkish Muslim player. In contrast, Mariam who on several occasions emphasized the importance of her British identity, supported England, her country of origin; she also justified her interest in football as characteristic of her way of being and she described herself as a 'tomboy' that was quite unusual for an Asian girl.

Some of the young people had an interest in politics and were actively participating in society by doing volunteering. Asif, for instance, ran for the young Mayor local election in a disadvantaged London borough where he identified priorities particularly relevant for youths such as reducing crime, tackling the drugs problem and provide cleaner and

safer places to meet and socialise. Saleem was also involved with volunteering and was part of an organisation supporting Muslim youths from difficult or disadvantaged backgrounds. Tania had planned to take a gap year after completing her A Levels, to go and volunteer in an orphanage in India, where her family was originally from.

Ali was interested in domestic and international politics. He spoke about the Palestinian question and the condition of Muslim people in the world explaining how he gained knowledge of these issues at school and then developed an interest in it:

> *'You mentioned Palestine, is it something you know about or you are interested in?*
>
> Yes. I've studied it and its part of one of my GCSE subjects, humanities. There was a unit on conflict and co-operation. (…) It's a controversial issue because they both see Jerusalem as their promised land and there's different religious arguments and there's moral arguments as well.
>
> *So how do you feel about the Muslims in Palestine, what's your view?*
>
> I'm a Muslim myself. I think that not one group should be given priority over the city and that both groups should have it but it's something for them to sort out between themselves. It's something for them to be grown up about and sort out. (Ali)

Finally, young people spoke about their social life as mostly split between family and friends. School, college and related activities, including their homework, occupied most of their day and did not leave time for much else. When free, they described spending time with their family, at home watching TV, doing some sport and meeting up with friends. There were some differences amongst young people about the time spent with their friends related partly to their gender, but also their personal interests, their own willingness toward going out but also their family's attitude toward them being out. Going out mostly meant meeting up with friends to go shopping, for dinner or to birthday parties. Some of the young boys, Pervez, Davar, Tahir, Ali and Mohammed were going out a lot more, they often spent the afternoon out together in the local area and were staying out late on weekends. Sarah spoke about spending quite a bit of her free time, particularly at the weekend, at her friends' houses where she was allowed to stay overnight or to come back as late as midnight if she was staying with friends living locally. Tania, in contrast, said she did not have much of a social life as she lived quite far from her friends and school, therefore she spent most of her free time doing things on her own at home. This was echoed by other young people, both boys

and girls, who were more academically focused and placed a lot of their time and effort on working hard for their grades.

The importance of religious practice

Together with photographs of their secular activities and interests, young people photographed objects and situations that, they explained, symbolised Islam. These included the prayer mat, the prayer beads, pictures of Mecca and scenes of family members praying. The discussion with young people about the pictures suggested that religious practice was an important dimension of their religious identity which was in line with their parental perspectives.

Figure 10.2: Family Praying

Islam implies following Five Pillars, which are guiding moral principles and religious acts. These include the shahada (the Muslim declaration of belief or creed); the five times daily prayers (salat); fasting during the Ramadan; almsgiving or giving to the poor (zakat) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (haji) at least once in the lifetime (Schimmel, 1992). Combining religious practices, set out by the Five Pillars, with more secular aspects of social and everyday life, led young people and also their parents to developing strategies of negotiation which aimed to adapt practicing to daily schedule and commitments mostly marked by work or school. Other perspectives involved negotiating these two different dimensions, Britishness and Islam, by elaborating on the relevance of religious practice for Muslim identity.

The survey conducted in schools suggested that attending religious services was more important for Muslim young people compared to youth from other religious groups. In

line with this finding, the interviews also indicate the importance of religious practice particularly embodied by praying. Praying is a fundamental part of the pillars of Islam and one of the most important themes that was evident when young people and parents talked about religious practice. In some cases, when asked about whether they were practicing, respondents referred to whether they were praying five times a day as Amina exemplified:

> 'Yes (my family) is religious. My mum and my dad they are religious, they pray five times a day'. (Amina)

There were different reasons why praying was of so much value to respondents as shown by the following accounts:

> 'Yes. I myself pray. So I can't say that I am very religious but I can I say that I am, I do very much believe in God and I do say my prayers and it's also me by the way. I pray because I need to pray. Because there is somebody I can talk to, that somebody when I'm upset I can ask and cry and have a communication with.' (Omar's mum)

> 'When I don't pray I feel empty. If I know people that never used to pray, now they pray and they are always happy'. (Saleem)

> '(Praying) gives escape and comfort (…) it's the closer you'll going to be with your Lord (…) it's just literally you and him'. (Hania)

The qualitative insights aligned with quantitative findings described in Chapter 6 about the intrinsic motivations underlying practicing religion, and they elucidate about the meaning of praying as providing personal emotional support in different ways. Praying was considered a 'personal need' and life fulfilling, it provided comfort and escape from troubles and increased the proximity to God. These themes were also relevant for some parents such as Hamid's and Hania's fathers, who were both in work, and emphasised the role of praying in bringing the family together. In Hania's family, parents and children prayed together every Sunday, while at Hamid's home they were trying to gather the family for the evening prayers and prayed five times a day only at the weekend.

Most of the young people and parents admitted practicing their religious quite frequently but not fully as stated by the Five Pillars. Negotiating work, school or college

and religious practices involved, for some of the young people and parents, reducing the number of times they prayed during the day to only morning and evening:

> 'The praying they say you should do it five times a day but as a family we don't do it five times. We don't have time. I go to school so I only do it in the morning and evening'. (Haroon)

Religious practice in a context such as the UK amplified difficulties related to daily schedules and work commitments. However, there were some exceptions such as Asif's father, who was the main earner and had two jobs but still managed to pray five times a day. Sakina was also praying regularly as set out by the pillars:

> 'Yeah I pray now (…) five times a day. That's when I started wearing a headscarf really, that's when I started to take my religion seriously when I was 11 years old, so when I started at secondary school I started doing five daily prayers'. (Sakina)

In her case, praying five times a day was the result of a personal journey toward increasing religiosity where practicing was a substantial part. Hania's father also spoke about how he always made time to pray:

> 'I was going to London last week and there was a time for my prayer and I thought to myself if I don't pray now by the time I get to London this praying time will pass because its five times we pray isn't it. That's the longest, this is the longest time that you get but the other four is like an hour/two hours that you have to do it or you passed it. I was in the car driving and I thought I will miss it by the time I am there and so I stopped the car in a service station and I read it in the car because our religion does say if you are travelling you can just do it in your mind you know or just through your body actions you can do it in your mind. So the religion is very, very easy it is how you take'. (Hania's Father)

He explained that praying was not particularly hard while living in the UK; rather he felt it was up to the individual to use the opportunities and services available:

> 'Well I'll tell you something yes praying-wise it is better over there because everywhere you go there is a mosque there and you can pray, you can do whatever you want but looking at this country now, in a European country now these days nobody is stopping you to pray, no work places are stopping your from following your religion. Even schools these days are saying that if a student comes up to the teacher and says "right its my praying time" the teacher will say "go on and do whatever you have to do." It is up to that individual how much they believe in it and how strongly they believe in it. I myself find it very easy here, following it here than there, Bangladesh'. (Hania's father)

The accounts about religious practice indicate that negotiating between secular and religious commitments was often for respondents a matter of personal willingness, which enabled them to overcome possible barriers deriving from being Muslim and living in a non-Muslim country.

Being 'Muslim but not religious'

Another way of combining religious practice with the more secular routines imposed by work and school, involved elaborating on the importance of religious moral principles as Omar indicated:

> 'I do (pray) but I don't do it as much as like you know I don't do five times a day like I would pray but occasionally but I guess that is just me I'm less religious than they are but I think I respect religion more in terms of what it makes how it grafts you as an individual and the beliefs and morals behind it. I think those are much more important than the practice. I mean of course I think ideally I would like to do it more but I think that as long as I believe in god and I do pray but maybe not all the time but I still always think of god or like before I go to sleep you know I give a little prayer or something or you know thank him for whatever I've been given or you know before an exam just pray to god that whatever, I think stuff like that I think it is the morals which are more important that it grafts you into being a good individual or someone who's respectful honorable you know all the sort of good qualities I think those are much more important than say being very religious but just not holding up the moral aspects of it'. (Omar)

When defining themselves as religious, some of the young people and parents were inclined to place emphasis on believing as the spiritual and moral dimension of religion, rather than the other aspect of practicing. Thereby, Islam was perceived by some respondents more in terms of guiding values rather than predefined religious acts. In this case, for instance, the *salat* or *haji* were seen as an integral, but not an essential part, of their being Muslim. For these young people and parents emphasising the spiritual and moral dimension of their religious identity, believing in God was the overarching principle and foundation defining the meaning of their '*being Muslim*', while '*being religious*' was associated with practicing fully. Therefore '*being Muslim but not religious*' meant believing while not fully practicing Islam:

> 'I believe in Allah which is my god. That makes me a Muslim (Tahir)'.

Tahir's accounts also reflected the idea of 'being Muslim but not religious' which was shared by some of the young people and parents. He described Islam as very important to his life and to his identity but he explained he was not used to religious practice due to his family upbringing:

> 'When you're about six you start going to mosque and they teach you about religion two hours a day. Monday to Friday. I used to be up and down with my mum and dad when they had their little problems. I never had the time. I got older and got used to not praying'. (Tahir)

This point about being Muslim but not religious was reflected also in Yasmeen's account when she explained how believing was more relevant to her faith than strictly practicing her religion:

> 'It's hard because for me I won't pray five times a day but then when I go to mosque I will, so I pray there and so let's put it this way I am not religious, I believe in god and I believe the things that I am supposed to believe and I do believe them genuinely but I won't practice if that makes sense.' (Yasmeen)

These last perspectives have highlighted the possibility of maintaining a Muslim identity even without practicing. There was an underlying sense, amongst some of the respondents and particularly some parents, that being religious meant practicing fully and could be associated with being radical or extremist. Yasmeen's family particularly mirrored the identification with a non-fully practicing Muslim as exemplified by her mother in the following account:

> *'Would you say you are religious now?*
> No. Not at all. I do pray once in the day and I read a bit of Qur'an in the morning and that's all.
>
> *And this is not enough to define yourself religious?*
> No. Because I don't do it for religion. I do it for peace of mind. I don't do it in the name of Islam, I do it for my own peace of mind. (…)
>
> *(…) would you define yourself as Muslim?*
> A Muslim yes. But not a practicing Muslim. I do my own version of Islam for my own peace of mind. My husband doesn't fast. We don't go to mosque all the time. We go whenever work permits or if we can be bothered. But other than that, no.' (Yasmeen's mother)

These accounts suggest that 'being Muslim' encompassed religiosity both in terms of practicing and creed. By contrast it reflected a cultural legacy, an inherited condition

which started with being born as a Muslim and developed as being brought up in a Muslim family. According to this perspective, a non-practicing Muslim adopted a more personal and individual approach to religion, which did not require an externalised outlook such as traditional clothing or the hijab, and did not entail participation to rituals or the full implementation of the religious acts as detailed by the pillars. It can be argued that this perspective may be relevant also in the context of other religions, for instance non-practicing Christians or Jews may still define themselves as Christians or Jews. However, for Muslim parents and young people 'being Muslim' reflected a main determinant of their own identity, which characterised them more deeply than other elements of self-identification like nationality or ethnicity. For some young people, like Tahir, who was involved in a totally 'un-Islamic' lifestyle, being Muslim was a legacy which fulfilled the need for belonging. In other cases, being Muslim reinforced the link with the culture and country of origin, while for other young people being Muslim was about knowing the boundaries of moral behavior and follow the rules which forbid the use of alcohol, drugs, eating pork or pre-marital relationships. Being Muslim was also associated with values such as respect and generosity reflected in carrying out charitable acts. However, a contrasting account has highlighted how believing without practicing was not enough, as Asif pointed out:

> 'You have to practice, you can't really call yourself a Muslim without practicing the religion and like if you do particular things and be at peace then you can feel peaceful. Like if you pray five times a day, fast in the month of Ramadan and say that you believe in God and the prophet. Mohammed peace be upon him is his messenger and like you may get peace in this world or in the afterlife'. (Asif)

In this case Muslim self-definition required a balance between believing and practicing. Asif had a very high idea of what being Muslim meant, and even though he knew a lot about his religion, he studied Islam and he believed in God he was still not comfortable with defining himself as religious as he was not able to fully practice as Islam required.

10.2 'Being modest and modern': combining identities and the hijab

This section explores practices related to clothing and style which were relevant to combining identities. Clothes and style were an important part of young people identity

for both boys and girls as outlined in Chapter 9 which showed how issues about clothing caused intergenerational conflict. Photographs of clothing represented different styles from western British to the more traditional *shalwar kamiz*[16] while girls also also took pictures of jewellery and accessories. Some young boys spoke about the importance of style and clothing, they took pictures of hair products and told me about the time they spent doing their hair every day. The following themes about the role of clothing and style in combining identities revealed how certain practices, like matching the hijab with 'modern' clothes, interpreted aspects of young people's identity and showed how they combined religion and 'Britishness'.

'Being modern and modest'

'Being modern' in this context signified wearing western clothes such as jeans, dresses, leggings, t-shirts and tops and was opposed to 'being modest'. Modesty in Islam is paramount for both women and men. However it is particularly for women that modesty becomes a more controversial issue because it is seen as the justification behind the practice of 'covering up' to reduce women's sexual allure. In this sense modesty is the rationale behind the wearing of the 'hijab' (headscarf), the 'jilbab' (full length gown) and ultimately the 'niqab' the most discussed full face veil. These clothing practices have been increasingly associated by non-Muslims to the viewing of women as mere sexual objects and ultimately as instruments of oppression (e.g. Yafai, 2010; Tarlo, 2010).

The accounts of young people and parents reflect the importance of negotiating modesty and modernity. Zahida's father interpreted modesty in cultural terms and referred to the body of manners, behaviour and practices embodied by what he called 'old culture' as opposed to the new culture:

> '(The old culture is) How you dress, how you handle yourself, how you talk to strangers, how you stay away from certain strangers. You should be special. When you talk to someone you shouldn't be blunt and abrupt. You should be nicer with depth and wisdom.
>
> *Is it about behavior?*
> Of course.
>
> *And what is the new culture about?*

---

[16] Long chemise with matching trousers underneath (Becher, 2003)

Body piercing, in between is where you should be and you should be comfortable'. (Zahida's father)

Even though in Islam modesty transcends the issue of what to wear and encompasses attitudes, behaviour and the relationships with others, it is within the discussion about clothing that the theme of modesty becomes particularly salient. Therefore, wearing certain clothes, as an expression of personal taste and as a marker of identity, can be seen as an indicator of modesty itself.

Modesty was perceived by the girls and mothers as a empowering because it enabled them to be viewed beyond their appearance and with respect:

'It's nice knowing the fact that I will be judged for who I am personality-wise than oh look she looks hot, she looks good and stuff let me go and talk to her.' (Sakina)

As a value, modesty was embedded in the girls' practices and manifested through different ways of being modest. Being modest, as respondents explained, meant 'to cover up' and not to wear revealing clothes in order to avoid provoking or attracting the attention of men:

'Yeah that and like you're not meant to like, you're meant to be covered so that no other man looks at you in that way. That's an important reason, you just want to like keep yourself hidden. It's even bad like, even like your eyes, everything's meant to be covered, but I don't know, I will do that soon but not now though, I can't just do it now, because I know I still do bad things'. (Nilufer)

Although there was a general agreement amongst the girls about the importance of modesty, there were different ways this was interpreted and reflected in their everyday practices, mostly in their outlook and clothing.

Being modest did not mean giving up western clothing or homologising and abandoning a personal style. In the college in Oldham Muslim girls were wearing fashionable and colourful clothes like other girls of their generation including jackets, skirts to dresses. Some of them adapted their 'modern' clothing to 'be modest', while in some cases the hijab was matched to embellish the rest of the outfit in others it was the only feature of clothing that could identify these girls as Muslim. Hania explained how the hijab could go together and actually add something to 'modern clothes':

'Well I think you can be modern and wear the Hijab still as long as you are modest and dress modestly and obviously there are some girls who wear the shalwar kamiz with a Hijab on, I mean that is their way of dressing and it wouldn't be seen as typical British because obviously Britain is like they wear mainly English clothes. With myself I couldn't ever wear Asian clothes in college because I see myself in a different role, when I come to college I am here to socialise with a number of people, my friends and English clothes and as long as its modest that's the best clothes to wear.

'Do you select your scarf to match whatever else you are wearing?
Yeah I shouldn't really but I do. I mean I think being eighteen years old, late teens it is important to still be fashionable but still religious at the same time and it has been one of my toughest challenges yet because if I didn't wear my Hijab now I would still be seen as typical British dressing because of my jewellery and how I have accessorised everything and just putting the Hijab on its still the same. Do you know what I mean? Because I still try and be fashionable as well as religious.' (Hania)

However, being modest or being religious did not necessarily have to be manifested by wearing the hijab, the headscarf worn by Muslim women to cover their hair (Tarlo, 2010). Some of the young girls who were not wearing the headscarf spoke about how they created their own modest style simply by adapting western clothes. This involved for instance, wearing dresses with long-sleeved t-shirts and skinny jeans underneath, matching long sleeved tops with jeans and boots; the general rule, it was explained, was to keep arms and legs fully covered and do not show or emphasise the figure by wearing too tight clothes. Maria, who was not wearing the hijab spoke about how she created her modest style while wearing modern clothes and how she shifted from one style to the other, Asian or British, depending on the circumstances:

'Do you always wear these sort of clothes (shalwar kameez)?
No I don't always wear them. Majority of the time I wear them, at home I wear them and majority of time when I am out and about I wear them but I also wear like jeans and stuff because that is a part of my identity as well.

Do you mix them? Like skinny jeans or boots?
Yeah. Oh no I hate those Australian boots that everybody has. I just like wearing what I want I know it is important to cover yourself and so I wear everything that covers and I just follow my own trend.

So let's say in one week how often do you wear British clothes' like jeans or a jumper?
Probably out of seven days probably twice, twice a week, whenever I want to wear it basically.' (Maria)

Those who did not wear the hijab explained that it was because it was a cultural practice rather than religious, which did not compromise their 'being Muslim'. Some

women saw wearing the hijab as a possible future step in their lives, but they did not feel ready yet as they were prioritising other elements of their religious identity such as respecting the values attached to Islam or praying. Even Sakina, who was wearing the hijab, pointed out that this did not necessarily make a woman a good Muslim and that being Muslim signified, first of all, believing in God and aligning life to this belief:

> 'I mean as I said I've got some Muslim friends who don't wear their scarf at all, wear skinny jeans and stuff like that, but yet inside they have a really strong faith. I had one friend, you know, it's remarkable, she's one of those girls she didn't wear a headscarf, but she prayed five times a day and normally, you know, you see loads of people wearing headscarves but who don't do the same thing and that's a testament to how your appearance necessarily match your inner faith or inner character and sometimes people get misjudged'. (Sakina)

Sakina finally explained that the difficulty was to find a balance between being modest and modern and respect the fact that people go through transitions which take place at different times in their lives:

> 'I mean I suppose if you can find that balance, I mean I'm a daughter and I do wear makeup with my scarf, but on special occasions and I think it's a very difficult thing when you're a teenager trying to balance your beliefs as well as what you want in the sense that, you know, what society is doing, what's normal and I think not only is it about maintaining modesty but also about not standing out too much and that obviously sometimes comes a conflict wearing a bright scarf and stuff, but because in London it's so diverse, people wear colours all the time, when you wear a colourful scarf you're just like another person on the street, but yeah again you do retain some kind of modesty because again you're covering your hair, but I've seen some girls wearing like scarves and skinny jeans and yes they are covered up, but it still shows your figure and I used to do that but then I thought what's the point of me wearing the scarf then? But it's just a development I think when teenagers go through that phase of adjusting between 2 different cultures and making that transition into becoming more modest as you grow older, so yeah.' (Sakina)

In brief, there was not a fixed rule on what to wear, hijabs, jilbabs and ultimately the niqabs were seen by women as steps of a personal journey with different degrees of religiosity but not necessarily the only way to represent and manifest their Islamic faith.

The hijab

The Qur'an contains a number of references to the rules about women's clothing and appearance (e.g. Tarlo, 2010). These references do not detail specifically what women should wear and they are not explicit about the need of covering the head and the hair.

Rather, The Qur'an provides general guidance and advocates the importance of modesty and the requirement for women to cover up for protection. The following verses discern how women should dress in public:

> "Tell believing women to avert their eyes, and safeguard their private parts, and not to expose their attractions except what is visible. And let them wrap their shawls around their breast lines, and reveal their attractions only before their husbands or fathers, or fathers-in-law, or sons, or sons of their husbands, or brothers, or sons of brothers, or sons of sisters, or their womenfolk, or slaves, or male attendants with no sexual desire, or children with no intimate knowledge of the private parts of women." (24: 30-31)

Protection of women, from 'Barbarians' or other tribes, was another rationale behind the need for women to cover up:

> "O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters and women believers to wrap their outer garments closely around them, for this makes it more likely that they will be recognized and not be harassed. God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each." (33:59)

As already explained, in this study the hijab exemplified for quite a few young people the idea of modesty itself and was particularly relevant to the identity of young girls as reflected in their pictures and accounts. Several girls took photographs of the hijab; some of them, as well as some of their mothers were wearing it when I met them. Other female respondents did not wear it yet but told me they wanted to do so one day, and others thought they would never wear it but they still felt it was something important to them.

Figure 10.3: The hijab
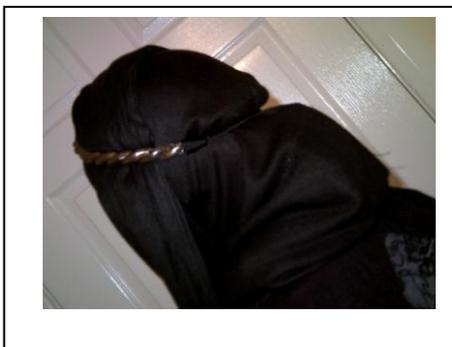
Figure 10.4: Self-portrait and the hijab

Female respondents described different reasons for wearing the hijab: some started wearing it as children as part of their upbringing, took it off and then started wearing it again as teenagers. As adult women the hijab reinforced their sense of Islamic identity and symbolized modesty and religiosity. Mariam explained she started wearing the hijab as a child to please her mother and because she was much more religious when she was younger. Since she started secondary school, she felt she had changed and become more critical about certain aspects of her religious tradition. However, she said, the hijab was still a very important part of her identity to the point that she felt uncomfortable without it:

> 'Well to be honest when people see me with a Hijab they think I am religious but the reason I am wearing it now it's like I can't go outside the house. I was going to my next door neighbours' house and I had to put a cap on, I have to have something on my head. Identity, I feel like this is a part of me now'. (Mariam)

Sakina was 18 years old at the time of the interview and she had been wearing the hijab for eight years already. She recounted her mother and, most generally, her Muslim upbringing, were amongst the main determinants of that choice, but she also referred to a personal journey which involved a thinking and exploration:

> 'I used to go to Islamic school when I was younger and so they addressed me on all sorts of issues and like books regarding these boundaries such as modesty, it was very very important for me, I had to learn more about that, because it's very difficult when you're growing up, you want to look good, you want to be appreciated but then again you don't want to be taken advantage of and you want to be taken seriously, so I had to find that balance myself and I think I was talking to my friends and it was like a step for them too, because we were going on this journey together and then you're talking about how we want to go and find the next step. I just felt as though it was time for me to cover, because I was a child before and I suppose I didn't have, my mind wasn't fully formed, my reasoning wasn't fully formed, but now because I understood the reasons why I thought there was nothing else, there's no reason for me to hold back, if I understood the reasons why and I believed in my faith and I believed that God told me to do this then why shouldn't I do what he told me to do and so that I felt for me was the starting point of me becoming more of a practicing Muslim and that's like when I was 11 years old and I started at secondary school.'(Sakina)

Hania explained how she started wearing the hijab as a child mostly because of the influence of her mother; she then went to a Muslim school where she kept on wearing

the hijab as part of the uniform. At school, she felt compelled to wear the hijab and as soon as she finished, she rebelled and stopped wearing it until the age of 17. When she turned 17 years old Hania decided to start wearing it again, but this time as her own personal choice:

> 'Well obviously I was growing up and I felt as though obviously my family is quite religious and my mum obviously introduced the hijab and told us "look you should wear it its for such and such reason" and my friend wears it as well, and it helps you in many ways and because I know the true meaning behind wearing it I kind of fell in love with the idea of wearing it. It's not because I want to be different or stand out from the crowd it's because it just felt right at seventeen to wear a hijab and I thought about it. It took me months to decide to actually wear it and because I went to a Muslim girls school in my high school I had to wear it, that was compulsory and I didn't like that idea that I had to wear it as part of the uniform and that is why I didn't wear it throughout my high school year. I would wear it in school but I wouldn't wear it outside the house and once I left I told myself I will never wear it because I was forced to wear the Hijab but then I decided that actually I might wear it because I am going to college and it is going to be mixed as well. One of the main reasons why I would wear it is to hide your beauty and do you know any reasons?' (Hania)

The hijab became for Hania a very important element of her identity. She started her interview talking about a picture of herself with the hijab, which she described as able to combine different aspects of her identity, particularly enabling her to shift between the public and private sphere. She thought of herself as two people 'the one with and the one without the hijab':

> 'I don't know she took that picture. Well being that is the only picture with my hijab on I thought you know and I have got the bus in it as well because that is how I transport from college to home and yeah mainly the hijab that I took for that picture because obviously it's a part of my identity and I value that the Hijab is a part of my identity because I can't imagine without it, I am a different person without my Hijab on.
>
> *Why?*
>
> Because you have got Hania with the Hijab and you have Hania without the Hijab and there is only certain people in my life that have seen me without the Hijab on, so I see myself as two different people. I don't mean to sound crazy or anything. Obviously the girl with the Hijab on is the person who everyone sees in college or at work or anything like that and the people that don't see are the people who are really close to me who will be my family and obviously

my friends who I see as my family anyway'. (Hania)

Hamid's mother had been wearing the hijab for three years and she described her choice as being the result of her religious faith at a particular stage of her life as an adult:

> *Why did you decide to wear the hijab?*
> I just decided it was time that I followed what I was supposed to do and I went for Hijab and I decided.
>
> *Is it important in Islam?*
> Yes. I didn't change my dressing, I dress like this but I just put on a head scarf but if you followed the Qur'an and try and be a good Muslim then you are supposed to dress modestly and cover your hair that's all and in all these years I denied that I used to say no, no I'm not going to do that and then one day I don't know what came over me and I thought it is about time I did that and my husband and I decided we will go for a pilgrimage and I said to him that if I do that then when I come back I am going to wear it. It was entirely my decision.' (Hamid's mother)

In this research, no one of the women wearing the hijab spoke about being forced to do so, being constrained or oppressed. By contrast, these female respondents emphasised that the wearing of the hijab as a personal choice:

> 'It was my choice to wear it. If I don't want to wear it now I can take it off. I still do want to wear it. It's beneficial to wear it. That's what Muslims believe. If you wear it you're respecting god.' (Nasreen's mother)

However, individual choices cannot be understood outside the context of where they are made and therefore outside the constraints as well the resources of the specific social field where individuals operate (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005). The accounts of Yasmeen's mother highlighted how two extremes 'not wearing many clothes and covering up' reflected two opposite ways of women interpreting and manifesting social and structural influences coming from British and Muslim lifestyles:

> 'I hate when a girl goes out totally freezing and all she's got on is a bra and a short skirt to there. I hate seeing it. But the reason I hate seeing it, is not because I'm a Muslim and you should cover yourself, but I just think blimey you must be cold. That's their choice to go out like that. The same argument applies. If you want to go out in a veil, it's your choice to do that.' (Yasmeen's mother)

In conclusion, for most of the respondents, both mothers and daughters, the hijab was a marker of Muslim identity which made 'being Muslim' visible to others while it

exemplified modesty as a value and way of life. The hijab accompanied the religiosity journey and personal development of some of the women leading to higher religious commitment and increased awareness of Islamic teachings and meanings.

The views of young boys and fathers on modesty and the hijab

The topic of modesty and the hijab was also addressed in the interviews with young boys and fathers. While modesty was seen as paramount by all of them, the hijab was considered by some as a cultural practice and a women's choice, as Nasreen's father pointed out:

> 'No. It depends on the heart. Your inside heart is clean, everything is okay. It's an act of modesty for you. You don't have to wear it. It's a choice.' (Nasreen's father)

Davar's father was instead very critical of the *niqab* and reiterated that covering the face was a cultural practice, which originated in the Saudi tradition, but which led to compromising the image of Muslim people and Islam itself bringing about negative stereotyping:

> 'Yeah full (veil) you don't have to, you don't have to do that you don't have to cover your face no. In Islam you don't have to but people do these things and make Islam bad and doing other but freedom okay you've got freedom I don't mind. I mean to say say an incident like my wife puts a veil on it completely and goes to the bank how do they know it is her getting the money out it maybe somebody else's card. She took it.
>
> *It's a big issue.*
> In Islam we don't have to put a veil on.
>
> *So what is it? What does it mean wearing it?*
> It's a cultural thing and it's Arabic culture it's not in Islam. Islam is not Arabic, Islam is the whole world is Islam but the cultural thing is oh to put a veil. Do you know why? People should know this about this you know. In Saudi Arabia it's like a desert all sand and when you know our prophet and his wives and daughters they used to go Medina to Mecca and it was windy and sand everybody had to cover their face.' (Davar's father)

Interestingly, some of the young boys, who otherwise mostly contested tradition and parental culture, used the issue of the hijab to reinforce their masculine identities and claimed that girls should cover their head and be modest mostly as a form of respect as Pervez commented:

> '*What about girls wearing the hijab, what do you think?*

I totally agree with my religion. They have to wear a scarf. It's respect against our culture. When other people see it they think good of you. Everyone knows around us religion, Islam it's got to be the right way and if there's some people not wearing scarf and half of them wearing scarf, it's a disgrace and it's not nice to our religion. People start thinking "I thought Islam was the way of this". Other people say this then it all revolves. (….)

You are saying girls should wear traditional clothes and the headscarf?
They should. At the young age they should wear a scarf.

From what age?
Starting from 7. At 7 you don't realise, your mother says "wear your scarf" they listen. It's a young age. When they get older they will get used to the scarf. If you tell them later on they will be like 'no, boys think I'm ugly, no I won't have a boyfriend'. When you go through puberty and when a lot of boys are round you, you feel tempted to do stuff. But when you've got a scarf on and you know your family and parents brought you up the right way then there ain't a chance of you making a sin or doing a haram thing. In Islam haram means you're doing a big sin and halal means it's right, you're going for the right path.'(Pervez)

Similarly, Davar, who was contesting as described in the previous chapter, also pointed out how he would expect the woman he will eventually marry should wear the hijab:

'Do you think to be Muslim you must to that? Is it a girls' choice?
To be a proper, fully practicing Muslim you have to wear that but in this culture and area most girls don't bother with it. If I were to marry a girl like that if I was my parents I would ask her to wear a headscarf but if it was us two alone again I would ask her. In my culture people see me and they'd say 'look who he got married to, look at the kind of girl he got married to.'

Because she is wearing the headscarf or not wearing it?
Because she's not wearing the scarf.

So would you prefer to be with a girl who is wearing the headscarf?
Yes.' (Davar)

These accounts of young boys reveal some inner contradictions which took the form of gender bias. On one side, they contested South Asian traditions and culture particularly around the strict moral rules which forbid alcohol, smoking, having premarital relationships, adopting a particular style of clothing or going out, but on the other they did not apply the same criteria of judgment to girls which still reflected, according to some young boys, the honour of the family and the need for modesty.

The journey to Islam and the niqab

Islam as a moral journey of self-improvement was a very important theme for both boys and girls, but it was for girls that the practices of wearing the hijab and niqab were more salient and became ways of externalising their faith. As for the hijab, the need for women to cover their face with the niqab, or full face veil, is not specified in The Qu'ran, perhaps because the seventh-century women dress in Saudi Arabia would have involved head-covering anyway (Tarlo, 2010).

In the study the niqab was perceived by some of the women as a marker of higher religiosity which symbolises particular spiritual achievements. None of the female participants was covering their face. However a few of them considered that as option for the future, which reflected the idea of Islam as a journey made up of several progressive steps as Sakina, who was wearing the headscarf, pointed out:

> 'Personally I wouldn't (wear the niqab), like I don't see myself wearing a niqab just because of the type of career that I want to go into, to work in medicine, I mean it involves loads of contact with patients and you speak to them and because they're quite vulnerable and you want them to confide in you, wearing a niqab might put them off, especially if they don't understand the reasons if they're not used to it and so that's one of the reasons why I don't wear it, but also it's taking the next step. I don't feel as though I've reached that level of faith yet and I think it would be quite misleading if I wore it, because..(I'm not ready yet)'. (Sakina)

Similar to the accounts about the hijab, the idea of women's choice was highlighted and the practice of covering the face was not seen as imposition. Sakina's story of a friend she really looked up to who was wearing the niqab reflected a mixture of respect and admiration:

> 'Well the face veil is just another step for modesty, so she takes the orthodox approach to modesty as in she wears that not to, what do you call it? To draw attention to herself and she wears a niqab because of the same thing, she doesn't want to be looked at and she finds it as the next step of her trying to increase her faith and is taking the next step to become closer to God and obviously for modesty as well. I mean when I've interacted with her it's fine, all she does is, she doesn't wear it in school, she wears it when she goes outside, so when she's walking down the street, but in the school obviously for practical reasons she doesn't do so and with her I mean it's perfectly normal, she's a normal person like one of us, she participates in lessons. She's really bubbly, she smiles all the time, (...) I do remember one teacher approaching another friend of mine with a niqab and she was saying how come you're wearing a niqab, I mean don't you feel, what do call it, oppressed and stuff? She goes no, I wear it out of my own choice, why would I feel that and she

goes do I question what you wear and the teacher goes no you don't and she goes fine then let's leave it at that, I don't challenge what you wear, you don't challenge what I wear. She's very forthright in her opinions and she's very firm on why she wants to wear it, which I find admirable really.' (Sakina)

The story of Zahra, a 16 year old Pakistani girl particularly catches the idea of the hijab and niqab being steps in the journey to Islam. Zahra took photographs of clothes and spoke extensively about her passion for fashion as proved by her favourite movie: the life of Coco Chanel. She told me she loved going shopping with her sister and friends and admitted her shopping was 'an addiction' and then spoke about the hijab. At the time of the interview, Zahra had only recently started wearing the hijab:

> 'As for the scarf I never used to wear it and I have never really been wanting to wear it or thought about it. I only put it on about two months ago, so yeah'. (Zahra)

She explained her boyfriend was 'quite religious' and that he had some influence over her, but mostly she described the need for a change in her life. She revealed she was scared of 'being superficial' and decided she needed to move on and 'grow up':

> 'Yeah because that's what crippled me from wearing the Hijab first because I was too into my hair, make up and earrings and necklaces and things, so that is what stopped me first but I just came to that age where I realised that it is not really that important like it's something I enjoy but it is not really that important.' (Zahra)

Therefore the decision to wear the hijab which, she said, will be followed by the hiljab and finally the niqab:

> 'I just felt that a woman's body is sacred and in a sense it is not for anyone else to see, so I just felt that it was a progressive thing like I am hoping to hopefully wear the long thing (hiljab) in the next few weeks as well. It's just that sense of just covering up really. Finally, not sure when but I should wear the niqab at the end. I have to think how it works when I'll go to uni. There is a lot of anger attached to it. But I feel it I'm going to have to do it. ' (Zahra)

However, there were also some negative views about the niqab as a marker of women self-segregation and lack of integration into British society. Yasmeen's mother commented about women wearing the hijab and particularly the niqab as wanting to make a statement about their Muslim identity neglecting the most general unifying identity 'as a person':

> 'And it's the same with the people who wear the complete thing with the veil

and all they've got here is this net. What are you saying? Hey, I'm a Muslim.
Instead of saying, hey, look at me, I'm a person. The same with the head scarf.
Totally different category of announcing yourself, but you are announcing
yourself as a different person. (…)

What about if it is their choice?
Yes. If you're that bothered about it, then, I just totally believe if you're that
socially, I want to be brought up as a Muslim and this is my identity, why are
you here? Why have you come to a society that's totally and utterly
westernised where girls go round in miniskirts and they frown on them. But
that's their culture. (Yasmeen's mother)

Overall, the niqab represented a higher measure of religiosity than the hijab and a step
further in the journey to Islam. Women's accounts also suggest that the niqab was seen
as a stronger statement of modesty.

10.3 Talking about the complex processes of negotiating multiple identities

This final section focuses on how young people talked about combining multiple
identities in their everyday lives and explored different 'levels' of young people sense
of belonging.

Fluid identities: 'all together they me'

Several young people described one of the strategies they used to combine different
identities as a process of singling out the contribution that each dimension - national,
ethnic or religious - of their identity could give to their individual self-definition.
Accounts reveal that these three dimensions (national, ethnic, religious) were balanced
and equally important to the identity of some of the young people in the study. The
reconciliation of these different aspects created a unifying sense of self, as Hamid
summarised with the idea that 'all together these identities are me'. Similarly, Omar
specified that national, ethnic, and religious identities have different, but equally
relevant functions, which impacted on his everyday life by affecting his value system
and sense of belonging:

' (…) For me Muslim relates to sort of religion so it is Islam so it's following the
beliefs and as I've said it's the moral beliefs of what makes you a good
individual and the religion crafts you to be the best individual that you can be.
(…)

Then being Pakistani, being Pakistani is a sense of identity as you say it's my origin it's my it's where my family come from I wasn't born there but by going back there I've found my roots and where my family have got all their views from or our history (…) my roots from Pakistan and no matter what social stigmas might say about it, it's not the race or your ethnic colour or background whatever which defines you it's what you've done with your life (…)
Being British I was born and raised here it's given me all the opportunities I had which I never would have in Pakistan. It's tough like being able to go on the universities, the ability to think freely which is I guess given me sort of much more wisdom than I might have had otherwise in Pakistan. (…) so I think I'm proud of being British as well for everything it's offered me. Yes, I am British as much as Britain is home for me not Pakistan. Pakistan is my parents' home and England is home for me. Yes the legacy of my family is Pakistan so it's like I have home in two places but from different sides.' (Omar)

Young people explained that the three different dimensions of identity (national, religious and ethnic) fulfilled different purposes in their everyday lives. National identity reflected the social context where young people grew up and particularly mirrored freedom and opportunities such as access to good education and social participation; ethnic identity embodied the cultural legacy and reflected their family upbringing, while religion shaped the value system and beliefs and set out the guiding moral principles of everyday life.

Other accounts have focused more on the difficulties experienced by young people when bringing the three dimensions –national, ethnic and religious - together, as Yasmeen pointed out:

'It's complicated because there is many things going on at the same time, so sometimes in Ramadan after being at school all day I would come home and do my homework, so that was in some way like my British bit but then I would have to go to mosque for a couple of hours and pray and so that was like the Muslim bit and Indian bit. It all just merges into one like at school all of my friends know I go to mosque, I do this and that and I have loads of things going on at the same time'. (Yasmeen)

A way of overcoming the sense of difference and separation, caused by having to deal with different aspects of identity, was prioritising one dimension over the others. Most often, Islam was the prevailing and depicted as the unifying term, as illustrated by Saleem:

'Yes. I'm Muslim first, that's my religion. That's who I want to be. I want to be a Muslim. Before being British I'm a Muslim all the time. If I'm living in this

country I'm going to support Britain. If you're doing something unjust I'm not going to support it. I'm Muslim then the nationality comes afterwards. First there is you then nationality. Religion always comes first for me'. (Saleem)

Similarly, Asif emphasised the guiding role that Islam had in his life:

'Yeah. I feel that my religion shapes the person who I am and I don't think my ethnicity where I'm from doesn't really matter to me, like as long as I'm equal in the place where I am in school then that's OK with me. (…) (Being Muslim is) the values like they shape me who I am, so I can have like compassion and mercy, so like I say if I do become rich I won't be like some of the rich people that are greedy and selfish and being a Muslim makes me compassionate to people that are lower than me and does not allow me to be superior.' (Asif)

In comparison to the emphasis on Muslim identity, the importance of ethnic identity was declining for second generation young people:

'I see myself as a female Muslim girl and then a Bengali, its right at the bottom of the page.'(Hania)

Sakina also expressed low attachment to her Bangladeshi identity:

'(…) being British is something that is second nature to me. I don't feel myself as completely Bangladeshi, but being Bangladeshi is my origin yes, that's where my grandparents and my parents came from, but it's not necessarily me because I was born and brought up here so all the experiences that I had is in a British environment (…)' (Sakina)

Tania explained that she did not feel a strong sense of belonging to neither ethnic nor national identifications:

Would you describe yourself as British?
'I say I'm a British Indian because when I was younger it didn't seem like I noticed I'm not a racist but I noticed where other people are from, I notice these things, so before it didn't really matter I just didn't see it I think I saw myself as white because I didn't differentiate between, but as I've grown up I've noticed different things and how I'm more comfortable in some peoples company. You just notice, things that I do and where I fit in completely. Like living in England I don't think I could ever completely 100% fit in because I look Indian but then being in India I don't think I could completely fit in because I was born somewhere else and I can't speak that language and its just not the same, so I don't really fit in anywhere'. (Tania)

As anticipated already in Chapter 9, some young people had a negative perception of their parents' country of origin and the attached ethnic identity that they associated with backward culture quite alien to them, as Amina's account illustrates:

'There's a lot of difference (between Britain and Bangladesh), most of the parents here want their children to study, have a good future, (in Bangladesh) they want their child to get married, live with a husband have children so it's different, they don't let them work.'(Amina)

The strategies described in this section enhanced combining multiple identities by singling out and attributing specific meanings to each dimension. These strategies confirm the complexity of reconciling differences to unity and illustrated a variety of priorities amongst young people.

The local sense of belonging

The local area determined the *local sense of belonging*, which also had a role in negotiating identities. The previous chapter has illustrated the case of how living in a deprived Inner London borough affected the social field where the habitus of five Bengali kids originated by importing, for instance, gang culture. Living in Oldham was also perceived as determinant of identity but from a different angle. Young people in Oldham described how life in the town was relatively easy for them. As racial tensions got 'quiet' since the riots in 2001 respondents felt the area was now safe:

'Where I live its mostly Pakistani people. The other day we left our bike in the main street outside our door without padlocks for 3 nights, no one took it. One of my cousins came with his colleague and she said "isn't that dangerous, someone will take it?" I said I trust this place. Once we left our front door open, no one came through it. We trust this place. We feel safe.' (Saleem)

There was a sense that living in closer knitted communities in prevalently South Asian areas, like in Oldham, acted as a form of 'protection' and facilitated the negotiation of identities:

'No because I live in quite a majority Pakistani community and so I feel quite safe where I live. I have heard stories of how my sisters used to get bullied on the bus and my cousins having a really bad experience beyond Oldham, going to Huddersfield and Manchester. So basically Oldham is almost like a cocoon for me like people have accepted me or are probably familiar with me because I am similar to them but I think it is very hard to go beyond, even up in businesses or careers and stuff because we are such a targeted group in the media and the world.'(Maria)

However, the perception amongst young people was that Oldham was 'increasingly mixing' but remained still segregated:

'People from Pakistan and Bangladesh, few of them can't speak English anyway but they wouldn't really mix because there is nothing in common whereas

probably twenty years or thirty years down the line it will be more common, I think, people mixing because there is more similarities between people.' (Zahra)

Saleem also recognised that getting to know the other communities was the key for Oldham to become more mixed:

Is Oldham quite mixed?

'Half half. If you go to one side its very mixed. One side is totally white. In our street there's a white family and most of the family they don't live with Asians. Those love us because they've grown up with us. Once you get to know them its different'. (Saleem)

The case of Tania living in a prevalently white and wealthy area of the South East, illustrated how the sense of 'not fitting in' increased when young people lived more isolated from South Asian communities. Tania liked her town but she also said she was also looking to eventually move away:

'Yes I just want to be in somewhere different and (town)'s really nice and everything but it's much quieter than a lot of other places and I don't want to be here anymore, I want to go do something different. (...)' (Tania)

In brief, young people demonstrated different degrees of attachment to their local areas and some of them highlighted the advantages of living into closer knitted communities prevalently South Asians.

Conclusions

The three typologies identified in the last two chapters, conforming and contesting parental culture and tradition and combining identities, exemplified three different but overlapping ways in which young people negotiate multiple identities.

The contesting and conforming typologies bring together themes that reflected respectively intergenerational conflict and solidarity and exemplified possible strategies adopted by young people when negotiating between the influence of family and religion on one side, and Britishness and British values reflected on their national identity on the other.

Based on qualitative results and insights from visual methods, this chapter has explored how young people negotiated identities by combining interests, tastes and practices which reflected being young, British, Muslim and also South Asian. In so doing, the chapter provided insights into the concept of British Muslim youth and led to the development of the third typological category: combining identities.

In the context of Bourdieu's theory, the three typologies reflect the reciprocal relationships between habitus and field. They particularly show how the individual habitus results from the interaction of different fields, in this case the domestic/private fields of the family, which incorporates South Asian cultures, tradition and religion, and the public fields shaped by school, peers and the assimilation of Britishness and lifestyles.

Therefore, the every-day practices of young people in the sample, such as listening to music, watching movies or reading books were part of the general 'landscape' of interests, tastes and activities that characterise youth as social field including young people of the same age group living in the UK or in other western countries. At the same time, the accounts of these young people indicated the relevance of Islam to their everyday life in both aspects of religious practice and beliefs.

Importantly, other elements particularly gender and social class increased even further the complexity between the habitus and fields. Findings indicate that conflicting aspects of identities were stronger amongst a specific group of boys from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who were more exposed to the secular lifestyles of their British peers, while most of the girls in the sample tended to ultimately conform to their parents' tradition or combine the influences on their habitus.

Ultimately, having multiple identities derived from having to negotiate habitus amongst these multiple private and public fields and juggling the sense of belonging to different allegiances from ethnicity, religion, to nationality but also gender and youth. These different aspects were brought together to develop the concept of 'British Muslim youth' which, in the context of this study, represented the way the field of British youth's culture and Islam intersected to shape habitus. In this sense Being young British

and Muslim, and then also South Asian, defined a set of interests, tastes and practices, as well as values and beliefs, which were not exclusively British, Muslim or South Asian but lay in the inter-spaces amongst these three distinct aspects.

Chapter 11

Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter revisits the main aims of the study, the research questions and outlines the key findings from the thesis. The chapter then identifies the theoretical and methodological contribution as well as the implications for policy. The limitations of the research are also discussed.

The study has explored the negotiation of religious and national identities and the intergenerational transmission of values in the context of South Asian Muslim communities in the UK. In so doing, the research has sought to answer the following research questions:

- How do young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds negotiate between their religious and national identities? Do religious and national identities conflict, co-exist or are mutually reinforcing?
- How do South Asian Muslim parents transmit values to their children? Do they adopt particular strategies?
- How do values transmitted by Muslim parents from South Asian backgrounds affect the development of their children's identity?
- What are the priorities of South Asian Muslim parents in bringing up their children?

Ultimately, the study aimed to provide direct accounts about the values, beliefs and priorities that are relevant to South Asian British Muslim parents and young people, in order to inform theory and policy and improve the understanding of a community which is often stereotyped and perceived as 'hard to integrate'.

Drawing from Bourdieu's theory of social practice, the thesis has adopted a sociological perspective which also takes into account individual action. The study focussed on the concepts of habitus and social field, which have informed the development of the conceptual framework and my definition of identity as:

> *'The body of individual's orientations, which are assimilated by the individual in the social fields under the influences of the structural conditions, and are then internalised to reflect subjective values, beliefs, tastes and practices'.*

Habitus is a theoretical construct which embodies the relation between subjective action and social structure. More specifically, habitus explains how individuals firstly internalise influences from the social world to then manifest them externally through their *'inter-connected practices'* (Becher & Husain, 2005). Bourdieu defined habitus as – *'a system of durable and transposable dispositions (…) which generate organized practices and representations (…)'* (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53-65). He theorises that habitus is socially constructed in the social field which is the context of power relations resulting from the struggle to preserve or improve positions with respect to the defining capital for that field (Jenkins, 2002). Because habitus results from social interaction, the experiences shared with other groups of individuals determine also shared dispositions and thus similar habitus (Ingram, 2011). The thesis assumes that identity and habitus overlap: therefore identity, like Bourdieu's habitus, is not given and it is not just within a person, but it results from interaction in a context of power relations within a social field.

The thesis has focused on identities negotiation and intergenerational transmission. By applying Bourdieu's theory to the understanding of these two inter-connected processes, the research conceives identity negotiation as concerned with reconciling a habitus that operates and originates in different fields, such as the domestic family field and the public field of school and peers. Intergenerational transmission is interpreted as the transfer, from parents to young people, of the body of cultural and religious capital accumulated and owned by parents in their life history.

11.1 The primacy of Islam and British national identity: key findings from the survey

The survey conducted with 560 young people aged 14-18 years old, in three secondary schools in London Newham and one sixth form college in Oldham, has 'set the scene' and provided four key insights, which were developed further and investigated in more depth by the qualitative interviews.

Firstly, the survey results challenged other evidence about decreasing religiosity amongst youth (Collins-Mayo & Dandelion, 2010) and found that religion was important to the self-definition of a high proportion of young people. This finding related strongly to the composition of the sample with 44 per cent of respondents being from a Muslim religious background and confirmed, alongside other research studies, the primacy of Islam for Muslim young people (Modood & al., 1997; O'Beirne, 2004). Muslim respondents were much more likely than any other religious group to consider religion as important in their lives (59 per cent compared to 24 per of Christians); to see religion as a source of meaning (62 per cent compared to 22 per cent of Christians) and to practice their religion more often than any other religious group (55 per cent of them compared to 27 per cent of Christians). The survey evidence also suggests that Muslim young people had an intrinsic orientation toward religion. This is to say that Islam was not seen in instrumental terms but as a driving force around which other priorities were set. In fact, Muslim respondents were the most likely to say that the statement *'my whole approach to life is based on my religion'* applied to them.

Secondly, together with the primacy of Islam for Muslim young people, the survey results indicate that Muslim respondents were more likely than other groups to describe their national identity as British. This finding needs to be placed in the context of other literature (eg. ETHNOS, 2005) suggesting that minority groups tend to associate themselves with the British national identity rather than with specific regions such as England, which is more commonly favoured amongst the White British population.

Thirdly, based on Marcia's model of identity status (Marcia, 1966), the survey evidence revealed that Muslim young people had foreclosed identities, which is to say their identities were characterised by high levels of commitment and low levels exploration. These findings imply that Muslim young people relied strongly on external role models when making decisions about different aspects of their social and private life, such as making friends or dating, but also in developing their personal views on different issues from policy to gender roles. This finding about young Muslims falling into the foreclosed identity status, relates to qualitative insights described in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 about the external role of parents in affecting the construction of young people's identity.

The results from this survey are in line with other research which also found that the foreclosed identity status applied to ethnic minority and religious groups (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008, p.985; Graf et al., 2008; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). However, the application of the identity status model to highly diverse samples has revealed to be quite complex and the literature has identified divergent paths. For instance, other studies indicated that religious people tend to have moratorium identities with low commitment and high exploration (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008; Saroglou & Galand, 2004). This second case involves young people going through a transition and therefore evaluating traditional cultural and religious values in comparison to the collective values they learn in society (Crocetti, Rubini, Luyckx, et al., 2008).

Finally, the survey has also found strong commonalities amongst respondents from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Most young people irrespective of their backgrounds had similar aspirations and prioritised happiness. They believed that one person's own actions, hard work and education are the determinants of success in life. They were all concerned with some levels of racial and religious discrimination; they expressed low trust in the Government, but still felt a sense of belonging to Britain. In addition, family was for all the respondents, regardless of their gender, ethnic or religious backgrounds the most trusted social institution. This finding is in line with qualitative insights summarised by what Saleem, an 18 year old boy from Oldham, said during his interview:

> 'The family is the biggest influence on what you become and do.'

To conclude, evidence from the survey indicates that the primacy of Islam did not affect Muslim young people identifying their national identity as British and their sense of belonging to Britain. The findings from the qualitative interviews have provided further depth about where the emphasis on Islam originated and on how the two dimensions, Islam and Britishness, were negotiated by Muslim young people.

11.2 Negotiating identities: three typologies

The two emerging patterns from the survey - the primacy of religion as source for self-definition for Muslim young people and their British national identity – have implications for the main research question of the study:

> *How do young British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds negotiate between their religious and national identities? Do religious and national identities conflict, co-exist or are mutually reinforcing?*

The evidence from the research suggests that young British Muslims adopted a number of strategies in order to negotiate their religious and national identities. Based on thematic analysis, these strategies were brought together into three overarching *typologies* – described as *conforming, contesting and combining* - which reflected the different ways adopted by young people to negotiate identities in relationship to their family field.

The composition of the sample was taken into account in the analysis and discussion of findings. The 15 families in the qualitative sample reflected a good socio-economic balance with eight families from lower socio-economic background and the remaining from middle class background. Most of the families were from Indian and Bangladeshi ethnic backgrounds and only three from Pakistani ethnic background; the sample also included two families from a minority Muslim Shi'a sect. Importantly, the study has focused on first generation migrant parents and mostly second generation young people (all second generation apart from two). Six parents (four mothers and two fathers) had low English language skills and interviews were carried out with the support of an interpreter; other parents had quite low English language skills but were able to understand and answer the questions.

Conforming

The typology *'conforming to parental culture'* reflects paths of inter-generational solidarity and shows how young people aligned to their parents on a number of different issues: from the ways they socialise, their moral standards, their values, relationships and dating, to their aspirations and plans for the future.

The idea of following the '*right path'* was central to conforming. *The Surah Al Fatihah*, the very opening verses of the Qur'an, set out that the only way to follow 'the right path' is believing in one God who guides the believers and prevent them from 'getting lost' (Surah Al Fatihah, The Qu'ran). The thesis shows how these verses were elaborated by respondents, particularly young people, who saw the 'right path' as the overarching framework of guiding moral principles, in practice reflected by prohibitions on drinking or going out, using drugs while showing modesty and respect.

Why did young people conform and felt they had to follow 'the right path'? The key element in the conforming strategies was the influence of the family field, which provided the context for young people's socialisation. In other words, the way these young people were socialised in the familial field involved parents setting clear boundaries of behaviour, very high expectations and placing a strong emphasis on communicating values such as modesty, moderation, decency, respect and a strong sense of their roots and tradition. Once these boundaries were set, parents felt confident their children would remain within the confines, and therefore concede them levels of trust and freedom. Ultimately, the relations within the family field meant that young people were critical of activities such as drinking, using drugs or casual dating and not interested in clubbing or going out.

Importantly, the evidence from the thesis suggests that young people actively constructed identity and habitus. This is to say that they did not conform by passively accepting parental restrictions, but rather they assessed their options and reflected on the consequences and benefits of following certain norms. Therefore, some young people saw dangers to their health by practices such as smoking, drinking or drug taking, forbidden by both Islam and parental culture. Some of them expressed no interest in going out and clubbing, which they associated with drinking. They showed awareness that parental control was connected to protection, and therefore that parents acted for the children's own good. The understanding of what was behind restrictions led young people who were conforming, to place effort on meeting parental expectations and not disappoint them. The transmission of high aspirations, and a strong sense of duty, had a definite role in the construction of a conforming identity by raising young people's sense of responsibility. Young people showed

awareness of sacrifices their parents had made so that they wanted 'to give something back' to them.

However, the process of conforming was not easy: some of the young people reflected the effort and endeavour required to deal with the complexity of negotiating contrasting social fields such as family and peers. In so doing, they gave their own interpretations of how to use individual willpower and moderation to follow Islam, while operating in the context of social fields that can, at times, profoundly challenge Islamic values.

Contesting

The typology *'contesting parental tradition and values'* includes strategies of identity negotiation which implied intergenerational conflict.

What were young people contesting? Having pre-marriage relationships, going out, partying and drinking as well as wearing certain clothes, such as oversized jeans for boys and skirts with tights for girls were big arenas of confrontation between young people and parents. These accounts reflected levels of frustration about the restrictions imposed by parents in the name of Islam and culture. 'Contesting' involved young people challenging, arguing with parents, lying, breaking the rules and dealing with the deriving tensions within the family.

This research has also found that young people tended to challenge and take distance from South Asian cultures, which they associated with parental cultural heritage and system of values. In this regard, the main issues of discussion were unequal gendered roles set out by perceived patriarchy, or practices such as arranged marriage. In talking about these topics young people accused their parents of mixing culture with religion leading to bad stereotyping and misconception about Islam. Young people explained that parental misunderstandings were related to the way parents, mostly first generation migrants, learnt about Islam by reading and memorising the Qur'an only in Arabic. In contrast, access to the internet and new technologies benefited young people who had easy access to translation and on-line information to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the content of the Qur'an. Some of the young people, like Saleem, appeared very confident about their knowledge of The Qur'an and the

'truth about Islam'. In this sense, Islam was more strictly associated with the doctrine and teachings of the Qur'an, perceived as the defining essence of what being Muslim means and the unifying element which oversees and regulates the life of Muslim people in different countries.

The contesting typology had several implications in terms of young people's identity construction. Some young people, like Davar, felt they will become less religious while some others developed a set of 'discourses' in order to justify how they juggled their Muslim identity with practices such as going out, drinking or taking drugs. Some of them told me that doing 'these kind of things' is part of 'being young' and that they eventually 'will grow out of this', while others explained to me that 'no one is perfect' but hoped for God's forgiveness. All of them still declared that they were Muslim 'first of all' and 'no matter what'. In contrast, other young people, like Zahra, Saleem and Sakina, appeared more knowledgeable and committed to their religion than their parents. In these last cases, Islam fulfilled the gap derived from a lower sense of belonging to the ethnic group associated with parental culture. The thesis suggests that multiple 'senses' (plural) of belonging to different identities reflected intergenerational differences and affected young people and their parents unequally. While parental identities remained closely attached to their country of origin, young people identified more strongly with Islam and Britishness.

Importantly, when looking more closely inside the typologies, it emerged that the contesting accounts were more present amongst young people whose parents had quite different levels of familiarity with British society, including different levels of English language skills, experiences of working and integrating socially in the country. Even though most parents were first generation migrants (22 out of the 27 interviewed), the migration histories of mothers and fathers and their experiences of settling in the UK were often quite different. These differences affected the continuity or discontinuity of parenting and ultimately young people's identities. In addition, gender and social class were other factors which increased further the complexity between young people's habitus, identity and social fields. The evidence from the study suggests that conflicting aspects of identities were stronger amongst a specific group of boys from lower socioeconomic background who were more exposed to the secular lifestyles of their non Muslim British peers, while most of the girls in the sample tended

to more explicitly conform to their parents' cultural norms or combine different influences affecting their identity.

Combining

The third typology *'combining identities'* examines the strategies adopted by young British Muslims to bring together multiple and different identities. As part of the research, young people took self-portraits and photographs of other people, objects, places which were meaningful to them. The photographs reflected an assorted mixture of secular and religious themes: from hair products, books, jewellery, to South Asian traditional and 'British' clothes, from scenes of family gathering to pictures of them being out with their friends, from the prayer mat to pictures of Mecca symbolising Islam, to photographs of their favourite rapper and pop artists.

Young people combined identities in very creative ways which linked together, eclectically, elements of Islam, British and South Asian cultures. In line with findings from the survey, the interviews also demonstrated that Muslim young people had highly externally determined identities, which strongly relied on external role models, usually, family members but also celebrities. Some young boys looked up to the controversial American rapper Lil Wayne, they were going out a lot, had 'girlfriends', they were drinking and using drugs. However they still showed a strong attachment to their Muslim identity. They explained that rap music was for them a different route to success by which they could 'break down barriers' and achieve recognition. These accounts are indicative of what 'being Muslim' meant to some of the young people. In these cases religious identity had less to do with practicing Islam fully or following the teachings of The Qur'an, rather Islam was a more personal alliance which fulfilled and reinforced the need of these young people for belonging.

The strategies adopted by some of the girls to appear at the same time 'modern and modest' as reflected in their outlook and style, were another indicator of combining identities. Combining was about adapting western clothes to 'Islamic standards', so that girls wore skinny jeans or dresses while keeping arms and legs fully covered. Modesty was perceived by the girls as an empowering value because it enabled them to be viewed beyond their physical appearance and with respect. Women, both

mothers and daughters in the study, did not have a fixed rule about what to wear: the hijabs, jilbabs and ultimately the niqabs were perceived as steps of a personal journey of religiosity but not necessarily the only way to represent and manifest their Islamic faith.

Another way of combing identities consisted of prioritising one dimension, most often Islam, on the others. Alongside the survey findings conceiving the primacy of Islam as a source of self-definition, the interviews with young people, irrespective of their gender, socio-economic background or level of religiosity, have also revealed that they prioritised their religious identity amongst other sources of self-definition. In this context, young people's perception of Britishness varied. In the accounts about contesting parental culture, Britishness assumed a very positive connotation, and came to represent freedom, education, opportunities, 'modernity' and change. The accounts about conforming to parental culture highlighted other aspects of Britishness associated with practices such as going out and getting drunk and embodied by what they defined as 'British pub culture'.

The three typologies as a journey

The thesis suggests that the three typologies, *conforming, contesting and combining*, exemplified three different but also overlapping ways used by young people to negotiate multiple identities, particularly in relation to their religious and national self-identification. The continuity between these different strategies of negotiation characterised the habitus and identities of young people in the study.

Figure 11.1: Typologies of negotiating identities
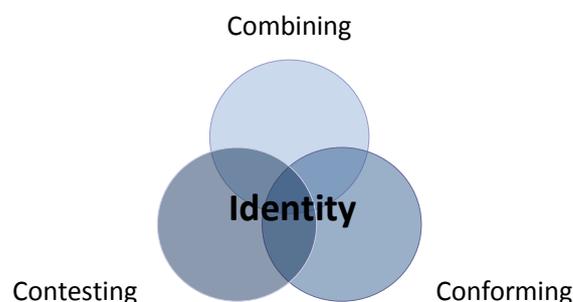
In-depth analysis of the three typologies suggests that conforming, contesting and combining were not exclusive and young people often moved between the three by, for instance, firstly contesting, then combining and finally conforming. The story of

Hania, who was sent by her parents to a Muslim school, reflected this journey of firstly rebelling to parental decision about school, then slowly adapting to it and finally conforming by recognising the benefits attached to attending that school:

> '(My) high school it was a girls school, Muslim girls school and I rebelled against it and cried so many times and my dad I was just about winning over but my mum said "no you are still going to send her" and I think the way I rebelled against it and what I have achieved from going there has made me a completely different person. I thank my mum and dad everyday that they sent me there because it's like the things that I have learnt in that school and how it has shaped me as a person I would never have had that opportunity anywhere else.' (Hania)

The more rebellious Davar, one the Bangladeshi boys who admired the rapper Lil Wayne, was also 'in between the typologies' adjusting his Mohican hair and 'rapper clothing style' at home, where he adopted a plainer regular outlook in order to conform to parental will. From the typologies, solidarity and conflict emerged as two dimensions explaining the relationships between young people and their parents. In quite a few instances, young people's accounts about conforming to parental culture, intersected with the ones about contesting and combining to reflect the complexity of the process of negotiating identities as a whole.

The conceptualisation of negotiation based on the three typologies implies that having multiple identities does not lead to an unsolvable identity crisis, but rather to a process by which these identities can be reconciled to create new and different senses of belonging.

11.3 South Asian Muslim parenting

How do South Asian Muslim parents transmit values to their children? Do they adopt particular strategies?

The thesis has adopted Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital to explain the content of intergenerational transmission. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital brings together the body of knowledge, competencies, educational patterns, values, beliefs and lifestyles owned by parents. The other element of the transfer utilised by the research study was Bourdieu's idea of religious capital as the body of symbolic resources available within a religious community (Bourdieu, 1971).

The results indicate that intergenerational transmission in the context of South Asian Muslim families involved different strategies: some of these strategies were quite general and could have been shared by parents from different ethnic religious backgrounds, while others relied on the strong role of South Asian cultures and Islam.

Being from a particular socio-economic background did not affect parents adopting the strategy of *being strict*. The study has shown that parents from different socio-economic backgrounds aimed to *'be strict'* in order to set the boundaries for their children's moral behaviour and to enable them to discern right and wrong according to a specific system of values. This type of approach to parenting sought to maintain young people as close as possible to the *'right path'* and thus to prevent them from getting involved with a lifestyle which could increase their distance from South Asian cultures and Islam.

There were different elements of 'being strict'. Firstly, strict parenting aimed to maintain young people's identity as close as possible to their family's cultural heritage and religious background and implied *'protection'* of culture and *'maintenance'* of tradition. Secondly, in some cases being strict overlapped with 'being socially conservative' in the context, for instance, of prohibiting pre-marriage relationships and dating. Thirdly, strict parenting also involved different degrees of guidance: from 'providing direction' to more strongly affecting and determining young people choices for their future. Finally, the requirement for being strict was exacerbated by the need for protecting teenage children from the dangers present in their local areas.

Alongside 'being strict', parents also adopted another strategy, *'being indulgent'*, to enhance levels of communication with their children. Once again, parents from different socio-economic backgrounds described spending time with their children explaining the reasons behind certain prohibitions and talking about their values. 'Being indulgent' reflected intergenerational solidarity and involved levels of parental warmth.

Relying on the extended family to transmit values to the children was more of a South Asian specific parenting strategy. The extended family provided a protective network for young people socialisation and upbringing, which supported parents in many

respects: from being a ground where to share decision making, to advising and supplying a range of role models.

The domestic division of labour and the differences between parental roles were other characterising elements of South Asian Muslim parenting. Gender roles in the family were informed by a combination of culture, Islam but also Britishness through the experience of settling and living in the UK. Some men appeared to be withdrawn from the day to day aspects of their children's upbringing, which was mostly considered, in line with South Asian culture, the key maternal role. However, culture was not the only factor in determining the gendered roles of parents in upbringing. Socio-economic factors and employment circumstances implied that often, but not always, men were the main earners in the family. Some men, especially those from lower socio economic backgrounds, had two jobs and spent most of the day out from their homes. In these cases mothers dealt with the bulk of the daily children rearing, while fathers were only concerned with overseeing the educational side. Whether this type of division of parenting roles was common in the study, there were also different patterns reflecting the complexity of the South Asian Muslim family field in the UK. In some families mothers held higher qualifications than fathers and took up the role of the main earners. English language skills were another determinant of gendered roles in the family: those who were more fluent could deal with taking their children to the GP or picking them up at school and speaking to the teachers. Therefore, the study suggests that migration and settling in the UK has resulted in gender roles in the family becoming more interchangeable. There were cases where fathers were fluent in English and took up some of the responsibilities traditionally attributed to South Asian Muslim mothers, as well as cases where mothers had better English language skills and acted as the spokesperson of the family.

The *intercultural differences* between parents and young people were another characterising element of the South Asian Muslim family field. While parents were strongly attached to their South Asian culture, young people had a deeper sense of British identity. These differences between parents and young people added a further level of complexity to the usual 'intergenerational gap' characterising most family fields, regardless of the ethnic and religious backgrounds. Importantly, the study has found there were also some Muslim specific parenting strategies and, as detailed later

in this chapter, Islam had a crucial role in parenting both as a channel for transmission and as object of the transfer.

11.4 Parental aspirations and priorities

How do values transmitted by Muslim parents from South Asian backgrounds affect the development of their children identity?

What are the priorities of South Asian Muslim parents in bringing up their children?

In the context of parental priorities and aspirations the analysis has paid particular attention to the families' different socio-economic backgrounds and migration generational status. The research found that there was a common pattern and irrespectively of their socio-economic backgrounds, all parents described multiple benefits of education both in the moral as well as on the material sphere. Having a good education was relevant in the moral sphere as it was associated with being respectable and with having good manners. Most importantly, education was a key route to social mobility that opened up opportunities while making life more meaningful by providing clear goals. Most parents were first generation migrants and it appeared that, more than their socio-economic background, the experience of migration marked parental emphasis on education. In other words, first generation parents projected on their children the opportunities they missed out in their lives because of having to deal with the difficulties associated with being first settlers.

Marriage was the other priority that parents from different socio-economic backgrounds had for the children. The research evidence suggests a strong emphasis on marriage as a parental aspiration for children and most parents had preferences for both intra-faith and intra-ethnic marriage in order for their children to preserve their religion but also their cultural heritage. Therefore, marriage was the context where ethnic differences amongst South Asian groups and divisions between Muslim sects, such as Shi'a and Sunni, became more apparent. Parental restrictions about who their children should marry were relevant to parents independently from their socio-economic background. Professionals from higher socio-economic background were concerned as much as, or sometimes more, than other parents from lower socio-

economic background, about whom their children should marry. In these cases, marriage became a way to preserve not only religion and culture but also status. Thereby, it was explained how the practice of arranged marriages fulfilled the parental need to maintain Islam, culture and sometimes status within the family group. Even the most rebellious young people finally accepted the requirement for intra-faith marriage and told me that they would definitely only marry a Muslim.

Parental restrictions on marriage and their emphasis on educational success had some emotional consequences on some of the young people and pushed them between resignation and defiance. However, the evidence from the research also suggests that the experience of migration and of parents settling in a new country was at the origin of young people's motivation and willingness to succeed and do well in life starting with their education. Therefore, first generation parents instilled a strong sense of responsibility in their children who felt they had the duty to accommodate parental expectations in order to give something back to the family.

11.5 Theoretical contribution: Bourdieu, intergenerational transmission and identities negotiation

The thesis has met its main aim of understanding the interplay between intergenerational transmission and identities' negotiation in the specific context of South Asian Muslim communities in the UK. The key contribution of the thesis to social theory stays in the development of Bourdieu's theory of social practice which was extended and applied to the study of intergenerational transmission and young people's identities negotiation. As discussed extensively in Chapter 2, the thesis has drawn from Bourdieu's sociology of practice and has brought together the concepts of habitus, social field, cultural and religious capitals into the contexts of identity construction and transmission of values.

In the thesis, Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, social field, cultural and religious capital were used to develop a framework for identity. The thesis has adopted a sociological perspective which also paid attention to individual action and, similarly to habitus,

identity was conceived as a circular process of interaction between the individual and the social world.

Jenkins's argued that Bourdieu's theory of social practice ultimately leads to social determinism by restraining and limiting individual action (Jenkins, 2002). By contrast, this research suggests that when habitus operates on multiple social fields different from the one where it firstly originated, it changes and produces novelty (Ingram, 2011; Raey et al. 2009). The study indicates that young British South Asian Muslims retained some key aspects of their original family habitus but also displayed dispositions emerging from other external fields influenced by *Britishness*. The resulting habitus and identity are to be understood as *fluid*.

In this sense, the research study presents a new angle to look at the identity construction of young British Muslims. As summarised in Figure 11.2, by focusing contemporaneously on two processes, negotiation and transmission, the thesis unfolds the underlying mechanisms that shape identity in the form of values, practices, beliefs and tastes of these young people. While the role of parents in the construction of their children's identity is consolidated in the literature (Becher, 2003; Brannen, 2006; Morgan, 1996), the thesis details the specific contribution of South Asian cultures, Britishness and *Islamic capital*, the idea of Islam as a convertible resource used by parents for their children upbringing, to the identity trajectories of two generations.

Figure 11.2 below summarises how Bourdieu's concepts were utilised to explain the transmission of values and identity negotiation and links with Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2 about identity. Figure 11.2 describes how the family field incorporates cultural and religious elements as well as the experiences of parents migrating and settling into a new country. The combination of these factors influence the process and content of intergenerational transmission and therefore shape habitus and ultimately the process of identity negotiation. The process is circular to describe the reciprocal influence between individual habitus, identity and social fields where they originated.

Figure 11.2: A summary of the thesis conceptual framework
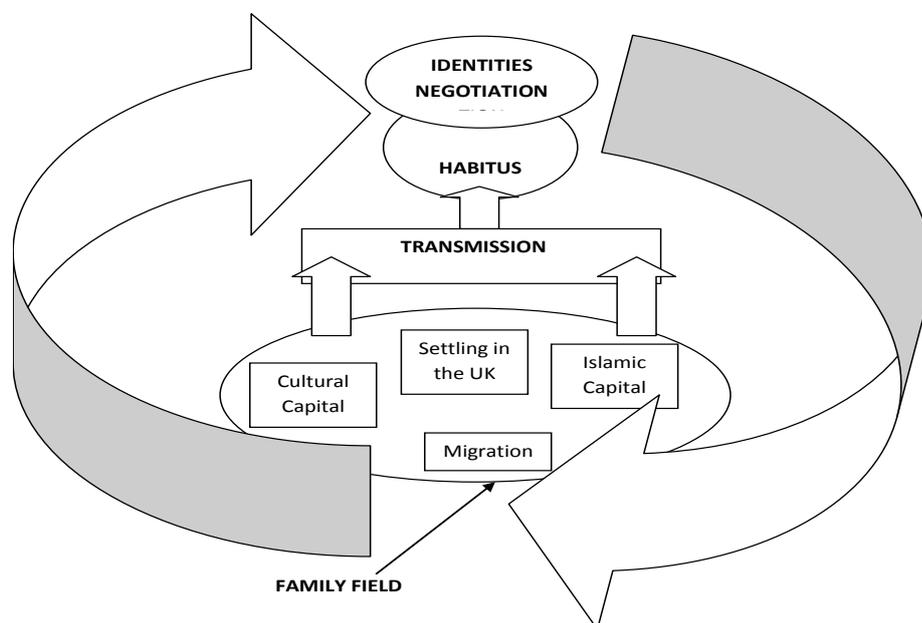
Islamic capital

Based on the idea of social capital, Shah, Dwyer and Modood et.al (2010) elaborated the concept of ethnic capital as the specific resources and networks deriving from ethnic identity. This thesis has shifted the focus from ethnicity to Islam, and drawing from Bourdieu's cultural and religious capital, has developed the concept of *Islamic capital* in the specific context of intergenerational transmission of values. Islamic capital is a theoretical construct emerging from thematic analysis and used in the specific context of parenting. It is defined as a body of convertible resources originating from Islam and used by parents to support their parenting on different fronts.

Respondents explained that Islam 'is more than a religion, it is a way of life' which meant it shaped and forged the most various aspects of life from everyday practice such as clothing and eating, to social relationships and views of the world. As both a part of the process as well as the content of what is transmitted, Islam involved the transfer of a corpus of values, beliefs, practices and tastes. In this sense, Islam functioned as a social field and provided a major source for the construction of identity and habitus.

Firstly, Islam supported parents with transmitting to their children a sense of morality or a 'sense of right and wrong', and the study shows how parents converted Islamic teachings into norms aimed to directly control their children's behaviour. Islam informed the idea of *'the right path',* which was embedded in parental teachings and was assimilated by their children as shown by the typologies conforming and contesting. In conforming, young people demonstrated an understanding of the 'right path' in parental terms, and for young people who were successful at school, Islam was a further incentive to do well. When contesting, young people showed awareness that their behaviour was often un-Islamic and deviating from the 'right path' as reflected in young people's accounts about their 'hope for God's forgiveness', 'none is perfect' and the sense of guilt attached to breaking the rules. The research evidence indicated that the socio-economic background of the family had a role on the ways and the extent parents used Islam to instil a sense of morality in their children. While parents from a lower socio-economic educational background relied more strongly on Islam, the higher educated parents integrated religious explanations with other sources of evidence including personal experience and their knowledge. However, these variations in the use of Islam for upbringing, did not put into question the unanimous recognition amongst parents that religion had a role in teaching values to their children.

Secondly, Islam acted as a 'convertible resource' for parenting also by increasing solidarity within the family and providing a common platform of values across generations. In this regard, Islam created a sense of sharing by setting common values and by bringing the family members together. In this way Islam enhanced social capital and supplied parents with networks/resources for young people's socialisation including the community, the extended family and the Mosque.

Methodological contribution

The intergenerational perspective, a distinctive element of the thesis, is embedded in the methodological approach, which has involved interviewing parents and young people within the same family unit. Thematic analysis has also taken into account the intergenerational dimension and themes have been analysed within and across family

groups in order to catch a range of perspectives: the fathers, the mothers, the young people and the family group (Brannen, 2006; MCarthy et al., 2003).

A further methodological contribution of the study stays in prioritising young people life world through photography. By using visual methods in the form of photographs taken by young people, I succeeded in effectively engaging young participants in the research process. Effort was placed in giving out control to enable them to focus on what was most meaningful to them. The use of photographs as complementary to the interviews has contributed toward a re-distribution of power relations between myself, the researcher, and the interviewees who revealed, through the pictures, aspects of their habitus that otherwise would have been neglected.

Research limitations

The study has some limitations which should be considered. In the case of the quantitative survey, the required sample of South Asian Muslim students was achieved but it was not statistically representative because it was not randomly selected and therefore did not allow generalisation to British youth. The sampling process started with a purposive selection of specific areas and, within these areas, the schools which took part were self-selected. In the case of the on-line questionnaire, students were also self-selected: they received an email from their teacher with the link to the survey and only those with a strong interest in the topic went ahead and filled the questionnaire. The different methods of data collection (written questionnaire in Newham and on-line survey in Oldham) reflected different students' motivations and there were also differences within the characteristics of the two sub-samples from London and Oldham which were combined for the analysis.

For the qualitative stage, I placed particular effort in selecting families from different socio-economic backgrounds. Because of the areas selected, the school sample only led to identify families from quite low socio-economic backgrounds as already detailed in Chapter 5, while the other families from middle class backgrounds were identified through other routes by snowballing. The final sample of 15 families reflected a good balance of families from low and higher socio-economic backgrounds (eight families were from low the rest from middle-class background). However, because of English language skills, the interviews with families from higher economic background tended

to be longer, more articulated and consequently they provided richer data. Therefore, the accounts of parents from higher socio-economic background affected thematic analysis and were more represented in the selection of quotes. Having an interpreter would obviously have helped to gain deeper insights from parents who were not fluent in English and whose language barriers prevented me from sometimes reaching a certain depth during the interviews.

The nature of the sample also involved other limitations. While a good gender balance was achieved, the ethnic composition did not reflect the national picture where Pakistani is the most represented group amongst South Asians. In the study, only three out of the 15 families were Pakistani compared to seven Bangladeshi and five Indians. Low response amongst Pakistani families may be related to different factors. Since the London bombing, Pakistanis have been more than other Muslim groups in the UK under the spotlight of the media and object of stereotyping which could have acted as disincentive. Other possible reasons may be related to my sources of recruitment outside schools as, through previous research I developed links and personal connections with Bangladeshi families.

Finally, I am aware the thesis has not addressed directly or in depth issues that are often associated with Muslims including poverty and social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination or others often quoted in the media such as honour killings, terrorism and extremism. Since I started working on the research I felt external readers from non-Muslim background had quite precise expectations about what a research study about Muslims should include. However, these issues go beyond the scope of the thesis and they were not a primary concern in the topic guides and therefore they were not an object of detailed discussion during the interviews. The context of poverty and social exclusion amongst South Asian groups were introduced and discussed in Chapter 3 and 4, and as shown in the findings, social class has been a critical factor. When I accessed these families explaining I was interested in understanding how they transmit values and how they negotiate identities. It emerged that parents wanted to tell me about parenting and education, young people wanted to talk about music, the meaning of Islam and aspirations. Therefore, my focus has been on getting answers to my research questions.

11.6 Implications for policy and future directions for research

The thesis is placed in the wider context of other research studies aimed to inform the development of support for parents and young people which is grounded in the understanding of different communities (Becher, 2008; Becher & Husain, 2005).

Education, migration and social mobility

One key finding of the thesis is the importance of education for South Asian Muslim parents and young people from different socio-economic backgrounds. There is evidence that, having high aspirations is a strong incentive for educational success and a key factor for social mobility (Basit, 1997a). In general, socio-economic background is a determinant of educational aspirations, which tend to be higher for middle class families (Reay, 1995; Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010; Reay, Crozier, & James, 2011). Alongside other research evidence (e.g. Archer, 2001; 2002), Chapter 8 indicates that this social class pattern is no longer found amongst migrant families. In the study even parents from lower socio-economic background wanted their children to go to university and move into high professional careers as case study 3 (Chapter 8) highlighted. The case study portrayed the educational success of children from a family with both unemployed parents also lacking in qualifications. The evidence from the thesis, as in Chapter 7 and 8, suggests that all parents, regardless of their socio-economic background, desired their children to prosper and become doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs and self-employed to acquire respectability and fulfil what they, as first settlers, missed out in their lives. On the other hand, young people tended to take up these opportunities and many of them were aiming high, working hard and doing well at school.

In the study aspirations and educational opportunities were also important in constructing young British Muslims' sense of belonging to Britain which was associated with 'freedom, opportunity and change'. These findings highlight the key role of education for both social mobility and integration into the wider society and are particularly relevant in the context of the recent reforms in the UK, such as the tuition

fees and Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA[17]), which have increased the cost of education (BIS, 2011; Browne, 2010; Dearden, Emmerson, Meghir, 2008). The evidence from the thesis, particularly from Chapters 7 and 8, suggests that an increasing cost of education could negatively impact on the opportunities of many young British Muslims from different socio-economic backgrounds. This is mostly because of the larger family size that characterise Muslim households and because of Muslims' attitude toward taking on debts. The claim that the reform of tuition fees will enhance access to education for young people from disadvantaged groups, because of enabling access to student loans with longer terms of repayment (BIS, 2011) is not culturally sensitive. In theory, Muslims are not allowed to use financial products that are interest-bearing or interest-earning called 'riba' (Farooq, 2009; Collard et al., 2001) as it is forbidden by the Hadiths and The Qur'an (Farooq, 2009). Therefore, Muslim families may be even more reluctant than others to borrow money because of their cultural and religious heritage (Collard, Kempson, & Whyley, 2001; Mitton, 2008). In Chapter 7, Zahida's father, a qualified medical doctor from a middle class background, expressed his worries about the affordability of higher education for his two daughters and he said 'he could not sleep thinking about it'. Asif's father, from lower socio-economic background, told me he took up two jobs in order to be able to provide for his two children's education. Even though there is not much primary research with a direct focus on the relationship between religion, culture and financial exclusion, there is evidence that Pakistani and Bangladeshi households are less likely to access loans and more likely to experience general financial exclusion, intended as a limited access to financial services (JRF, 2001; Khan, 2008).

In addition, the difficult economic climate has already pushed many young people, including graduates who are struggling to get a job, into the NEET group (Not in Employment, Education and Training) with implications for social cohesion and with high economic costs (Eurofund, 2012). Amongst other youth, the situation of young British Muslims is even more complex. After the London bombings in 2007, extensive programmes for the prevention of violence and extremism have been put into place and have particularly targeted young British Muslims (Communities and Local Government Committee, 2010). These programmes have been generally very

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[17] The financial support scheme for students aged 16-19 years old from low income households (YPLA, 2011).

expensive and marked a shift in the government's focus from the idea of education as a source of civic values and engagement (Paterson, 2009) to the requirement for enforcement, spying and surveillance. Reviews of these programmes have revealed that they were not cost effective, very difficult to deliver (Birdwell, 2010; Casciani, 2011), had the effect of demonising young Muslims and increasing their sense of exclusion (Casciani, 2011).

Future research

In this complex and fast changing social context, the thesis provides scope for future research which follows the second generation of South Asian British Muslims accessing higher education, work and forming a family and therefore which has a focus on the subsequent life stage of *young adulthood*. Young adulthood is a relatively new research category within other more popular stages of the life span present in the literature such as youth. In the last decades youth transitions have been extending because of the longer length of time spent in education and delay in leaving parental homes. The influences of culture and religion, particularly of South Asian cultures and Islam, on these transitions and their impact on identity have not been a focus of sociological investigation. Therefore, while this study has particularly explored the experiences of first generation migrant parents and their second generation UK born children, it will be of interest for policy and social theory to follow the development of identities of second generation British Muslim young adults as new parents transmitting values. In this context, primary research will contribute also to the understanding of the complex relationships between cultural and religious barriers to borrowing, the rising cost of education and the implication for future paths of social exclusion for South Asian Muslim families in the UK.

Concluding remarks

The thesis is set in the context of multicultural Britain after the 9/11 and London bombings and events that have raised questions about the contemporary models of social integration and the traditional notion of national identity. The results from the research highlight that identities have become more fluid and the sense of belonging is plural, as shown by young people negotiating multiple influences. These findings feed

into the debate about multiculturalism and the construction of a national identity able to incorporate and be meaningful to a variety of groups.

The main difference with previous research on British Muslims stays in the way this study looks at their identity in terms of dynamism between *identities negotiation* and *values transmission*. The model of habitus and social field was adopted and extended to investigate these new areas not directly addressed by Bourdieu's sociological theory. In this sense, the research brings together important concepts and offers a new interpretation of Bourdieu's theoretical framework which has been mostly focused on explaining the reproduction of habitus and social class. Findings from the research suggest that the reproduction of certain social conditions within the South Asian Muslim family field came together with striving for social mobility and intergenerational change.

By reporting the experiences and thoughts of young people and their parents, the research sought to contribute and increase knowledge about this over-questioned, but rarely listened to, very diverse community. In line with other studies (Basit, 1997a; Becher, 2008; Dwyer et al., 2008a; P. Lewis, 2007; Mondal, 2008; Morey & Yaqin, 2011; Tarlo, 2010), the hope is that research findings will impact on the public and theoretical debate and will affect understanding and perceptions against the framing of people and stereotyping.

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