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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCES OF  
YOUNG MALES OF PAKISTANI-ORIGIN – A CASE  
STUDY**

**ASHIQ HUSSAIN**

**A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education**

**March 2021**

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## Abstract

This thesis is a case study that explores the further education experiences of young males of Pakistani-origin at Bradford College in the north of England. Bradford is now a de-industrialised city but it originally attracted the first-generation Pakistani migrants in large numbers to its textiles mills in the 1960s. This study seeks to address the following research questions: To what extent does an FE setting meet the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students to complete their courses and to progress further while negotiating any impending obstacles during their study? To what extent does the students' cultural or class background enhance or impinge on their learning or educational experiences of an FE college? How does the FE experience correspond with the student perceptions and expectations of their past or post-college trajectories?

Despite FE's marginalised status, it remains popular with BAME students, this along with concerns for achievement gaps for Pakistani-origin students, the paucity of research literature on Pakistani-origin students' FE experiences and the new application of segmented assimilation theorisation - for all these reasons the study is intended to make original contribution to knowledge.

The data was gathered from 26 students and 10 staff who participated in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. By utilising the theoretical framework of 'segmented assimilation' (Portes & Zhou, 1993) which theorises three distinct paths open to second-generation migrant children- they can either join the middle classes in the mainstream for an upward assimilation, or they join a downward assimilation into the poor section of the host community, or lastly, they can continue to have economic successes while still continuing to hold their cultural values. In addition to these, there are three other factors that can affect the pace of assimilation- the government's existing policies towards migrants, the strength of prejudice towards immigrants in the host community and the presence of co-ethnic groups in the host community – these three factors are referred to as the 'modes of incorporation'. These concepts are applied to FE experiences of the males of Pakistani-origin in this study.

The study found that the FE experiences are not always upward assimilation trajectories, as students with low grades, or poor educational experience are vulnerable to downward assimilation while high ability and motivated students are likely to succeed in their studies and follow an upward assimilation path. The study also found that the socio-economic conditions in the city impacted on the youth most adversely.

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Word Count: **59903** (excluding appendices and bibliography)

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## **Dedications and Acknowledgements**

I would like to dedicate this doctorate to my grand-children Isa, Deena, Fariha, Duaa and Ayah; they have been inspirational in their own unique way at a time when I would have preferred less of their interruptions.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Paul Thomas whose deep insight, encouragement and guidance helped me complete my thesis. My thanks also go to Professor Pete Sanderson whose timely advice on the structure of the thesis and incorporation of theory and concepts assisted greatly with the final version. Without their sustained support this thesis would not have been possible.

It will be remiss of me if I did not mention all those anonymous students who had to give up their time to participate in the interviews and furnish that valuable data used to inform my thesis – thank you.

My appreciation is also due to the college staff whose candid and comprehensive contribution informed the study from an alternative perspective. I also thank my colleague tutors at the college who cooperated by releasing students from their scheduled classes to participate in face-to-face interviews.

Last, but not least, I thank my wife Zahida, whose practical support assured I stayed on tasks at difficult times.

## List of abbreviations

AoC	Association of Colleges
AYM	Asian Youth Movement
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CD	Compact Disc
CONTEST	Counter-Terrorism Strategy
CTL	Curriculum Team Leader
DfE	Department for Education
EFA	Education Funding Agency
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FEI	Further Education Institute
FHEA	Further and Higher Education Act
FSM	Free School Meals
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HND	Higher National Diploma
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
MEND	Muslim Engagement and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PCET	Post Compulsory Education and Training
PLC	Progress Learning Coach
SFA	Skills Funding Agency
SLC	Student Load Company
UBD	Understanding Bradford District
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admission Service
UCU	University and College Union
UK	United Kingdom
VET	Vocational Education and Training

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Pakistani-origin youth, Further Education (FE) and their uncertain future

This case study, into the experiences of young males of Pakistani-origin at Bradford College, a further education college in the northern city of Bradford, explores primarily, their FE experiences and reviews the impact of social and economic conditions in the city on their experiences. The college population comprises of 9 ethnic groups, the largest being white with 40%, followed by Pakistani 31%, African 5% and others however, the aggregate Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students form 47% of the total college population, according to the College's self-assessment report 2015/16.

FE stands at a key point, post-16 where the divergence in young people's life chances becomes visible in the choices they make, the experiences that framed these choices, and their consequences and the issues of what they might mean for FE, especially in a city like Bradford. I was seeking to investigate the experiences and perceptions of Pakistani-origin male around the role of FE as their educational achievements monitored by the college were below that of other ethnic groups. For this reason, it is an ideal site for exploring issues utilising the segmented assimilation and modes of incorporation theorisation (Portes & Zhou, 1993) discussed below.

Many of the students who proceed to local colleges have an option of vocational courses while a few more confident students use the facility as a second attempt to improve their grades for lofty aspirations such as an entry to HE. But locally, as well as nationally, FE is a route for many BAME young people, yet there is very limited evidence-based literature around their experiences (Avis, Orr & Warmington, 2017; Peart, 2018; Riaz, 2018; Abbas, 2002), even less about Pakistani-origin students despite their growing numbers in FE which I shall discuss in the next two chapters as most studies have focused on HE experiences (Bunce et al., 2019; Panesar, 2017; Bangurt, 2018). This dearth of literature does not offer the case study any insights from places like Bradford.

It is for this very reason why it is imperative to know more about how BAME/Pakistani-origin young people experience FE. This study will make original contribution to the understanding of FE experiences where FE itself has been enduring marginalisation and funding reductions in the recent years while operating in an environment of increased internal and external monitoring with the performativity element directed at competition within the sector rather than collaboration between the colleges.

There are 7 further sections in this chapter outlining the, Case study setting of Bradford, FE in Bradford, Pakistani communities in Bradford, Motivations for the research, The theoretical concerns of this study, Outline of the methodological approach and Structure of thesis.

## Case study setting of Bradford

Bradford is a northern English city and a metropolitan borough of West Yorkshire, the city was once a booming, industrial powerhouse but it is now, typical of de-industrialised towns, struggling to substitute this foundation with alternative forms of stable employment for its young growing inhabitants.

The city has been described as 'low skill low wage' economy with low employment rates for those without qualifications. The biggest sector of all businesses is retail at 14%, the biggest share of all employees is in health (15.5%) then manufacturing (12.7%) and education (12%) (Census 2011 Release 2.1, 2012). Bradford is an active part of the Leeds City Region and it is hoped that some of the wider regional initiatives such as the rail link, could also bring prosperity to Bradford.

Bradford Council acknowledged in its Bradford District Partnership Progress Report (2017) that there were still attainment issues in the district that need to be addressed at Key Stage 4, that is, the GCSE attainment to be as good as, or better than the England average percentage of pupils gaining 5 A\*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (key stage 4) at 42.4%, this is not expected to be achieved by 2020, the report stated. The Bradford average for both maths and English GCSE grades at A\*- C at key stage 4 was 48% in 2015.

Bradford has a tainted history of communal disturbances in 2001 (Bagguley & Hussain, 2008), these troubles also flared over to the neighbouring towns, the Bradford Muslim community because focus of media attention. The perpetrators were young males of Pakistani-origin who were quickly apprehended and severely punished. Two other significant events at around the same time were the 9/11 (11 September 2001) and 7/7 (7 July 2005) with their repercussions for the city, as one of the young offenders was born in the city and this instigated the characterisation and credence of the Muslim youth in the city and beyond. As well as the questions being asked of the Muslim's place in the British society themselves felt obliged to introspect itself as a community (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjort, 2008)

The media characterisation of young Muslims is unhelpful in an environment which has seen an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments not just in Britain but throughout the western world, there have been marches organised in the city by far-right groups such as Britain First and the British National Party. However, the anti-Muslim narrative often spouted by these far-right groups understandably, undermine the young Muslims efforts to integrate themselves as responsible citizens in the British society

With first Pakistani settlers exhibiting high incidents of social deprivation and poverty than the UK average - some of the inner-city wards are counted as amongst the 10% of the most deprived in the country. However, it is a younger city with nearly a quarter of its population being under 16, which predictably puts huge strain on public services such as education, housing and health services (UBD, 2020). Unemployment is significantly higher than the national average, while the educational achievements across primary and secondary schools are lower especially amongst its Pakistanis residents - this reality sets the scene for this case study investigation. There is disproportionate amount of youth offending amongst Pakistani males reflected in the regional prison population.

These young males' low socio-economic status also exert strain on their daily efforts to improve their social status. Many of them reside in the electoral wards which display a very high level of deprivation that patently has ramifications for other social problems such as health, housing, drugs and other misdemeanours. These youngsters are vulnerable to such propensities. The Pakistani parents' low educational attainment in the city, may explain the young males' low educational achievements at school, as the absence of parental support at home for some, as well as the lack of capital to acquire any educational advantage are contributory factors. These conditions pre-dispose some Pakistani-origin youth to uncertain future. For many of them, Further Education colleges are their destination from school, so putting the spotlight on FE in relation to individual and community advancement, yet there is very limited literature/research on BAME experiences of FE generally, and little or none on Pakistani-origin experiences.

Overviewing the locale, where the first-generation migrants from Pakistan were attracted to the once bustling textiles mills of the north but nowadays the Pakistani-origin youth are competing for the limited job opportunities in the local labour market due to a multiplicity of socio-economic factors.

This first chapter configures the rationale for the case study by overviewing the city itself first – the spatial context for the community and FE there, Pakistani community in the city, the role of marginalised and underfunded FE colleges for BAME students and my personal motivations for this case study. The theoretical underpinnings of segmented assimilation along with other key concepts, the justification of methodological approach adopted in this thesis, and the structure of the thesis, setting out each chapter's content.

## **FE in Bradford**

The Pakistani-origin youths' low educational performance in schools, possibly also, due to their low socio-economic class, predisposes them to choose local colleges for their post compulsory education and training (PCET). Bradford College is a further and higher education college with over 20,000 students, offering courses from entry to post-graduate level but most students take vocational option. The college population comprises of 9 ethnic groups, the largest being white with 40%, followed by Pakistani 31%, African 5% and others however, the aggregate BAME students form 47% of the total college population, according to the College's self-assessment report 2015/16. To put it in perspective, the College intake was 22% below the average school leaver attainment for the Bradford district, many of them being Pakistani-origin students. There are 59% female and 41% male students.

FE colleges have been acting as businesses since 1992 (as stipulated in FHEA 1992), being responsible for their budget and staffing but the funding of colleges has been reduced and changed under different formulations to make it harder for colleges to survive as they compete with each other. There are also increased monitoring processes both internal and external accountability, such as performance targets, appraisals, observations and the Ofsted.

Young male students of Pakistani-origin enter such environment with additional social and cultural complexities which could include religious obligations, familial

responsibilities and social care duties for either parents or other elderly relatives in the family. These complexities need to be explored in colleges for the appropriateness of educational provision for students including the students' realistic aspirations for potential social mobility (Ahmad, 2001) and responsible citizenship.

Bradford College's comparative uniqueness in the district, as with Shipley and Keighley, lies, in its central location, where significant majority of its student population comprising of BAME students, overwhelming number of them belonging to the Pakistani-origin community reside. This fact alone makes it an important site for a critical empirical evaluation of how its educational provision is tailored and perceived by the students for their impact and effectiveness through their everyday lived experience in college. The college has to provide an educational experience by offering courses that have currency in the diverse labour market or potential to build on that experience for further study.

In a city with rising youth population the college needs to send the right messages to parents for their children's education to keep the self-interest of business afloat while at the same time contribute to the city's economy which should be the role of all colleges (Salisbury & Jephcote, 2008).

The FE colleges have to undertake their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to provide for all their diverse students, to foster respect for the differences among students, to enhance skills for the local labour market, to provide equality of opportunity for social mobility through appropriate policies, guidance or pathways and to have informed understanding of the students educational, social and cultural needs (Peart, 2015). The FE colleges are continuing to operate under challenging environment of audit cultures with pressures of funding cuts, rigorous monitoring, marketisation, competition, drop in enrolment numbers, potential mergers, and curriculum and qualification changes.

### **Pakistani communities in Bradford**

Again, according to the local council, Bradford's large Pakistani community (20%) of which 60% are born in the UK and well-settled participate fully in all democratic processes such as local and national elections and has reasonable representation with two of the five districts members of parliament belonging to the Pakistani community along with numerous local councillors serving in the city hall.

The proportion of people educated to Level 4 (degree or equivalent) in Bradford is 26% against the national average of 40% and for Level 2 is 61% for Bradford and 76% nationally (UBD, 2019). Persistent inequalities in attainments gaps for Pakistani-origin male at Bradford college is acknowledged by the college locally while the British Muslim educational attainments nationally are raised for being an under searched area (Khattab & Modood, 2018).

But much of Bradford's poor Pakistani community continue to live segregated lives in the inner-city conurbations with some pockets of the community not mixing much with other ethnicities on daily basis. However, there is an emerging educated and professional elite, who tend to live in the suburbs yet retain their strong Muslim faith identity and show signs of integration (Neal et al., 2013). But the older generation still

retains strong links with their ancestral homes but the younger generation is showing signs of indifference and only visit their ancestral homes when unavoidable as in cases of weddings, deaths or for occasional cultural experiences.

The new generation of Pakistanis are showing signs of rootedness in British society by focusing on starting their own independent businesses and displaying a life style such as expensive houses, cars, holidays and even finding their own life partners locally unlike their parents whose matrimonial arrangement was decided by their parents and the partners often came from Pakistan (Werbner, 1990). Despite this change the Pakistani community retains strong cultural and religious ties within their social groups and there are many voluntary organisations political and social that work for the benefit of its members (Rehman & Kalra, 2006).

Pakistani community's notoriety gleaned more prominently from the Rushdie Affair for its militancy and challenging the status quo. The Pakistani community's large presence has been mobilised over the years to gain a number of concessions from the local council ranging from the provision of halal meals in schools to the option to withdraw from mixed PE lessons for girls.

The city has fair representation of its Pakistani workforce both male and female in all its various sectors, retail, education, social services, catering, construction, legal and professional, transport, travel and tourism and so on without any signs of inter or intra-conflicts based on difference of ethnicities. But there seems to be lack of community leadership from the mosques so the young people often tend to self-help through self-advocacy approach with religious or social activities involving all communities – community Iftars (breaking of the fast during the month of Ramadan, fund-raising for the refugees) or Bradford Literature Festival are, but a few examples.

### **Motivations for the research**

My motivation for developing this study are very personal. As a Pakistani immigrant to Bradford, I studied at Bradford college, went on to higher education in the city and have subsequently served the local community as a councillor and a community activist. More importantly, I have worked at Bradford College since 2005– the setting for this case study, working with many young male students of Pakistani-origin.

I came to England from Pakistan in 1970 and attended an upper school in Bradford with low English proficiency. I struggled initially but still succeeded in passing a mixture of 'O' levels and some CSE's – I subsequently enrolled at Bradford College to study 'A' levels in sciences. After passing 4 'A' levels in 1979, I went to University of Bradford to study a degree in Mathematical Sciences. In my student days at University of Bradford I was part of the Asian Youth Movement that acted as a channel for the young people to vent their disaffection at social issues who often demonstrated against the rallies organised by the far-right groups in the city such as the National Front. Then from 1987-1995, I served on Bradford council as a councillor for Little Horton which is an inner-city ward with much deprivation and experienced the Manningham riot in 1995 in the city as well as witnessed the notorious book-burning event in January 1989 that later became synonymous with the Rushdie Affair. I have been an active member of the Labour Party but currently, just a party member for ideological affiliation. While being on

the council where much of my portfolio comprised of educational duties, I also served on Bradford College's governing body as a governor and Chaired one of its sub-committees, the Equality and Diversity committee.

Currently, I have been in FE for the last 17 years, first as a tutor then as a middle manager in English and Maths Department for 9 years at Bradford College, having worked for 4 different FE institutions during this time.

I have been resident of the city for 50 years with strong links with the local Muslim community via many forums, businesses, Council for Mosques and so on. I am married with 3 adult sons who all attended local comprehensive schools before entering universities and pursuing their chosen careers. I had seen education as a system from all its facets, as a parent, student, governor, policy maker, tutor, manager and I even gained a MA in Leadership and Management in Education.

I had keen interest in knowing why some people from the same socio-economic background perform better economically and socially than others who seemingly have similar life trajectories, why some young people are compelled to a life of sub-culture or aspiring to become drug dealers as an example, why is the alternative not so attractive for some youngsters? Can those students, for whatever the reasons of their failures at school, be helped by an FE institution? What might an institution do provide opportunities for social mobility? Or is the FE institution exacerbating their marginalisation?

I was working in a college where I thought I could explore some of these issues and make contribution in this key area. I had sufficient experience and awareness of the social and educational issues for the young males and was in touch with them in a way that would ensure I hear their narrative first hand.

I maintain that with the right approach, that is respecting and valuing each other's views, treating all as equal human beings, working collaboratively, a fair society is possible, the one where all individuals feel part of the bigger community.

### **The theoretical concerns of this study**

The FE experiences are viewed through the theoretical lens of theories of segmented assimilation and modes of incorporation. The theorisation of 'segmented assimilation' framework, states that there are three distinct paths second-generation immigrant children follow as they settle in the host country -they can either join the middle classes in the mainstream, which is an easy assimilation process; or they can join a downward assimilation into the poor section of the society where they can encounter, lack of opportunities, marginalisation, racism or 'othering' as in the case of Muslim youth due to their faith; lastly, they could have economic successes while still continuing to uphold their cultural values. However, there are three additional factors that affect the pace or direction of assimilation and these are – the current government's policies towards immigrants, either friendly or hostile, where the migrants' narratives of acceptance or rejection is enunciated at the national policy level; the strength of prejudice towards the immigrants in the host community, the greater the prejudice the greater the segregation,



hence the marginalisation of migrants; and the presence of ethnic groups in the host community, where the co-ethnic support mitigate the negative effects of settlement through a network of support systems such as assistance with securing employment, arranging for lodging and so on – these factors are collectively referred to as the ‘modes of incorporation’ (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Asfari & Askar, 2020; Collet-Sabe, 2020). These theorisations lack substance on institutional or structural racism embedded in some systems which can plausibly present numerous possibilities of segmented assimilation for the affected youth. But the overarching theoretical framework for the study remains segmented assimilation and modes of incorporation for the youth in Bradford with its socio-economic challenges.

A number of key concepts are used for the FE colleges, ‘Performativity’ and ‘marketisation’ (Crowther, 2016; Allan, 2011), ‘warehousing’, when the students are placed on low-status courses which have limited skills development or currency in labour market (MacFadyen, 2012; Wallace, 2014; Lucas & Crowther, 2016; Avis et al., 2017; Gleeson et al., 2005). ‘equality of opportunity’ or social class equalities is a notion that has remained but an illusion for most (Shain, 2012; Hobbs, 2016; Ratcliffe, 2012) as the question remains unanswered whether the equality of opportunity is also the equality of outcome, here ‘widening participation’ was supposed to induce economic prosperity for individuals from socially deprived backgrounds (Robinson, 2012; Avis & Orr, 2016) – all these concepts are introduced and discussed in chapter 2 and 3.

The other key theoretical concepts are also explained and used in the next two chapters in this study, to aide with the debates and the analysis of the empirical data. ‘Migration’ is theorised to shed light on the factors pertaining to Pakistani migration to Bradford, the key components being the ‘word systems theory’, ‘push and pull’ factors and the ‘network theory’ and its explanation of early settlement of Pakistani-origin migrants in Bradford. ‘*Biradari*’, (clan-based kinship) is discussed for facilitating the first-generation migration settlement, and its use for political mobilisation (Lewis, 2007; Peace & Akhtar, 2015) with its shortcomings in the present social context among the youth – the concept is still embodied in social interactions for many Pakistani communities. ‘Social cohesion’ as an idealised response to diversity (Modood, 2010; Bowskill et al., 2007; Boucher & Samad, 2013; Schneider & Crul, 2010; Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017; Kundnani, 2007) and the contrasting concepts of ‘residential self-segregation’ or ‘clustering’ or ‘marginalisation’ (Kapoor, 2013; Thomas & Sanderson, 2012; Bonino, 2016; Hickman et al., 2011 Alam & Husband, 2013; Alexander, 2004; Phillips, 2014; Orofino, 2016; Hussain & Bagguley, 2013 Kunst et al., 2012; Peart, 2018). These notions explain spatial segregation in the city.

The concept of ‘ethnic capital’ is used to explain the educational attainments (Modood, 2004; Shah et al., 2010) by placing high value on education, strong family support and positive family influence and, conversely, the ‘ethnic penalty’, an acceptance of discrimination in the labour market (Brekke, 2014; Shain, 2016). ‘Ethnicity’ is part of one’s identity (Abbas, 2002), while ‘positioning’ describes people’s engagement in social relationships (Phoenix, 2005) and there is also the discussion on the various notions of ‘spatial’ or ‘spatial clustering’ (Miah et al. (2020; Din, 2006) and ‘personal identities’ (Hussain & Bagguley, 2005; Modood, 2010; Bhatti, 2011; Alam, & Husband, 2013; Anthias, 2016 Franceschelli & O’Brien, 2015).

'Ethnic representation' is the changing characterisation, particularly of young Muslims in the media and social narratives (Amin, 2013; Archer, 2003 Sanghera & Thapar-Bjort, 2008; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Mirza, 2017; Cockbain, 2013).

'Conviviality' is a concept that describes the living together of people or as a mode of being and interacting (Neal et al., 2013).

'Aspirations' reflect the students desires for a certain level of educational attainment while 'expectation' is what is likely to happen in future. 'social mobility' is understood as the movement or opportunities for individuals or their off springs between different social classes or occupational groups (Robinson, 2012; Archer. 2008; Avis et al. ,2017) while, 'Social justice' is understood to mean, how people are free to improve their position in society (Tate & Bagguley, 2017). 'Social capital' in the form of 'bonding capital' in Muslim families is derived from ethnic and religious identities and practices, whereas the 'bridging capital' is to engage with wider civic arrangements.

### **Outline of the methodological approach**

The philosophical assumptions underpinning this case study are constructivist, utilising a qualitative approach with a case study design, with semi-structured face-to-face interviews as research instruments with both student and staff respondents, extending over two years which is normal duration of a college course for FE student respondents, and at the end of the second year with staff respondents. The Pakistani-origin students experiences and perceptions of FE were equally paramount if their educational achievement gaps compared with other ethnic groups were to be equalised. The BAME student population at Bradford College is approximately 50% of the total number of students, according to the college's self-assessment report of 2015/16. There were also concerns about the motivation and behaviours of, particularly Pakistani-origin male students. These concerns along with the paucity of any literature available on FE experiences and perceptions added weight to undertake research in this vital area. Hence, the research questions focus on:

1. To what extent does an FE setting meet the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students to complete their courses and to progress further while negotiating any impending obstacles during their study?
2. To what extent does the students' cultural or class background enhance or impinge on their learning or educational experiences of an FE college?
3. How does the FE experience correspond with the student perceptions and expectations of their past or post-college trajectories?

As I was employed in the college as a middle manager (Curriculum Team Leader), I had to obtain clearance from all gatekeepers including the tutors and the college management prior to the initiation of any interviews. All interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured, held on the college premises at a location agreed by both sets of respondents where they at liberty free from any coercion or intimidation. After minor attrition, 26 student respondents and 10 staff respondents were interviewed and the data generated accordingly.

All ethical considerations were addressed by adhering rigorously to the guidelines stipulated by BERA, constituting informed consent, guarantee of participant anonymity and confidentiality, and no harm to be intended to anyone involved in the case study and the participants' right to withdraw from the research process at any stage.

I was also studious of my own position as someone who was a middle manager - hence the power differential, belonged to the same ethnic group, and somewhat in a privileged position compared with students and how my unique status could potentially compromise the quality of field data, I exercised reflexivity in this dilemma. I had an advantage of being an insider researcher in two ways – as a tutor but also as someone from a similar ethnic male background.

This case study, into the experiences of young males of Pakistani-origin in a further education college stem from a Masters level study I conducted earlier into the impact of equality and diversity measures, in closing the achievement gaps between different cohorts of students in a large FE college. I had spent some time in FE both as a tutor and in a middle managers role and wanted to know how these young males experienced FE as a post-compulsory option for my doctorate study.

This introduction gives a brief overview of the research study which will be explored and discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapters.

## **Structure of thesis**

This case study is compiled into nine chapters - Chapter 2 is the first of two literature review chapters, it introduces the various concepts and discusses the Pakistani-origin youth in Bradford, reviewing the first-generation migrants' settlement, the events leading to the designation of a 'suspect community', Pakistani-origin youths educational and employment experiences, their spatial and personal identities and the citizenship. The second literature review is Chapter 3, to focus on Pakistani-origin youth in FE, exploring the role of FE along with the experiences of white and non-white (BAME) students and the structure and mobility issues experienced by students from all socio-economic classes.

The Research methodology is covered under Chapter 4, discussing the research approach adopted in the case study, the use of population and sampling design, the research instruments employed, the data generation, collection and analysis. My own role as a researcher is underscored along with ethical considerations for the research undertaking. The study's limitations are discussed with how the present study contributes to and fills the gap in knowledge.

The data is presented and critically analysed in next four themed chapters, Chapter 5 (student motivation for choosing college), 6 (experience at college-initial and later & non-Educational), 7 (student aspirations for the future) and 8 (staff perceptions).

Chapter 9, is the overall conclusion on FE experiences of young males of Pakistani-origin, it draws together all the debates and theoretical perspectives discussed in the preceding chapters thus communicates the key findings from both student and staff

respondents and ends the chapter with suggestions for further research that could be conducted in the area for further and augmented original contribution to knowledge.

## Chapter 2: Pakistani-origin youth in Bradford

### Introduction

The study's literature review is divided into two chapters – chapter 2, on Pakistani-origin youth, examines, discusses and analyses multifarious aspects of their experiences in Bradford. I start with reviewing the city's context with its key demographics, its migration history and the textiles industry, crucial to its industrial past. I then discuss the 'myth of return', Mirpuri diaspora, conditions in Mirpur at the time of migration and the role of the concept of *biradari* in Mirpuri community and its embodiment in various social relations such as mobilising groups for personal or political gains.

Theorising of migration is discussed along with spatial clustering, the experiences of first-generation employment in textiles industry and the impact of de-industrialisation particularly on the youth. I then discuss how the Pakistani-origin youth were characterised in public and policy discourses as social events unfolded and they were associated with the events and how the youth mobilised themselves in the 70's into a movement to counteract any threats of violence from the far-right groups such as the National Front. I then move on to the discussion of the social marginalisation, stigmatisation, self-segregation and other key concepts such as multiculturalism, community cohesion and securitisation. I then explain in detail and propose to utilise the theorisation of segmented assimilation framework in my analyses.

The labelling of 'suspect community' is discussed along with the legislative moves, notably the Prevent Duty and its focus on surveillance and securitisation and its implications for the Pakistani youth in the city. The next section discusses the role of human capital in educational attainments for the young and how the concept of ethnic capital can ameliorate the effects of class and ethnic disadvantage for the Pakistani youth. The final section discusses the changing representation of the Muslim youth since the urban disturbances of 2001, and the notion of identity, its formation from self to ascribed, individual to group or just spatial. A comparison is also drawn with some northern towns having similar socio-economic conditions as Bradford.

Chapter 3 is the second part of the literature review on Pakistani-origin youth in FE, which reviews the role and the function of FE, structure and mobility, BME students in FE, perceptions of FE including the VET.

## Bradford

This first section sets out the scene for the uniqueness of the city by reviewing the context and the key demographics, its migration history, including the post-war Pakistani arrivals. The evolution of textiles industry was crucial common factor for the migration to the city, as either an opportunity to develop the industry as with the early German merchants or for employment over the years for different waves of migrants.

Let me overview the economic development of Bradford historically and the consequential rise and composition of its current population. Bradford is a northern English city and a metropolitan borough of West Yorkshire. It is made up of 30 wards, City ward has the highest population (25,520) and the highest percentage of the working age population (72.2%) - this is due to the high numbers of young people who attend Bradford College and University and the lowest percentages of older people aged 65-84 (4.8%) and very old people aged 85+ (0.7%). Bradford has 14 of the 30 wards which are within the 10% most deprived wards in England (IMD 2019): Bowling & Barkerend, Bradford Moor, City, Clayton & Fairweather Green, Eccleshill, Great Horton, Keighley Central, Keighley West, Little Horton, Manningham, Royds, Tong and Wibsey. Despite the deprivation, Bradford has one of the highest business start-up rates in the UK though it is now slowing down which may reflect a strengthening of jobs market.

According to the 2011 Census, the district has a population of 522,453, where the White British form 64% (333,628) of the population, the Asians 27% (140,149), of which Pakistanis are 20% (106,614) (Understanding Bradford District, 2020, p. 1) - the next Census is not due until March 2021.

The latter figure is prominent as it alludes to a historical shift of people from the effects of decolonisation of the Indian subcontinent that created a new country of Pakistan in 1947. This figure is also worth noting as the majority of the Pakistani population in Bradford has roots in a particular region of Pakistani-administered Kashmir - specifically, from the district of Mirpur. The first influx of immigrant arriving from this region started in small numbers soon after the second world war (1939-45) but then, in more increasing numbers from 1960's onwards, "migration is defined broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (Anwar, 1979, p. 17). They were mainly young male migrant workers eager to work in the textile mills where a simple yet laborious process of turning a natural fibre (wool) into yarn and then fabric was to become their livelihood and rootedness, (Goodhart, 2014, pp. 124 & 137). To understand what attracted the first wave of these and other immigrants to Bradford over the years, it is important to identify the historical context of how the growth of Bradford as the hub of textiles industry that was so alluring.

Bradford was well placed geographically to benefit from the industrial revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1760-1820) in terms of its location, resources and the infrastructure as the small cottage industry succumbed to the invention of faster machines resulting from the new technological innovations which meant the people from the outlying areas who had been working on looms in their homes for generations had to move closer to find work in the newly built mills in the centre of the city. Bradford (Montgomery, 1997, p. 53) benefited hugely from the local natural resources too, such as the coal, iron, stone, and the constant water supply, aided by the opening of the Leeds-Liverpool canal in 1777.

The first wave of Irish immigrants arrived into Bradford following the Irish famine of 1845/46 to work in the mills, these were mainly uneducated people driven from rural areas with strong Catholic faith. The Irish experience in the city is recollected by Husband et al. (2016, p. 12) as the “Irish population in the town, who, anticipating more recent scenarios, were preponderantly crowded into a few areas of the town, and who attracted considerable hostility from the resident population of Bradford”.

The city’s prosperity soared in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with increased housing, new architecture and the movement of people to Bradford from around the country and further afield from Scotland and Germany. By middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century “there were well over a hundred mills in the town whose looms were churning out worsted cloth that was in demand all over the world” (Montgomery, 1997, p. 53). Some of the visible land marks from that era are a testimony to those affluent times: Lister mills built in 1873, Salts mill in 1853 and Drummonds Mill in 1861 (Montgomery, 1997) which was ravaged by fire in 2016. Many of the first-generation Pakistanis worked in these mills as they lived in overcrowded terraced houses within the commuting distance of these mills in Bradford.

There was also the arrival of German merchants in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, who were mainly business people with marketing skills and saw the opportunity to develop the textile trade which they did by making Bradford a global city. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century they “comprised half the textile merchants, doing business from their palatial warehouses in Little Germany and playing a full role in cultural, political and business life” (Ibid, p. 61). Unlike the Irish before they were educated, much cultured and philanthropist who had a real impact on Bradford’s society and economy and, as a consequence gained respect from the host community. The area of Little Germany in the heart of the city is a memorial to their legacy of labour and grandeur architecture.

Some of the displaced Europeans after the second world war including Ukrainians, Poles, Yugoslavs and Italians, also came to fulfil the needs of the industry at the time (Panayi, 2010, p. 41).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought much turmoil including the two world wars (1914-1918, 1939-1945) with it came the independence of former colonies- India (1948), Pakistan (1947) and later East Pakistan breaking away to become Bangladesh in 1971. The displacement of people in the Asian subcontinent brought much poverty and hardships. Bradford’s textiles industry had already become weaker prior to the start of the Second World War (1939-45), but in the post-war years “Bradford’s worsted trade had to come to terms with the new world economy where competition was fierce and technology rapidly improving” (Firth, 1997, p. 129). This environment continued, as Toms and Zhang reflected (2016, p. 3) “the cotton textile industry, and then the textile industry in general, declined in the face of increasing overseas competition”. Consequently, a combination of not keeping abreast of technical developments, something that helped Bradford with its rise in the first place, now became the very cause of its fall, and long unsocial hours with low wages made it unattractive for the locals to continue to work in the mills. This trend equally affected most northern towns in the UK including Burnley and Oldham.

In contrast, the post-war immigration from the commonwealth countries, discussed in the next section, that of single men living in multiple-occupations had a different reception from both public and the political fraternity, Husband et al. (2016, p. 17) describe “this influx of migrant workers throughout the 1960s was associated with extensive racial hostility, which regrettably became a key populist discourse within party-political competition for the electorate’s support”. These discourses are being rehearsed with equal fervour with the arrival of other immigrants as refugees or asylum seekers due to the political upheavals in their respective countries, mainly from the Middle East.

The second wave of Eastern Europeans immigrants’ journey to Bradford is a direct consequence of the opening up of the labour market to EU states in 2004 leading to the economic migrants from Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania and Latvia. The European Union being essentially a political union of now 27 European countries that had been consolidating their union from 1951 onwards with various treaties among the member states. By 2017 there were almost 2 million people in the UK from the former communist countries including Romania and Bulgaria (Phung et al., 2020), some of these reside in Bradford.

Although Britain has formally left the European Union (Brexit) from January 2020, the Brexit deal is not completely sealed yet. Post-Brexit scenario will have implications for the future governments on how they deal with immigration and social issues, but judging from the pre-referendum manifesto promises and the current neo-liberal discourses, it is not easy to predict future migration trends as it is likely to depend on the political will, terms of the UK exit, and the socio-economic background at the time. Alam (2018, p.287) point to the racialised representation of even Easter European immigrant communities, “Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy (2012) conceptualize Eastern European migration into the UK as a racialized problematic framed around various dimensions including criminality and cultural deficiency”.

Reverting to the 2011 census statistics to understand Bradford’s composition it is noted that 83% of the people living in Bradford were born in the UK while 17% were born elsewhere including 10% in South Asia. But in the four years to 2011, 36% of the international migrants came from South Asia, 32% from the EU Accession countries, 13% from other European countries, 11% from other parts of the world and 8% from other parts of Asia and in 2018/19; over 3,300 foreign nationals obtained their National Insurance numbers while based in Bradford. It is also noted that Bradford has young population with 23.7% of its population being under 16 which makes it the 4<sup>th</sup> highest proportion in England, according to 2019 estimates. Its median age is 36.5 compared with 40 for England and 40 for Yorkshire and Humberside.

On the religious persuasion, 46% of the populations professed Christian faith which compares with 60% for England and 60% for Yorkshire and Humberside. The figure for Muslim faith is 25% for Bradford compared with 5% for England and 6.2% for Yorkshire and Humberside (UBD, 2020). This milieu of diversity can have implications for multicultural co-existence which will be discussed later. On socio-economic front, Bradford has an employment rate of 65.1%, which is lower than regional and national statics, 42% of the unemployed belong to the older 50-64 group (UBD, 2020). There



are 25% employed in lower skilled jobs compared with 17% nationally – hence Bradford can be described as having a low skilled low wage economy. In terms of the district's deprivation in 2019, Bradford ranked 5<sup>th</sup> most income deprived and 6<sup>th</sup> most employment deprived ((UBD, 2020).

According to the government's school performance service (Gov.UK), 15 out of 58 schools in the district scored higher than the mean score of 46.5 in Attainment 8 for England, which does not tell much about the state of secondary schools in Bradford as they are individually ranked, but it does allude to a relatively lower level of secondary level attainments. And if we glance at the figures for NVQ4 qualifications in 2019, only 26.4% of the population has that level compared with 34.2% in Yorkshire and Humberside and 40.3% in the UK (Nomis, 2020).

A cursory look at the demographics of Bradford reveal that according to the Census 2011, the city's population is dominated by the younger age groups, with 29% of the population being under 20 and also having the highest percentage of under-16 population in England, outside London, with added growth rate for the city of 11% compared with 7% nationally. On the signifiers of deprivation, unemployment rate is deemed 5.8% which is higher than the regional rate of 4.8%, which in turn is higher than the rate of 4.4% for England. Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) which incorporates such factors as income, employment, education skills and training, health and disability, crime, barriers to housing or services and living environment, the Bradford Council has identified 14 out of its 30 wards for falling within the 10% of the most deprived in England, Manningham with high Asian population being the most deprived (UBD, 2020). In terms of school education, the number of pupils in schools is growing significantly, it is currently at 99,000 and pupil have a variety of languages. On school standards for year 2016, the proportion of children educated in schools with Ofsted inspection grade good or outstanding is 76% for primary, and 36% for secondary, both figures being comparatively lower than previous years, this is while the attendance has been around 95% for both primary and secondary sector.

The above statistics only tell part of the story as other equally important issues such as health, social housing etc have not been highlighted but, combined with the forecasted increase in population the authorities have to focus on the challenges of social, educational and economical nature for the city in the years to come.

This first section reviewed the city's crucial statistics with a brief history of its industrial past and the arrival of migrants over the years.

### **Pakistani migration to Bradford**

This section discusses and analyses the key concepts of the 'myth of return', Mirpuri diaspora, *biradari* and its relevance, prevailing conditions in Mirpur at the time of migration, theorising migration, spatial clustering, working conditions in textile mills and the management attitudes towards the Asian employees, and the impact of de-industrialisation.

The arrival of Pakistanis in significant numbers as migrant workers, started in the 1950's influenced by an interplay of both push and pull factors. Migration is seen as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence (Anwar, 1985), this suggests a one-way movement, one being indefinite and the other somewhat transient. Along with this is the concept of the 'myth of return', and in the context of Pakistani (Mirpuri) migrants is because "Many wish to go back but in reality, economic circumstances are such that the majority are unlikely ever to return...the cultural and familial bonds with Pakistan may weaken with the second generation" (Anwar, 1979, p. 222). It must be born in mind that there is a marked difference in the circumstances that gives rise to the movement of different cohorts of people from different parts of the globe and at different points in time over the last two centuries, for instance the Irish to England, the Italians, or Jews to America or Australia, or Mexicans to America, the Syrians to Europe.

But in the case of Mirpuris in Britain the myth of return is not quite dead yet and the it may be interpreted as "return fantasies are not necessarily a symptom of disengagement with the host society, but are part of a common way human beings have to imagine possible futures for themselves and make sense of their present", (Bolognani, 2016, p. 193); furthermore, with the continued evolution of Pakistani community over the subsequent generations in relation to political and economic challenges, "Their links back home are continuously revitalised and renewed... the flow in both directions underpins the process of ethnic renewal". (Werbner, 1990, p. 3).

Though Werbner's (1990) study was conducted with Pakistanis in Manchester, it is equally valid for those Pakistanis living in West Yorkshire. British Mirpuris' increased wealth means they can afford to make trips back home if they wish to fulfil the dream of returning home, "The return visit, migration or reunion, is devoted to a lifelong ambition to fill this void between pasts and presents in order to return forever to the homelands" (Ali & Holden, 2006, p. 239). The return may or may not happen in future but "Transnationalism stresses the connection between the migrant diaspora and the homeland, giving rise to networks which facilitate further migration" (Panayi, 2010, p.46) and investment. One example of that was demonstrated through the immediate funding raising efforts of the Kashmir community in the north of England following the earthquake in Pakistani-administered Kashmir in 2005, the "diaspora fund-raising and distribution was initially able to respond in a more direct and effective manner than states and non-governmental organisation". (Rehman & Kalra, 2006, p. 309)

Both the connectivity and the investment has paid dividends to the area with the emergence of the new Mirpur city up the valley from the old, mainly, with the help of foreign remittances sent by Kashmiri diaspora abroad. Mirpur is a modern city in contrast to its former namesake with much more improved infrastructure and commercial activity and is often visited by Mirpuri diaspora for holiday breaks, cultural and family connections for the young, and for older people going back has its own nostalgic appeal -the myth of return perhaps.

But the pioneering journeys were often financed by the borrowed money to be paid back later as they resumed earning. On commenting the financing of these trips in the 1960's Dahya (1974, p. 82) writes "In a country like Pakistan, where per capita income is £30 p.a., the money which the immigrant's family spent in financing his migration

represents a substantial amount and is an indication of the family's expectations in the form of remittances", this may partially explain how the 'myth of return' was imagined for Mirpuris along with their motives and behaviour patterns of the pioneering immigrants.

These were young men and like the Irish before, were mainly uneducated peasants from the poor and rural parts of Pakistan leaving behind their families including the young children in the care of their extended family members. Dahya (1974) argued that their migration was not to earn a living but rather to supplement their small landholdings with remittances to be reinvested back home in property and land.

Pakistani migrants in Bradford originate in small number of areas, notably Mirpur, but "the destinations in Britain were largely confined to the large metropolitan cities in which a chain migration process recreated the village structure left behind. Thus, South Asian groups were not only segregated from the white population, but also from each other" (Peach, 2006, p. 136), depending on where they settled in the north or some areas of London. Ali and Holden (2006) state that the Pakistani view was to arrive in the UK for temporary settlement as economic migrant with the intention of an eventual return back home. These were low-paid manual workers shaped by their class (Fazakarley, 2014) who bought their own homes primarily in average to lowest-status wards (Lyons, 2003) in the form of Victorian terrace houses available in Bradford. Phillips et al. (2006, p. 65) while discussing Leeds and Bradford state that "widening social class distinctions between British Asians have all helped to shape the narratives of urban space presented ... and influenced decisions about where to live". Miah et al. (2020, p. 65) shift the argument from agency where most of the blame lies for self-segregation, to more structural reasons for this milieu and elaborate further that, people with shared interests of many kinds may want to live near each other or share resources that are important for them, but singling out specific groups as prone to this 'clustering' behaviour serves a broader political purpose, to displace responsibility for events and problems that are the product of structures and policies onto one specific community.

A strong communal sense (*biradari* also spelt *biraderi*) of responsibility ensured that they also had somewhere to live on arrival, albeit in squalid conditions, and in some cases the employment was arranged through a network of existing friends and relatives already settled here. Inheriting the notion of *biradari* was crucial and embodied, especially for the first generation of Pakistani migrants. *Biradari*, literally means brotherhood or fraternity in Persian in the context of clan-based kinship (Lewis, 2007) and it served the communities well over the centuries in rural Kashmir or other parts of the continent where it was more pronounced. It is a social system embedded in hierarchical class structure of the cast system in Indian society where artisan classes have their fixed place in society and monopoly of their trades and their own social order. It should be noted here that the economic conditions of all *biradaris* were the same, so if there was any poverty or deprivation (water, food etc) in society it was equally rampant for all, but despite this stratification there was social harmony in society as social lines were clearly delineated. This is a social designation that causes structural suppression of people as there are obstacles in the way to any attempts to progress from a perceived low status to a higher one in the social hierarchy. But being together as a group under the banner of a certain trade has its advantages, it does give you the power as a collectivity, for instance, to set the tariffs for your product or services, borrow

money from your *biradari*, arrange children's marriages within (Werbner, 1990) and so on – a mobilisation of symbolic and material resources. In some respects, it bears parallel with being a member of a trade's union here in this country in industrial matters.

While the concept (of *biradari*) has given the families their values and a sense of identity in rural Mirpur where dependency on social groups in the absence of an effective social and economic infrastructure was necessary, it has nevertheless come under fire for being incompatible with modern ways of thinking and living in Bradford, for its emphasis on group rather than the individual merit, for being too prescriptive, as any actions outside the accepted norms of the respective group would result in being ostracised for the deviant individual.

The concept has played major part in all aspects of life in Britain recently, for instance with economic and social, Nazir (2019, p. 55) notes that, "various social and economic opportunities in Britain allowed *biradari* members to gain social mobility and izzat (honour) amongst other *biradari* members"; with civil engagement - the Respect Party's victory in 2012 in Bradford West constituency is attributed to *biradari* bloc voting (Peace & Akhtar, 2015); with spatial and marital – the social housing and matrimonial arrangements are a result of *biraderi* affiliations (Anwar, 1979) and even in education when the young are allowed to study "either they find the experience liberating, or they are so unprepared for freedom that they cannot handle it" (Lewis, 2007, p. 41), this is when the control on individuals is relaxed.

The subsequent generations have resented the concept and contested its place on several grounds: the social change - due to education of all artisan classes originating from Mirpur but now living in Bradford has resulted in more *cross-biradari* marriages among the young thus diluting the fixed labelling of the groups as it has existed in the past; the Islamic leaning- some of the faith-practising youth have challenged the inherent discrimination promoted in *biraderi* system (the caste-system), placing of one class above the other; racism and political activism- has united all *biraderis* against other more pressing issues of economic equality and demands for better housing or schools and more specific demands for the Muslim community such as the halal meals in schools, or allotments for Muslim interments; spatial segregation – by sharing cheap housing has ironically increased social bonding between different clan-based groups who would have eschewed each other.

The practice and impact of *biraderi* is likely to dwindle with time in its current form as the youth have rejected it for being obsolete and irrelevant to their contemporary living. It is difficult to defend your stance against racism or discriminatory practices in the mainstream society when you vehemently support *biraderi* in its bigoted form, within your own respected coteries on the other.

There is historical shortage of research on these early Asians in Britain as they started settling down in towns like Bradford from the 1960s and most of the research done focused on racialised and ethnicised communities in towns and cities (Mcloughlin, 2009). Badr Dahya (,1974,1988) and Verity S Khan's (1979) contribution is notable for being original and with newer understanding and application of 'ethnicity' as applied to Pakistani diaspora. However, as they were both 'outsiders' they had a different understanding of the communities than the latter scholars like, Yunis Alam (2013,2018),

Ikhlaq Din (2006) or Virinder Kalra (2006) who could be seen as 'insiders' as they belonged and lived in the communities and augmented their contribution by covering other social issues such as space, identities, experiences, culture and political mobilisation in their writings.

Din (2006) noted that Mirpur became one of the three districts of 'Free' (Kashmir) after the partition and majority of the Pakistanis from this area settled in Bradford and Birmingham and that this was done on the behest of the respective governments of Britain, India and Pakistani.

As well as the British government's willingness to muster cheap work force from the old colonies, other socio-economic factors such as the lack of proper educational infrastructure and pervasive poverty in Pakistan compelled people from this region to look for betterment elsewhere. The construction of the world's largest earth dam at Mangla near Mirpur in the 1950's also displaced a large number of people from the affected villages. Din (2006, p. 20) claims, "it submerged two hundred and fifty villages in the district of Mirpur and displaced approximately one hundred thousand people." What is not mentioned in the literature is, that, the old Mirpur city was also submerged and the designation of 'Mirpur' or 'Mirpuri community' extends well beyond boundaries of the city itself and includes other far flung places around and beyond Mirpur. It must also be borne in mind that other communities from around Mirpur not affected by the dam-project also made their way to Bradford including my father, as many of them belonged to artisan classes. According to Lewis (2006) 70% of the Bradford's Muslim community is from Pakistani-administered Kashmir.

Let me briefly discuss the conceptual understanding of the movement of people from Mirpur. Some academics with particular interest in the (high) migration from Mirpur (Dahya, 1988, Saifullah Khan, 1979) have explained this movement of people in terms of the chain migration and the historical links between Mirpur and Britain. However, Kalra (2000) mentions three theoretical approaches when considering post-Second World War immigration, namely, the 'world systems theory', 'push and pull' factors and the 'network theory'. Put simply, the first approach is the movement of population from areas of access to areas of demand; the second approach accounts for structural reasons such as poverty, famine or hope of a better life; the third approach being the existence of autonomous support structures that work as conduits, Khan (1979, p. 38) uses "village-kin network" in this regard.

It seems as if all these approaches were instrumental in case of immigration from Mirpur - the historical link as people from this region served on the ships as stokers as well as in great numbers in the British army – they could have been relied upon in case of shortage of workers as in the case of textiles industry – being in demand. Common deprivation, lack of proper work in farming or family trade, did not exchange much money, such dealings were bartered, cash was necessary currency for acquisition of any land or services. As Mirpuri community continues to be kin-based in its composition, *biraderi* network accommodated the movement to Bradford or other towns to lesser extent such as Rotherham or Sheffield. It can plausibly be assumed that all these three approaches played part to varying degrees that explains the high immigration of people from Mirpur to Bradford.

When the first immigrants from this area arrived in Bradford they treated their sojourn as contingent and not permanent. The 'myth of return' was conceived and later discredited as more and more families started to take root in this country but Bolognani (2007) warned that this myth was not completely dead but revitalised with the new geo-political significance in the face of global developments and movements of people and it seems to be the case to this day with regular travel between Bradford and Pakistan for many young people for a holiday, to meet older relative or for cultural experience. With the ease of travel and ability to afford these trips it is plausible to think that perhaps the myth is not dead yet.

This movement of people and the jettisoning of the old trades whether it was pottery, cloth-making or shoe-making, had the undesirable result of decimating the whole artistry that had been forte of the families for generations. Just as the industrial revolution affected the small manufacturers in Bradford, the emigration of young men, who would have learned the relevant skills from their elders abandoned the trades completely, which has been gradually replaced with Chinese products.

On arriving in Bradford, the first-generation Pakistanis including the small farmers and peasants found work in wool textiles industry and lived close-by in terraced houses, both, for the easy of travel to work and the cheap housing in the form of multiple-occupations that suited young single men.

The proliferation of this model created clustering and visibility of Pakistanis living together even now in different parts of the city and other similar northern towns. Din (2006) reminded us that this clustering can be a source of empowerment in terms of social and cultural relations and creates a sense of belonging. This self-help strategy remained contentious even with the succeeding generations when the discourses of integration and segregation became politically charged during the times of social turmoil.

The working conditions of wool textiles worker were studied by Fevre (1983, 1984) in his seminal work and noted that in 1978, although 13% of all direct production UK wool textiles workers were Asians but in Bradford this figure was 25% which dropped to 15% by 1979. Lewis (2012) also noted that between 1969 and 1980 some 80% of its textile jobs were lost which were the main source of employment for both local and the immigrant community. Fevre (1984) also revealed that the Asians were confined to the least desirable jobs in the mills, and the employers found it difficult to recruit labour for the low paid and dead-end jobs. Then there were also the hazards of working in dangerous conditions, unguarded machines, noise, dust, chemicals, unguarded machines etc. and claimed that it was generally accepted that British employers discriminated against Asian workers - this normality went unchallenged for some time.

Another example of exploitation by the employers was to employ Asian workers on faster machines on night shifts (Kalra, 2000) as women were barred by law from working night shifts so they worked on slower machines instead during the day.

Commenting on a 1977 report of the Manpower Studies that Asian boys were over-represented in textiles while it was the same for girls but in light assembly work, in Fevre's (1984) understanding this was attributed to racism and racial discrimination

which meant the racist beliefs led to discrimination – this being the case of racial division of workers or racialisation of workers in our present-day terms. The first-generation of Pakistanis had to endure these measures as normality without really challenging the injustices of these practices and the abuse of their rights as employees or how even to complain about them. Moreover, their regular trips back to Mirpur brought further complications to their employment as they would be deemed as having left voluntarily by the management hence disrupting their continued service. This point was made by Kalra (2000, p.110), “The lack of flexibility of the part of management was supported by the unions...”. and notes the unions stance towards black workers was that of general hostility regarding their demands for extended holidays to Kashmir or the leave for Eid – they conceived Asian workers as alien, foreign and temporary. Fazakarley (2014, p. 124) argues that “to accommodate Muslim demands for on-site prayer facilities, prayer breaks, Eid holidays, and leave to take holidays in countries of origin, were indeed regarded as creating significant difficulties for unions, employers, community relations organizations, and other workers”, these issues were resolved through the mediation of advisory groups set up on Race Relations.

This view changed as the younger generation of Asians started working in the mills as they had joined their fathers with other siblings as a consequence of the Commonwealth Immigration Act 1968 which barred voucher holders from Kashmir and forced families with children to join their fathers here. By the time the children of the men started work in the 70s in the textile mills, this industry had almost collapsed by the recession of late 70s. While there was competition for jobs on the open market some Asians decided to open up small businesses so “between 1978 and 1984 these small enterprises doubled from 600 to 1200” (Montgomery, 1997, p 105).

The next generation of Pakistani-origin youth in Bradford had been severely impacted by the de-industrialisation of the city as their parents, who supported the families financially, became unemployable with the collapse of the textiles industry- they lacked any transferrable skills or access to credible retraining opportunities (Fevre,1984) that may have helped them with alternative form of employment.

This section reviewed the Mirpuri diaspora, the embodiment of the concept of *biradari* (clan-based kinship), and the theorisation of migration and the subsequent spatial clustering. The working conditions in the textile mills were discussed as well as the long-term impact of de-industrialisation on former textile workers and their progeny.

### **Racist hostility and community responses**

This section discusses and analyses the key concepts of the Pakistani youth depiction in policy and public discourses from Pakistani to Asian to Black to Muslim as social events unfolded, youth mobilisation to counter the threat of far-right groups and the material deprivation.

The 70’s recession galvanised racist political movements with such groups as the National Front fuelling resentment among white working classes by taking advantage of the situation and blaming the blacks (all ethnicities) for the downturn. The Asian youth

responded to this threat by mobilising themselves into the 'black' political collective identity assisted by other anti-racists groups to counter racial violence and to challenge the related issues of police injustices and institutional racism. In 1978 Bradford Asian Youth Movement (AYM) was formed with more militant outlook, while similar organisations also sprung up in other towns and cities with sizable black (all ethnicities) population such as East London, Manchester, Luton, Birmingham, Sheffield and so on, with explicit aims of fighting racism and advocating self-defence (Ramamurthy, 2006).

Then on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1981, a group of 12 youth, latter dubbed as The Bradford 12 (included Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindu), who had been members of the newly formed United Black Youth League, were arrested on terrorist charges as petrol bombs were discovered on some waste site. The subsequent trial had "a significant impact on the political organisation of the young Asians throughout the country and, in asserting the right of a community to self-defence, the trial itself was to make legal history" (Ramammurthy, 2006, p. 53). Later the youth were acquitted after a nationwide mobilisation campaign by the trade unions, anti-racists and the community groups in their support. The AYM's lost their impetus soon afterwards as the young leaders were co-opted into government committees set up by to tackle the issues of ethnic disadvantage following an enquiry by Lord Scarman in 1981.

Other backdrop to Bradford is that the Pakistani community living in northern towns including Bradford, has had more of a collective ethnic representation, historically as Asians (Amin, 2013) or even 'blacks' as was evident from AYM's campaigns mentioned above, but the Rushdie Affair of 1989 and the race riots of summer 2001 changed the whole perception and with that, the portrayal of Muslims, not just in Bradford but throughout the western world. The very act of the book-burning of *The Satanic Verses* that took place in front of the City Hall in Bradford, was also seen as the turning point for the rebranding of Muslim masculinity from soft and effeminate to hard (Archer, 2003), these were troubling times for the youth of the day who had witnessed these events. Whether Pakistani, Black, Asian or Muslim, each representation embodied its own specific characterisation suited to the time and place.

This section reviewed perception of Pakistani youth in public and policy discourses due to social events associated with them, in the late 70's and their response by mobilising young people across the towns and cities in the UK to counter the threat of violence from the far-right groups.

### **Experiences of integration and cohesion**

This section discusses and analyses the key concepts by expanding the debate on the construction of Muslim youth, their social marginalisation and stigmatisation, the accusation of self-segregation, spatial living as clusters, conviviality, the explanation and theorisation of segmented assimilation, community cohesion, integration, multiculturalism, radicalisation, securitisation and spatial identities.

While ignoring the issues of material deprivation, the government commissioned a number of reports (Ouseley Report, 2001, Cattle Report, 2001) to review the



communities and the causes of the disturbances with explicit focus on race relations and the community cohesion.

The Muslim youths' representation in media and public discourses has continued to be reified as the new behaviours were linked with the emerging social issues. Bradford's Pakistani community became "synonymous with the Rushdie Affair and the 1995 and 2001 urban disturbances" (Sanghera & Thapar-Bjort, 2008, p. 543) with the male behaviour in the public sphere from being orderly to harassment and violent. Material deprivation was not wholly accepted or understood as a possible explanation but the Bradford Commission at the time, Macey (1999, p. 848) made the point that, "widespread social pressures of ill-discipline, poor education, overcrowded homes, poverty and unemployment might predispose young men, particularly those of minority ethnic origin, towards tension and violence".

The explanations for the riots, Alexander (2004) notes, focused on the issues of either, economic and social marginalization or the issues of cultural dysfunction so Cattle's (Cattle Report 2001) 'parallel' or 'polarised' lives, or Ouseley's (Ouseley Report 2001) 'self-segregation' were conceived in terms of cultural deficiency hence the subsequent legislations - which Thomas and Sanderson (2012, p. 160) noted as the "central to community cohesion has been a focus on 'contact' as a way of overcoming 'parallel lives."

In the same vein, Amin (2003, p. 461) states that

Common to a string of impoverished Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities across the Pennines and many other white working-class estates are acute problems of social stigmatization, low educational achievements, unpleasant housing and urban amenities, elevated health and drug-abuse problems, and pathology of social rejection.

These readings emphasise the need to focus on socio-economic needs of the disadvantaged communities to enthuse a sense of respect and equality in their diverse cultures.

Notwithstanding these concerns and against the backdrop of the events of 9/11, the 'riots' and the British Party's electoral successes at local and national level, Hussain and Bagguley's (2005) study of the British-Pakistani's self-identities and citizenship in Bradford sheds light on the assimilation processes in place – the second-generation Pakistani-origin youth were expressly British citizens, they 'belong' through their place of birth and that, "the identities of the second generation are hybridized, synthesizing South Asian culture, Islam and Western culture within their identities as British citizen" (2005, p. 420)

The Pakistani community thus became under the spotlight with such articulations as a community living "a series of parallel lives" (Phillips, 2006, p. 25), 'self-segregated lives' and 'enemy within'; the multicultural policies of the past governments did not escape criticism either and were blamed for its shortcomings. There were even wider debates about the fundamental incompatibility of Islam with Western liberal values leading to 'us' and 'them' demarcations. Bonino (2016, p. 224) expanded on this point as "the alleged

clash of civilisations between the Western world and the Muslim world has often translated into domestic cultural narratives of a conflict between ‘us’—the liberal British—and ‘them’—the ‘backward’ Muslims who are believed to threaten the social and cultural fabric of Great Britain...” These “negative branding” (Sanderson & Thomas, 2012, p. 1) would naturally put the Pakistani community on the defensive.

Similarly, the multicultural living in terms of segregation or the ‘parallel lives’ as spatial geography of Muslim clustering, has also taken a new meaning under the concept of conviviality - to live together or as a mode of being and interacting. Neal et al. (2013) discuss spatial and social living in the sense of dispersing away from inner cities and fragmenting along socio-economic lines. So, for Bradford they (Neal et al., 2013, p. 312) state that “The shifts in the formations of UK multi-culture have come about through a constellation of factors—migration trends, migration dispersal policy, social mobility, labour market demands—and have permanently disrupted the old maps which located multicultural populations with inner-city areas and the post-industrial Pennine towns.” They sound an optimistic note, “With an emphasis on lived experiences, contingent identifications, and amicable interactions, everyday multi-culture approaches disrupt the segregation narratives by repositioning debates about cultural difference away from panic, crisis, conflict, and apartness, suggesting instead the need to focus on the making of competent multicultural populations.” (ibid. p. 315).

The residential segregation has been studied in the past using an ecological hypothesis that has framed research in race relations terms, this approach has fed into political discourses and is being challenged by Kapoor (2013, p. 440) ) to state that “neighbourhood deprivation is significantly more important for considering inequalities in unemployment for ethnic minorities than the ethnic composition of an area”, suggesting the focus ought to be on material inequality and opportunities within a neighbourhood.

The concept of segmented assimilation is used to describe the diverse outcomes of social adaptation for immigrants in American society, in other words it’s a process of integrating socially, culturally or politically into some of the aspects of their new culture. Much of the theorising was formulated by Zhou and Portes (1993) in researching the experiences of second-generation immigrants and how they assimilate into different segments of society.

I shall be utilising this ‘segmented assimilation’ theoretical framework as a perspective to gain insights into, and the analysis of the experiences of second-generation Pakistani-origin youth in Bradford.

Let me overview the tenets of this theoretical framework first, – it states that the second-generation immigrant children can follow three distinct assimilation paths as they settle into the host country. They can either join the middle classes in the mainstream, which is an easy assimilation process; or they can join a downward assimilation into the poor section of the society where they can encounter, lack of opportunities, marginalisation, racism or ‘othering’ as in the case of Muslim youth due to their religion; lastly, they could have economic successes while still continuing to uphold their cultural values.

In addition to the above, there are the external factors prevailing in the host society that affect the pace of assimilation process. These tripartite factors are - the government’s

policies towards the immigrants, either friendly or hostile; the strength of prejudice towards the immigrants in the host society; and the presence of ethnic groups in the host community – these three factors are referred to as the ‘modes of incorporation’. These factors can inhibit or accelerate assimilation process as for instance, the existence of an already settled community can act as a resource for the newcomer, to accommodate, find work or even borrow money, as I discussed in section 2.3 on the chain migration of first-generation Mirpuris to Bradford. Portes and Zhou (1993, p. 83) describe as the “modes of incorporation consist of the complex formed by the policies of the host government; the values and prejudices of the receiving society; and the characteristics of the co-ethnic community”.

I have not yet come across any literature on the use of segmented assimilation perspective for analysis or the youth in the UK particularly the racialised groups, so I hope to make original contribution in this regard.

While there were both upwards and downwards routes to assimilation but the experience of some immigrants suggests that “a strategy of paced, selective assimilation may prove the best course for immigrant minorities” (Portes et al., 1993, p.96), which gives them the choice to embrace those aspects of adaption when necessary, to become part of the host society.

While emphasising on the paucity of research on the assimilation of Muslims in America, Asfari and Askar (2020, p. 217) found that “Muslims with higher educational attainment and household incomes are well-assimilated. We also found that respondents who identify themselves strongly as Muslim are less likely to assimilate, preferring instead to maintain close in-group ties” and claim the role of religion as a factor from this process is missing.

Collet-Sabe (2020, p. 513) applied the segmented assimilation theory in a European setting to the Muslim youth in Spain and found that “processes of downwards assimilation...discrimination from the native population; a segmented labour market; and some patterns of negative integration that have emerged as possible with the terrorist attack in Barcelona”.

The segmented assimilation theory has been criticised for some of the assumptions specific to American society and their relevance and applicability to other contexts but Vermeulen (2010, p. 1226) researching its wider applications, states that “in my opinion segmented assimilation theory is as applicable to Europe as to the USA, it is not that clear how much of the cross-national differences in the ways immigrants and their children integrate can be explained by it”.

Boucher (2013) contends that there are other global structural upheavals that compel social cohesion policy debates, including increased globalization, neoliberalism, economic uncertainties and technology. The overall objective for any government should be to endeavour to develop a harmonious society where all members have a sense of belonging, participation and inclusion and feel valued. But the community cohesion approach was conceived on the premise of a dysfunctional segregated (Muslim) community with divided loyalties that was unwilling to integrate and participate in society (Samad, 2013). Some blame was apportioned to the multicultural policies of the recent past which allegedly compounded this segregation process. But on bringing

the communities closer, Kundnani (2007, p. 24) cautions that “This integrationism draws on a wider anti-Muslim political culture associated with the ‘war on terror’, in which the focus is on ‘self-segregation’, alien values and forced assimilation, rather than on institutional racism”.

But for some (Meer & Modood, 2012) the critique of multiculturalism, a precursor to social integration, can be viewed in two ways, either, it facilitated social fragmentation and widened social divisions, or it distracted attention away from economic inequalities. Another approach to social integration was suggested as inter-culturalism, which was to promote greater interaction and dialogue between the diverse communities so it’s not ‘groupist’ and is more inclusive of different cultures. Any diversion from this Boucher (2013) also warns, will manifest in negative expressions such as nationalism, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments.

I was positive about cohesion as a new form of multiculturalism but that Prevent contradicted and threatened this vision as it treated British Muslims as a single essentialized community with increasingly securitised nature of the programme, “that Prevent has progressively side-lined and ‘crowded out’ cohesion practice at both the local and national level to the detriment of both counter-terrorism and community relations” (Thomas, 2014, p. 472).

These measures along with the war on terror have heightened stigmatization of young Muslims. This foregrounding of security over other socio-economic issues such as the social welfare, have given impetus to radicalisation which Ragazzi (2017) notes is manifested in a series of events including the London bombings (7/7/2005), the Lee Rigby murder (2013) and the joining of British subjects in the Syrian conflict. This radicalisation was perceived as an international terrorism threat acted through British citizens. Heath-Kelly (2013, p.405) argues that this framing of Muslim communities renders them vulnerable which “has the paradoxical effect of also securitising them concerning what they might produce, disciplinary governance thus merging with securitisation”.

But the city’s more astute Pakistani youth, through their own and social connections, are well aware of the aftermath of the 9/11 event and the London bombings (7/7) and its reverberations on them as young Muslims over the years- since then they have felt marginalised and alienated. The aggressive stance of western governments in parts of the Muslim world is seen by Kundnani (2012, p. 5) as a key factor in Muslim youths’ disillusionment with Britishness, yet the dominant narrative points to an individual ‘psychological or theological journeys’ when this is expressed in an extreme form as in the radicalisation process. Other writers have pointed to other factors such as the youth experiencing cultural conflict (Dwyer et. al, 2008), police harassment and institutional racism (Macey, 1999; Hussain & Bagguley, 2005).

The reality of the situation is that the Muslim youths are ordinarily engaged in the everyday struggles to earn a living and to evade being marginalized, as the consequences of such positioning can lead to a plethora of other social problems such as poor educational attainment, anti-social behaviour and deviance which is evident from the city’s less palatable statistics such as the prison population of Muslim youth. Lewis (2015) reminds us that many of the young Muslims from the working-class

backgrounds tend to live in the neighbourhoods considered to be the most deprived in England. Sanderson and Thomas, (2012, p. 4) explain this complexity (clusters) of living as “perceptions of spatial relationships, the nature of identifications with localities and urban centres, and the patterning of contact and interaction between self-identified groups is highly significant in shaping relationships between ‘communities’”, alluding to the type of employment available, the type of community or even the history of their migration, which cannot be dismissed as a mere self-segregation or living parallel lives or that they are unwilling to integrate.

This section reviewed the construction of Muslim youth, with discussion on their social marginalisation and stigmatisation. There was also the discussion of self-segregation and spatial living and how the use of segmented assimilation as a theoretical framework to gain insight and analyse Muslim youth experience in Bradford. The Pakistani-origin males’ daily enactment in integration, multiculturalism and spatial identities was discussed.

### **A suspect community**

This section discusses and analyses the key concepts of the labelling of a suspect community, the Prevent Duty and surveillance to counter the threat of radicalisation, homogenous conception of Asian groups, changing representation of the Muslim youth in the public and political spheres as cases of criminal activity traced them from misogynistic to hyper-masculinity.

The narratives of Muslims in the media and the public discourses, including the Pakistanis living in large numbers in the northern towns like Bradford, to be seen as a ‘suspect community’ just as the Irish had been before in the 70’s, all this at a time when a two-pronged policy approach, with the counter-terrorism measures was being reinforced on the one hand, along with the political rhetoric decisively on the community cohesion policies (Hickman et al., 2011) on the other.

The UK government’s over-arching policy framework in the form of CONTEST with the specific aims of, preventing violent extremism, preparation for an attack, protecting from such an attack and lastly the pursuing of terrorists, is an extension of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts of the 1970s when the intended targets were not Muslims (Gearon, 2018). The latest legislation in the form of Counter Terrorist and Security Act 2015 has placed a legal duty on education providers- schools, colleges and universities, among other public bodies to report any concerns on those individuals identified as at risk of being drawn into terrorism - the Prevent Duty; young Muslims in all these arenas would understandably feel aggrieved.

In view of this, while it is plausible to see the implementation of counter-terror measures to deal with any perceived threats, the execution, the focus and the aftermath of such legislations has been interrogated. Bonino (2016,) provides enough voices to support the consensus on the consequences of the legislation, that is - widening the net includes wider Muslim communities at the exclusion of others, further stigmatising and alienating Muslims through extensive surveillance and aggravating ‘us’ and ‘them’

dichotomy. The Muslim view in this regard, is articulated by Alam and Husband (2013, p. 248) as the “Muslims saw PREVENT as an assault on their integrity as law-abiding citizens; and Muslim workers required to implement the policy saw it as divisive, as their trusted status within their communities was potentially being exploited to further intrusive policies of control and surveillance”. Criticism is also levelled at the dangers of alienating young Muslims as ‘them’ for more sinister development, since the social discrimination, cultural alienation and political disenfranchisement would play into the hands of violent (Islamist) recruiters as has been the case. Bonino (2016) suggests that the West’s preoccupation with the state ‘security syndrome’ needs reviewing to find alternative ways of dealing with terror threats without jeopardising community relations and social cohesion that is built on trust, and disenchanting young people.

The Prevent Duty also came under scrutiny with critics arguing that it would accentuate the stigmatisation of Muslim communities in educational settings too. The engagement of education professionals with the Prevent Duty and the foregrounding of such vague notions as the British values is seen as problematic

Perceptions that Prevent as a whole generates discriminatory structures of surveillance on Muslim communities and that the duty is liable to encourage the securitisation of educational spaces.... promotion of so called fundamental British values has been a particular focus of criticism due to concerns that it lends itself to the stigmatisation and pathologisation of groups of students or sets of perspectives that are deemed somehow less British.” (Busher et al., 2019, p. 441)

The dilemma here, for the authorities such as the FE colleges is to strike a balance between the state security concerns and the human rights principles so that the individual communities (Muslims) do not feel subjected to intrusive surveillance and control or even treated as suspect communities.

The Asians as a wider group are diverse in their immigration history of settlement, their social, cultural, religious and political composition. Goodey (2001, p. 433) cautioned that, “if young Asians were faced with low educational and employment prospects over a long period of time, in combination with a rise in the number of young Asians in the population, then an increase in this group’s offending could be predicted”. Here economic wellbeing is perceived to be the key to social wellbeing, therefore it should take priority.

The image of Muslim youth over the years has transmuted to the embodiment of masculinity that is misogynistic, dangerous and threatening with propensity to radicalisation and Islamic terrorism. Sanghera and Thapar-Bjorkert (2012, p. 592) sum up this description as,

a threat to British ways, British society and democracy; as innately different and dangerous; as wedded to religious, political and cultural identities that predispose them to violence and disrespect for non-Islamic alternatives; choosing to live separately and maintaining their primordial identities, inwardness and patriarchal control

Yet another extension of 'hyper-masculinity' is added by Mirza (2017, p. 195) who states that, "Muslim young men have 'become hyper-masculinized through a discourse that identifies [them] increasingly with disaffection, criminality, violence and terror and leaves little space for alternative subjectivities.'" This is mainly on the back of sex abuse cases against underage white girls in Rochdale, Bradford and Keighley among some other cities with large Muslim populations. One can argue that the tabloid media perpetuates these descriptions in the main by criminalising Muslim youth. It seems as if the Muslim designation started with the onset of the Rushdie Affair and transmuted as other social narratives regarding Muslim communities became more pronounced including the segregation debate, the radicalisation or the sex abuse cases leading to the interrogating of Muslim loyalty, their belonging and their place in British society.

This section reviewed the labelling of a 'suspect community' and the imposition of the Prevent Duty, deploying surveillance means to counter the perceived threat of radicalisation from the Muslim youth who have been configured disparately over time.

### **Pakistani youth in Bradford now – their specific educational and employment experiences**

This section discusses and analyses the key concepts of the human capital in educational attainment, how ethnic penalty or ethnic capital affects the young people's educational achievements or disadvantage in the labour market; how the social cohesion with increased civic participation or young women's increased participation with education are examples of segmented assimilation despite the distrust of the Muslim youth through securitisation agenda; and the income and racial segregation leads to disadvantage.

In a recent report, *Overcoming Poverty of Hope*, by the children's charity, Barnardo's, in which Codling (2019, p. 5) claims that "young ethnic minorities believe employment, the economy and education are the most concerning issues for their future", while cautioning uncertainty in the coming years for the BAME youth. Among the recommendations for the government to address is, that all children, young people and parents have access to education.

While education has always been valued for its potential to transform people's lives by furnishing them with skills and experiences in the form of human capital that help them contribute to the labour market, this potential has to have certain preconditions for it to be realised fully in practice – the notions of aspiration, motivation, inhibitors, ethnic penalty are all part of this process. But the appropriation of education by different social and ethnic groups is a complex arena. Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera (2010) claim that social reproduction theories fall short of explaining the link between class and educational aspirations in working-class Pakistani Muslims because of the intersection of social class, gender and ethnicity, although social class is also acknowledged as a factor in continuing a child's post-compulsory schooling (Din, 2006) as in FE colleges.

But social cohesion remains problematic in places like Bradford as there are structuralist issues of inequalities and insecurities on the one hand and culturalist on the other. Boucher and Samad (2013, p. 197) describe social cohesion as "as the demise

of multiculturalism, marking a return to assimilation and framed by material and social insecurity, and fear of the Other". This view is borne out of culturist (deficit) model following the riots in 2001, with segregated communities living parallel lives, lacking civic engagement and having divided loyalties - the focus was on "contact" (Thomas and Sanderson, 2012, p. 160) to overcome parallel lives issue. While there is still some spatial segregation, there is also evidence of increased civic participation with evolving sense of Britishness among Pakistani communities as Boucher and Samad (2013) found from their study of social change in Europe. As for the students in FE colleges, the Bradford College promotes United Values which are reflective of the principle values incorporated in Equality Act 2010 and part of the Prevent strategy, here cultural diversity might be missing but at least there are some common values which can safely be shared.

The political understanding of aspirations is challenged by Shain (2012, p. 160) who notes that the "culture of aspiration...was reinforced by neoliberal education policies such as parental choice, is but an illusion for the majority". Berrington et al. (2016) make the distinction between expectations and aspiration, a measure used in students' progress in schools and colleges - 'aspirations' reflect the students desires for a certain level of educational attainment while 'expectation' is what is likely to happen in future. In contrast to Muslim girls, in an earlier study by Ahmad (2001) it was found that perceived familial obligation and individual aspirations were the motivations behind entering higher education, and that despite the patriarchal structures, "the pursuit of higher education, status, social mobility, and a career are not viewed as being inimical to cultural or religious ideals". (Ahmad, 2001, p.149).

In the case of wider BME communities, Berrington et al. (2016, p. 749) on discussing educational aspirations, emphasise, the significance of parent-child relationship, the parents' engagement with their children's schoolwork while noting "the impact of occupational class upon educational aspirations is similar for all ethnic groups", implying the educational aspirations are equally open to all social classes.

But the pragmatic approach by parents for judging the desirability of a school has been to look at the examination results, truancy statistics which are closely related to bullying - "bullying was common in all schools and many young people were affected by it" (Din, 2006, p. 59). Social capital in the form of bonding in the Muslim families is derived from ethnic and religious identities and practices whereas the bridging capital is to engage with wider civic arrangements. This practice extends to the wider Pakistani community as Thapar-Bjorkert and Sanghera (2010, p. 258) observed the Pakistani community in Bradford, "The neighbourhoods and wider co-ethnic communities also played an important role in terms of moulding the educational aspirations...", older siblings also serve as important role models in providing support and motivation to succeed in education, having command of the English language.

But the low socio-economic status leaves Muslim youngsters in a position of disadvantage, and to progress in education the parents' role has to be of paramount importance as Abbas (2002, p.87) found limitations here too, they "possess varying levels of knowledge and experience of the way in which education is best acquired", such as the quality of schooling, qualification levels and assessments and so on. Conversely, Modood (2004, p. 101) argues that cultural capital does not explain the educational attainments of some disadvantaged groups as the parents espouse high



educational ambitions with enforced good behaviour, “Hence perhaps the appropriate term should be ‘cultural-social capital’; or perhaps, ‘ethnic capital’” instead of (Bourdieu’s) cultural capital that explains the middle-class educational achievements (also Shah et al., 2010). But low level of human capital can leave youngsters in a disadvantaged and precarious position.

While the cultural dependency on parental advice and guidance is a good thing, its value is only worth when parents can offer relevant and timely advice that enhances young people’s life chances. But See et al. (2011, p.95) state that, “A high value placed on education, strong parental support and positive family influence were determining factors in participation in schools, in post-16 education and in further and higher education”. This is also in contrast to the sociological explanations of the link between class and educational aspirations mentioned above.

Whilst the cultural influence on Asian youth is pronounced, but for the drivers of attainment in the classroom, Frumkin and Koutsoubou (2013) studied BAME group learners in three FE colleges and found that the teaching staff’s knowledge of students’ culture and their witnessing of the role models, who support, engage and motivate students, were crucially important motivators. Wilkinson (2014, p. 421) argues at length, the merits of teaching history as a subject, to galvanise students’ interest and engagement:

history in school has great, if as yet under-realised, potential to help Muslim boys achieve both internal (intellectual, spiritual and affective) and external (instrumental and civic) success in preparation for them to make an engaged and informed contribution to local, national and international society

So, it seems the teaching of a subject along with its content and the delivery that catches students’ imagination can be rewarding.

In explaining the young British Pakistanis educational achievements, Shah et al. (2010) draw parallel with Bourdieu’s concepts of economic/cultural capitals and introduce ‘ethnic’ capital to combat the effects of structural constraints in selective school systems and racialized labour markets. Ethnic capital ameliorates social class disadvantage in ethnic minorities by parental encouragement of educational achievement and high career aspirations for their children. In practice however, this is realised by a strong “adult–child relationships, transmission of values and aspirations related to education, and enforcement of norms and sanctions” (Shah et al., 2010, p. 1123), all these are coached in the home environment. Community organisations on the other hand including mosques with strict regime of conduct and the community centres, facilitate the accessing of cultural capital too, albeit at the wider social level.

As effective education does involve entering the education system earlier on in life with the appropriate parental support, any attempts to obtain entry to a selective school may prove to be fruitful but in practice most attend local comprehensive schools (Abbas, 2002).

Some authors (Mac an Gaill & Haywood, 2015) have argued for a sociological perspective such as the class, rather than ethnicity, which effectively becomes minority experience. The powerlessness in a class structure renders any social group politically

and economically feeble and ineffective. While the young Muslims remain religiously active in the face of local, national and geo-political processes they do however, continue to configure prominently as having high levels of unemployment, over-representation in prison population, poor housing and lowest levels of social mobility. Archer (2008) previously argued that these socio-economic inequalities impact Muslim boys' education the most adversely.

It might be worth a brief glance at the other side of the gender, since the young Muslim women's education and employment has been problematic with the first generation due to social attitudes to the women's role in the labour market, as this was traditionally placed on the shoulders of the men in the family. But as the migrant communities settled down these social and familial barriers to education and employment began to lift gradually to the point where women were actively encouraged so long as the family honour was preserved – this could also be viewed as segmented assimilation.

Dale et al. (2002) identified several ingredients which were instrumental for the educational attainments of Asian groups namely, the embedded cultural value of education, migrant parents' high aspirations for their children and perseverance against ethnic penalty, as if there was an implicit acceptance of discrimination in the labour market. Another study of ethnic groups by Brekke, (2014, p. 37) found that "ethnic penalty among children of immigrants in Norway is not more pronounced among school dropouts than among school completers". Then, irrespective of one's achievements, the level of ethnic perception remains the same.

The young women's views on career aspirations on the other hand are from, being independent and "something to fall back on in the event of their future partner being unable to provide for them or of the marriage ending" (Dale et al., 2002, p. 953) later shifted to "enhancing social mobility to self-fulfilment and personal development." (Hussain et al., 2017, p. 409), while still preserving social and religious obligations – a more personal inclination.

Following her research in a secondary school, Archer argued that the dominant educational discourses of 'the ideal pupil' excludes minority ethnic pupils as "minority ethnic pupils are afforded only the narrowest spaces within which to negotiate and experience forms of 'success' and to embody and perform their gendered, racialised and classed identities" (2008, p. 103) alluding to the lack of concern for the specificity of ethnic pupils in schools. But a partial solution is suggested by Shain's (2016) study into how socio-economic disadvantage can be compensated by schools through policy interventions in funding and structural changes which can be helpful in the shorter term but the schools cannot address the wider social inequalities.

The 'Overcoming Poverty of Hope' report by Codling (2019) mentioned in the previous section heightened the worries young people have for their future and the belief that the government is not listening to their concerns. This issue of mistrust was also felt by the Young Muslims who saw the government's securitization approach as the "social cohesion initiatives by the logics of surveillance resulted in a breakdown of trust between large sections of the British Muslim population and the agents of the state." (Alam & Husband, 2013, p. 235). The previous depiction of Muslims following the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks as cultural outsiders or self-segregating, living in residential clusters and

threatening neighbourhood stability, is now seen differently as increasing number are moving to suburban spaces spawning new interethnic co-existence.

Wilson (2016, p. 1450), calls for policy change to create employment prospects for the black youth as “income segregation is coupled with racial segregation, low-income blacks cluster in neighbourhoods that feature disadvantages along several dimensions including joblessness”. It is claimed the black youths can easily be lured into drug trafficking or violent crime as a consequence of which the ordinary residents become innocent victims of criminal offences in poor inner-cities.

This section reviewed the concept and use of human capital with associated concepts such as ethnic capital or ethnic penalty and how they affect young people’s educational achievements and the social cohesion has increased civic participation which is indicative of segmented segregation despite the problems of securitisation.

### **Pakistani youth identifications, youth culture and lived experiences of ‘citizenship’**

This section discusses and analyses the changing Muslim youth conception since the urban disturbances of 2001, it also discusses complexities around the notion of identity, its formation, self, ascribed, spatial, individual and the group; how integration is linked to acculturation which is an implicit form of assimilation; the commonality of living in northern towns with high levels of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination; the role of *biradari* in social and political activity; reconciliation of British values with Muslim representation as ‘other’; the increasing use of English language as indicative of segmented assimilation; and how the social marginalisation and racial harassment can shape religious identity.

As the urban disturbances of 2001 gave rise to such articulations as the communities living ‘parallel lives’, ‘self-segregated’, having ‘divided loyalties’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction, ‘civil disengagement’, along with questions about the incompatibility of Islam with western values and the dangers of practicing such a faith - all these discourses point to the rightful placement of Muslims in wider British society, as citizens of this country.

The subsequent policy interventions have been in place for a while now, but the current youth may have a different view of their practice of faith or their Englishness with passage of time. Citizenship is understood as a person’s membership of a state where they have the legal right to participate in the national democratic processes and enjoy civil, political and social privileges – but it can be granted or revoked subject to certain conditions.

The access to citizenship is shaped by Britain’s imperial past, claim Kapoor and Narkowicz (2019, p. 667), “... it is contemporary race and imperialist politics, materialised in terms of immigration and counter-terrorism policing, that shape the borders, boundaries and qualifications to citizenship in the present.” Among other criteria such as the residency or proficiency in the English language, there is the ‘character’ proviso, which can be used as exclusionary mechanism for those not

deemed suitable for the privilege. Hence, any perceived suspicions, real or imaginary can be viewed as a criminal tendency to construct a bad character for racialised exclusions, so the construction of citizenship becomes racialised.

For Muslims, being one, “is a matter of community membership and heritage; for others, it is a few simple precepts about self, compassion, justice and the afterlife; for some others, it is a worldwide movement armed with a counter-ideology of modernity; and so on.” (Modood, 2010, p. 164), so there are multiple ways of identifying as Muslim. This diversity along with other complexities such as the immigration history give rise to a unique cultural identity. But to live in harmony with other cultures, a multicultural equality has to be achieved through socio-economic opportunities and shared public spaces embodying equality of respect and dignity. It is the street and the neighbourhood “that set the context for the accumulation of social capital and the stage for everyday lives and experiences of Britishness for many” (Phillips, 2014. P. 71). But the young Muslims understanding of their community’s progress is “often tempered by an awareness of on-going institutionalised discrimination and politicalised discourses that variously cast them as ‘marginal’, ‘securitised’, ‘failed’ or simply ‘not good enough’ British citizens.” (Ibid, p. 72).

In this way you have, “complementary notions of unity and plurality, and of equality and difference, but the idea of respect for the group self-identities that citizens value is central to each.” (Modood, 2010, p.161). Therefore, a national identity can be built by individual while valuing their own respective identities.

Social cohesion in the form of integration emerged as a policy response to cultural diversity following the urban disturbances but some see ‘multiculturalism’ as a better alternative to integration (Modood, 2010) as the notion itself accommodates cultural differences rather than eliminate them. But Bowskill et al. (2007, p. 3) state that, “‘integration’ has emerged as an idealized response to diversity according to social psychological frameworks investigating acculturation in a variety of cultural contexts”, and it conceals more implicit assimilationism with the de-racialised language of social cohesion. Schneider and Crul (2010, p. 1144) add that, “‘integration’ predominantly carries the implicit ideal of (a minimum degree of) cultural homogeneity especially referring to language”, emphasising the use of language as conduit of social contact between different cultural groups. As an ideal, integration must achieve educational parity and access to labour market, this way ethnic self-marginalisation can hopefully be prevented. While assimilation is not explicit in integration debate, it is understood to refer to extend immigrants or their off springs become similar. A “‘successful assimilation’ thus has mainly meant to measure the degree of incorporation into patterns of economic and social ‘success’” (Schneider & Crul, 2010, p. 1144). The notion of segmented assimilation, not much in the British context, alludes to the connection between types of acculturation and socio-economic mobility – some examples of this will be discussed later.

The experiences of Muslims residing in northern towns who share the same timing of first migration, the ethnic character and the type of employment are somewhat similar to Bradford hence the impact of any socio-economic challenges is likely to be the same. While there is vast diversity in the Muslim communities living in different parts of the UK

such as arriving at different points in time from different parts of the world, the reasons for their migration, the socio-economic background of these Muslims and the contemporary challenges they encounter as they settle down in the host environment. For the purpose of this review, some of the northern towns exhibit similarities that pose similar challenges and experiences for the Muslim youth in our study. Four towns, as a case in point, Oldham, Rochdale, Burnley and Bradford witnessed the violent confrontations between the police and the Muslim youth (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) in 2001 and the reasons why in these towns and not others like Birmingham, with much larger Muslim community, is a conundrum that has been explained in numerous terms. Demographically, according to 2011 census, 18% of the Oldham's population is Muslims with 17% being Pakistani and Bangladeshis combined, while Rochdale has 11% Pakistanis, Burnley has 10% and Bradford has 20% Pakistanis (25% Muslims). All these 'mill towns' attracted migrant workers from the Indian sub-continent in the 60's but over the year fell into decline giving rise to high unemployment rates in all these towns against national figures. These urban areas represented high levels of structural inequality and high levels of deprivation, disadvantage and discrimination (Hamid, 2011) which included overcrowded housing, racism and the demonization of young Muslim males and lack of political representation

Bradford's Asian politics continue to be dominated by the *biraderi* influence, that has its roots in patronage-based community politics. This practice has undesirable effect of disenfranchising many young Muslims who feel frustrated and not listened to by the main political parties. Due to a combination of factors such as the dominant role of the community elders, the protest against the Labour Party and exclusion of the women from electoral process, George Galloway, a Respect Party candidate in 2012 in Bradford West, who campaigned on anti-war, anti-establishment slogan which appealed to the young masses particularly. Peace and Akhtar (2015, p. 24) claim that, the "Respect's successes in Bradford were again a protest vote, though this time based on more localised issues and in particular, the perceived dominance of *biraderi* politicking.", the community leaders and even the Labour Party was seen as corrupt and unrepresentative, though there were many councillors of Pakistani heritage on the council at that point in time. This is the first time when politically motivated young Muslims showed their strength at the ballot box in such large numbers. This is what is needed most from all individuals and groups to participate in a civil society so that their interests are politicized to influence decision-making process to feel empowered as agents of change.

But the Muslim experience since 2001, has been an amalgamation of racism, social exclusion for the community in the first instance, and individually impacted upon by the incessant global events (Orofino, 2016) such as Iraq, Afghanistan or Syria. The new aggressive foreign policies aptly referred to as the new imperialism, "framed by an orientalist approach to warfare" (Qureshi & Zeitlyn, 2012, p. 112) causing destruction and chaos while alienating a lot of Muslim youth globally. Edmunds (2010) notices an orientation from transnationalism to globalism amongst the young British Muslims who are more concerned about human rights in their political outlook while remaining religious but "more 'local' and differentiated in their political participation than their predecessors" (Edmunds, 2010, p. 234).

The young Muslim men have therefore been "tainted with the brush of 'home grown terrorism', radicalization, extremism and latterly even sexual deviance." (Qureshi &

Zeitlyn, 2012, p. 113). In such a prevailing environment it is difficult to promulgate the ideas of fundamental British values while “schools and teachers [are placed] as agents of state surveillance and BME pupils as the potential targets of their new civilising mission” (Alexander & Weekes-Bernard, 2017, p. 490).

As an example, if the objective for the diverse communities is to live in social harmony then the depiction of Muslims in the recent ‘grooming’ cases in the media, as a racial crime threat, which will impact on community relations, would support populist racism and lead to hate crimes is almost given. Cockbain (2013, p. 23) explicates that “the risks of a narrow race-based construct of grooming are examined and shown to include fuelling racist rhetoric, distorting policy and practice and exacerbating community tensions”.

Kundnani (2007) had suggested that an integrated society can only be built on universal human rights values, justice and democracy where we all have shared political struggles. But our current combination of integration and securitization has resulted in greater control and containment in the government’s approach to governance (Sunier, 2012).

This ‘othering’ would denote rejection of British values (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013) along with the understanding of a community as alienated, deviant, underachieving, and as potential terrorists (Dwyer et al., 2008). The past policies of multiculturalism unfairly came under fire for exacerbating the rift between the different communities and causing this conundrum.

Despite the rhetoric that the young people of Pakistani-heritage are not being quite British, and hence ‘others’; it is imperative to elicit their own understanding of their identity rather than to view them with a politically imposed one. This obviously has implications for their role and place in the wider British society.

The notion of identity is not an easy concept to specify as it is socially constructed and contested, it transmutes under social and cultural experiences that renders it “nebulous, intangible and in the process of change” (Bhatti, 2011. p. 84). This flexibility was echoed earlier, by Hall, who claimed that the ethnic identity was fluid and malleable and that it cannot be essentialised, with the added proviso that it is also concerned with power, agency and representation (Hall, 1997) – these elements help to theorise identity as it is constructed and performed by various groups including the young Pakistani males in their daily lives as students or just social actors going about their normal business for instance education or work. For instance, in Bradford they “have a strong sense of their local identity, and while typically having a strong affiliation to their neighbourhood, they additionally have a clear sense of their shared Bradfordian identity” (Alam, & Husband, 2013, p.81) and this is for familiarity with the place, safety and where they can their own culture.

Anthias (2016) elaborates on the notion, as a form of practice, as lived everyday-performativity, and the “shared spheres of being”, (2016, p. 175) similar with others, be it cultural, religious belief, values, ethnicity or class. This is where Hall’s power, agency and representation as mentioned above complicate things by applying the notion of identity to the politics of race, ethnicity, class or other social categories.

Parekh (2008)'s understanding of identity was rather similar to Hall's who argued that for analytical convenience, the human identity could be viewed as three-dimensional, instead of Hall's *power* [my emphasis], we now have the individual identity - how they express themselves as human beings; in place of *representation*, we have the social identity - to do with ethnic, national, religious or occupational attachments and finally; for the *agency*, we have the personal - one's diverse self-hood. They both seem to be saying the same thing about identity but using different terms and emphasis.

The cultural with social intermingling of identity empowers members of a particular group for collective action; they may identify themselves in cultural, bi-cultural or even national terms (Hutnik, 2010). Bourdieu's concept of habitus as a disposition an individual has, can arguably be applied here, though tacitly, where 'religion' can be mobilised as a power resource, like a 'cultural' capital to construct gender identity to "be transformed to other forms of capital" Ramji, 2007, p. 1175). This empowers individuals entering any social settings (fields) to gain acceptance by being part (doxa) of that group and not judged as 'other'.

On the self-perception, Mythen (2012) in his research with young Pakistani Muslims, found that there were three processes that maintained identity, these were delineated as solidity, elasticity and resilience, whereas Bhabha (1990) claimed that through continual negotiation of cultural performances, a new form of hybrid identities evolve, "opening up fresh political perspectives that possess the capacity to challenge the hegemonic ideologies" (Mythen, 2012, p. 395). One of them was, what Bhabha (1990) called the third space, where in-between identities manifest in multiple ways ranging from generational differences to upholding faith in secular context (Modood, 2002) like the young Muslims, as well as cultural place between the traditions of Britain and Pakistan, straddling both cultures; this is not necessarily a cultural conflict.

But being in their comfort zone, the young people's leisurely preoccupation in Bradford is, with 'chai' (tea) stands, sheesha bars - mainly for the boys, and the dessert bars - mainly for the girls, and with the increased pressure to project a 'cool' image, by leasing expensive cars which sits neatly with the culture and the economics of Pakistani households. These young people save money by lodging with their parents that helps with the affordability of owning a good car. The car has thus become a symbol of masculinity and identity that has both power and meaning (Alam & Husband, 2013) for these young people. Alam (2018, p. 284) argues that "Given the current debates around masculinity, faith and ethnicity, this is especially significant and forms a counter to some of the dominant, essentialized and often homogenous readings of British Muslim identity". He further explains that the road is a vibrant space with fluid 'contact zone' that offer many diverse encounters for these young people.

The young people's involvement in drugs and the gang culture is such that the use of skunk cannabis is linked to their living conditions in deprived neighbourhoods afflicted by poor housing, low income, low educational attainments and unemployment (William et al. 2017). The drug use is becoming acceptable in some subpopulations where it was not the case before on religious or cultural grounds, which could be due to the influence by the wider British social norms. So, it appears as if the behaviour and attitudes towards the drug use, that is the skunk cannabis, has changed. But on the gang culture, Alam & Husband (2013, p. 117) state unequivocally that "There is little empirical evidence in the British context and in particular on 'Pakistani gangs' in the

UK”, and it would include Bradford. These debates are contextual and contingent but likely to change with time as social conditions change.

But some of the Muslim youths’ delinquent behaviour is attributed to the lack of moral education provided by the local religious teachers (Bolognani, 2009), the collapse of family structures, exacerbated by the poor parenting and the lack of interaction with wider social world, but this view fails to explain the coexistence of deviance and success stories within the same families where some siblings may complete a university education while another member in the same family will be embroiled in a criminal activity.

And for northern deindustrialised towns like Bradford where the temptation for illicit activity is greater than licit, Webster and Qasim (2018, p. 2) state, “An intergenerational shift from the availability of local high-waged, skilled, and secure textile work to low-waged, precarious, service work presented them with a series of problems and opportunities, leading them to reject licit wage labour and embrace illicit entrepreneurial criminality”, and all this while “while experiencing labour market segmentation and discrimination, and concentrated spatial poverty” Of course, this applies to those who may chose the illicit route, while many others will happily see this as an opportunity to participate in legitimate labour markets. A low-wage economy with job insecurity such as that in Bradford has potential to generate economic inequalities such as prolonged unemployment and endemic poverty.

While the prison experience for young Muslims is such that their social integration after release becomes impossible as “many find that life away from prison can be equally, if not more challenging than the life they experienced in prison”. (Qasim & Webster, 2020, p. 399), this is claimed because of their social relations and the discriminatory structural constraints upon them as Muslims.

One such category is the term ethnicity which is one part of identity and the focus of much research (Din, 2006), is “situationally defined, produced in the course of social transactions that occur at or across the ethnic boundary in question” (Jenkins. 2003, p.59), others describe it as “identities-as-context” (Ahmad & Evergeti, 2010, p. 1714) where identities are internally and externally generated, for example, to avoid the proxy description of a ‘terrorists’ by Muslims in some social situations. While Mirza (2013. p. 12) concurs that “resisting being ‘named’ by employing multiple identities that link outward toward a global transnational identity constitutes an embodied reaction to endemic racism and exclusion faced in Britain”.

The young Muslims negotiation of their Muslim and British aspect of their identity has been studied by Franceschelli and O’Brien (2015) applying Bourdieu’s theory of habitus and social fields. The habitus in this case, is derived from families through religious and cultural influences and changes when in contact with non-Muslim fields. But they also caution, “Both habitus and identity are contested notions because of their tendency to amalgamate and unify individual dispositions into single entities running the risk of reducing their complexities.” (Ibid. p. 712).

In my study of the young people, ‘positioning’, akin to identity, was another useful concept to consider that “constructs people as engaging in dynamic social relationships in which each participant creates and makes available positions for themselves and



others to take up, ignore or resist” (Phoenix, 2005, p. 105), this alludes to non-essentialist and flexible positioning in social situations such as the college settings where diversity of views juxtapose. If we accept the notion of identity in its multifarious form, that is being different, then we must also embrace cultural diversity in our contemporary society and learn to deal with, and the management of this difference separately to create an inclusive society that does not just reproduce inequalities but additionally promote socio-economic mobility for all. The youth of Pakistani-origin in Bradford are dynamic in all walks of life and receptive of other cultures. So, for the Pakistani Muslim youth, diversities can plausibly be recognised on the basis of location, positionality, the global and intersectional nature of social nexus as discussed above – those Pakistanis living in deprived urban slums will be noticeably different from professional or business elites but the British-born Pakistanis consider themselves as British than Pakistanis and prefer to speak English when conversing with their peers (Din,2006.)

Racialisation or direct racial discrimination can impinge on one’s British identity as Basit (2009) found that the young Muslims identity as British citizens was seriously compromised due to racial harassment after the terror attacks in the west, these issues are discussed further below. This anxiety was spotted by Mac an Gaill and Haywood (2015) who cite Miller (2006), who had discussed the emergence of fear as a result of divisive otherness - the state’s claim that young men were unsuccessful in being part of ‘Britishness’. This submission was challenged by Isakjee whose contention was that the social identity was fundamentally intertwined with space and place thus challenging the alienation from ‘Britishness’ as a sense of belonging was characterised by a contrast between their everyday lives, which are underpinned by attachments to local spaces and emphasise their inclusion, and the divisive political discourses that they encountered, which marked out the potential for their exclusion (Isakjee, 2016, p. 1338).

But Hopkins (2011) claims, that the minorities may well define themselves in dual terms, at national or ethnic level - superordinate and subgroup level respectively; and cautioned that these expressions should not raise any suspicions on their loyalty as British citizens.

For Anthias (2011, p. 14), “the need to consider diversity must therefore incorporate not just a concern with the binaries of identity and difference but also the articulation of social divisions and identities”, and that these include ethnic diversity, transnational migration and racialisation. She also proposed that these social divisions can best be understood by incorporating the criss-crossing of gender, with ethnicity and class – she called it an ‘intersectional frame’, a tool used for theorising identity elsewhere, although the coinage of the term has been attributed to Crenshaw (1994). The inference from such approach point to the axes of power, where “these axes of power are manifested in unequal social places, although they do not derive from within them exclusively” (Anthias, 2011, p. 214).

This theme is invoked by Coker (2013, p. 54) who points to the global influence and reiterates that, due to transnational trade and politics of globalisation the “individuals are increasingly becoming products of both the ways of thinking and doing in their immediate micro-social environments and the macro-structures of the international community” – he employed the term glocalization.

As young Muslims are inherently part of diasporic identities that cut across and displace national boundaries which create new forms of belonging and challenging the association of identities in relation to place (Anthais 2016) and articulated according to the given social context – they too can be seen as 'gloconized'.

The young Muslims' response to social marginalisation and racial harassment as mentioned above, is to identify with Islam which provides a sense of strong stable universal identity. Another research finding (Kunst et al., 2012) on the role of religious identities in European context, in 2002, found that religious stigma influences Muslims' perceived discrepancy between religion and being member of a nation, "they [the Muslims] seem to be torn between their willingness to become integrated members of the nation and their wish to maintain their religious affiliation." (Kunst et al., 2012, p. 529). But the experience of British Pakistanis in Yorkshire after the London bombings in July 2005, was that they "...were proud to be British and hostile to 'extremism', with many mixing with non-Muslims." (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013, p. 44). Manning (2010, p.97) on the other hand argues conversely - that a more serious culture clash may lie in the refusal of the majority to accept the minority as British, "and it would be useful to think about how people see others as much as how they see themselves." It seems as if there is need for research into the current British Muslim identities that transcend the 9/11 or 7/7 scenarios, most have been conducted in the light of those two events

If identity is seen as a process then by embracing Islam, "young people have been able to make and assert choices, in some cases rejecting cultural traditions and norms, in others challenging parents while maintaining their goodwill and staying within the bounds of religious respectability" (Phillips et al., 2020, p. 2).

Identity has been theorised in various ways, in social-psychological approach to ethnic identity, identity is viewed as a process and an outcome, where an individual has a self-definition of his or her values and beliefs including political, social and personal. Within this framework, according to Merino and Tileaga (2011, p. 87)

studying identity implies assuming and responding to 'otherness' in terms of the qualities that differentiate an individual's group characteristics from another in which the perceived 'degree of difference' between individuals is mainly derived from group membership factors as values, beliefs, norms and patterns of interaction

Lack of commitment to these domains can lead to dysfunctional or negative roles. Frings et al. (2020, p. 172) while studying student identities in higher education, state that the identity incompatibility, ("difficulties that arise as a result of differences between identities related to groups") can affect academic outcomes for BAME students.

Identity formation can be consolidated by normative influences as they provide a framework for modifying behaviour in line with cultural and religious demands that can be challenged when there is conflict with personal interests. (Hassan et al., 2019)

Berry (1990) on acculturation theory, describes how identity is employed in diverse society with four possible options for participating - separation, assimilation, integration and marginalisation- you reject the mainstream society and identify with your own

ethnicity (Separation); you reject your own ethnicity and identify with the mainstream group (Assimilation); identity with both (Integration) or reject both (Marginalisation).

Holliday (2008) takes up the issue from the social action theory perspective, where culture is assumed to be in dialogue with social structure so the cultural reality (profession, religion, class, political beliefs etc.) of an individual can remain with them as they move between different cultures so there can be overlapping or belonging to several cultures, or even cultural identities at the same time. The term 'culture' is hotly contested but it can intuitively be understood in its multifaceted uses such as youth/military/organisational/corporate but here I have used to mean beliefs, values or practices that shape social action that is in interaction with other individual or groups.

However, for the young females, Bulmer and Solomos (2009) argue that the wearing of hijab is a complex development of Muslim female identities especially among the educated women and their response to the perceived secular hegemony that construct women as sexual objects.

Such a conspicuous expression of Muslim affiliation or Muslim-ness, as a reaction to discrimination, does not help women as they suffered increased instances of abuse, intimidation, violence and threat (Allen, 2013) in their daily lives. Elsewhere, there are examples of Sikhs having inadvertently suffered violence because they resembled Muslims in their outward appearance. But more blatantly the mosques have been targets of ensuing hate crimes, any incidents of these nature, soon become discussion points in the Muslim communities.

While the Muslim community may have legitimate grievances against the state for not doing enough for its youth to tackle more pertinent issues of economic well-being as numerous statistics have verified, the government on the other hand saw the Muslim problematic solution in community cohesion and counter-terrorism measures as its urban policy since the riots of 2001. There were the bridging and the bonding social capitals as part of community cohesion, with Muslim communities seen as committed to bonding capital and unacceptably lacking in bridging capital (Alam & Husband, 2013).

This section reviewed the characterisation of Muslim youth since 2001 and the notion of identity and how it is embodied. Integration is discussed as an implied form of acculturation which could be interpreted as assimilation. Some common features are noted in northern towns in terms deprivation, disadvantage or discrimination. The appropriation of British values is problematic if the Muslim community is treated as 'other'. The increased use of English language is indicative of segmented assimilation.

## Conclusion

In this first literature review on Pakistani-origin youth in Bradford, Bradford, is visited as a post-industrial setting for the case study for its uniqueness, its location, demographics and the key statistics which provides the backdrop to this study.

Bradford's development as a hub of textiles industry attracted immigrants from overseas at different entry points over the last two centuries including the Asians in large numbers in the 50's and 60's. The current demographics reflect this pattern of immigration history to the city but the demise of textiles affected the labour market for the second-generation Pakistanis quite adversely.

The first-generation Pakistanis migrant workers arriving in large numbers were the young males received by a supportive network of family and friends already settled in England and who treated their stay as a temporary working arrangement until they were to return home permanently. There were imperative reasons for leaving their homelands acting both as pull and push factors, to work in textiles mills of Bradford, enduring hard working conditions which they perceived as normal, until the city gradually became de-industrialised leaving many of these people unemployable. The lack of skills for transition or retraining opportunities for new employment rendered many people economically inactive, the effects of which impacted their next generation. With the passage of time, they became dependent on the salaried-income thus the 'myth of return' was suspended. As the Pakistani community became settled in Bradford with their particular socio-economic status, they started making demands of the local council for more specific services tailored to their needs. The young Asian youth in the late seventies too, mobilised themselves politically in towns and cities to counter the threat of violence from the far-right groups like the National Front.

The concept of *biradari* (clan-based kinship) is discussed and how it facilitated the first-generation migrants' settling in and later on it helped to mobilised Mirpuri community in political activism in Bradford.

The Rushdie Affair of 1989 and the Bradford riots of July 2001 followed by the events of 9/11 shifted the whole conception of Muslims not just in Bradford but also in the west as a whole. This led to the altered depiction of Muslims in the media and policy discourses from Asians to 'segregated' Muslims. Islam was conceived as a challenge to liberal democracies, a terror threat, leading Muslims to be labelled as 'suspect community' deserved to be subjected to counter-terrorism measures (PREVENT) and intrusive surveillance. This changed further to hyper-masculinity after the sex abuse cases in some towns with large Pakistani Muslim populations. All these events had an aggregate effect of marginalising Muslim youth with little scope for assimilation particularly with popular British culture.

The ordinary Muslim youth who have felt marginalised, would rather see an improvement in education and employment opportunities in the city and feel integrated.

The theoretical framing of segmented assimilation is explained and how it may illuminate our understanding of Muslim youths' experiences in Bradford as all of the above measures formed the part of 'modes of incorporation' that hinders integration

(segmented assimilation) by treating the Muslim youth as 'others', under surveillance and marginalised while the Pakistani families accentuated the value of education and enforced strict behaviour at home, helped to overcome some of these dilemmas - as ethnic capital.

The Pakistani youth in Bradford have evolved their own particular cultural scene, by visiting chai (tea) stands, sheesha bars or driving luxury cars. The use of soft drugs (skunk cannabis) is more acceptable among the Muslim youth but there seems to be less evidence to support the existence of gang culture in Bradford though criminality and deviance linked to wider drugs problems in the city has led to increased incarceration among the Pakistani youth from Bradford.

The notions of identity and citizenship are discussed with their particular reference to the Pakistani youths' place in the wider British society. There are multiple ways of identifying as Muslims as it depends on one's ethnicity, religion, culture, history of settle in the UK and of course the socio-economic class such as being a professional.

Pakistani-origin youth identities are complex and linked to their social space, their religion, their British-ness which has seen an increased participation in civic and social engagement that is indicative of segmented assimilation by the second-generation Pakistanis.

Social cohesion has been a policy response to cultural diversity that would yield a more integrated society but for successful assimilation there is need for incorporation of socio-economic success for all. But the Pakistani youths' outlook is increasingly becoming transnational to global being a diasporic community who still retain their links with their country of origin. This is a slight diversion from segmented assimilation theoretical framework as the transnational angle provides new opportunities for otherwise settled second-generations to even look further afield beyond the settled country for better employment.

The Pakistani youth have become vocal by abandoning their community leaders' politics of clan-following (*biradari*) - an example of this was demonstrated in 2012 when George Galloway for the Respect Party was elected a Member of Parliament for Bradford West constituency against a solid Labour seat - the main parties were seen as corrupt by the youth who organised a campaign to support Mr. Galloway. This is an example of breaking away from the first-generation politics and adopting a more radical approach which puts the previously disenfranchised youth in charge of their political priorities.

The discussion on identity was theorised, being socially constructed, transmutes depending on everyday performativity - it can be local, hybrid, dual, or transnational. Bourdieu's theory of habitus (cultural capital) can be applied to Pakistani youth with cultural and religious influence playing the part in habitus (ethnic capital) helping them deal with non-Muslim social spaces (fields).

The young males' educational experiences are linked to their social class, aspirations and motivations to succeed which can be derived from their neighbourhoods, ethnicity (ethnic capital) and parental support but low social class equates to a position of disadvantage.

The next literature review Chapter 3 on Pakistani-origin youth in FE will focus on the role and function of FE, structure and mobility, BME student participation and experiences of FE and the perceptions of FE and the VET.

## **Chapter 3: Pakistani-origin youth in FE**

### **Introduction**

This second part of literature review focuses and analyses the themes of the role and function of FE as the FE system, in England, with a review of student make-up, its organisation, funding and management since 1993 that initiated a culture of performativity and marketisation. The student diversity and experiences are visited for the barrier they face in FE as a consequence of their prior educational experiences eventually affecting social mobility for all social classes due to structural inequalities or institutional racism. The experiences of BME students is explored where the concept of 'warehousing' is noted and discussed. The student participation in FE as a 'second choice' provision is discussed for inclusion and social justice. The VET programmes are discussed for the concept of social mobility, social justice and cultural diversity in alleviating structural inequalities and managing diversity.

### **The role and function of FE**

This first section reviews and analyses the FE system in England, student make-up and how its organisation, funding and management has evolved since 1993. This includes student participation, the changing government priorities, a culture of performativity and marketisation along with its effects of the workforce and FE's diverse clientele. Area-wide reviews are discussed for the rationale behind the thinking, that is to improve efficiency and localise post-16 provision.

As a starting point, the government's own published figures (Gov.uk, 2020) shed some light on the participation, scope and the trends in FE. The data for 2018/19 shows that the white people made up 77.3% of people in further education, and 84.0% of the overall population of England (based on 2018 population estimates from the Office for National Statistics), Black people made up 6.8% of all people in further education, and 3.8% of the overall population people from the Other ethnic group made up 2.8% of all people in further education, and 1.1% of the overall population.

But in the 8 years to July 2019, the percentage of people in FE from the Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups combined (BAME) increased from 19.3% to 22.6%, the percentage of people in further education from the Asian ethnic group went up from 8.4% to 9.6%, it went up from 6.5% to 6.8% for the Black ethnic group, and from 2.5% to 3.4% for the Mixed ethnic group. The number of people in further education fell by 30.6% in the 8 years to July 2019 the number of people from all ethnic groups except the White group fell by 18.4% the number of people in further education from the Other ethnic group increased by 4.3%, the number of people in further education from the Asian, Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups (BAME) combined reached its peak in the academic year ending July 2013.

In terms of funding for FE, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2019) noted a number of worrying trends in recent years, for instant between 2010-11 and 2018-19 the spending per student in FE fell by 12% in real terms. And the funding was lowest in 2018-19 due to the funding system providing more for vocational course and support of pupils from

deprived backgrounds. Fully reversing these endemic cuts would cost the government £1.1 billion over the existing plans.

The FE colleges continue to be impacted by the changing government priorities which act as policy levers for colleges over local control, this may include targets and funding, changing inspection regimes, or interference with curriculum and qualifications. Spours et al. (2007, p. 197) describe the impact of some of these policy levers, as “paperwork multiplied as staff had to cope with the bureaucratic demands of meeting the targets as well as those for funding and inspection”. Where there have been improvements in success rates as Boocock (2014) noticed in a particular department of an FE college, interpreting external national policy and using internal governance highlights two perspectives –the results of a top-down internal procedures interpreted by the senior managers, and the product of a culture of performativity and student commodification interpreted by other staff, and elaborate that “Such a culture was seemingly driven by the need to meet national benchmarks on achievement and success rates in the face of the rationalisation agenda...and the need to achieve a good Ofsted inspection grade.” (Ibid, p. 351), seemingly a product of performative college culture.

The college’s role as FE provision lacks clearly recognised and shared core purpose (Foster, 2005) but colleges have undergone many transformations in the last 15 years but this has not been easy as Bathmaker (2013, p. 101) states “Repeated overhauls to funding, design and regulation, together with competition between qualification awarding bodies for market share over a considerable period of time in England, have done little to develop agreement about valuable knowledge to be learned by students taking these qualifications, and who should be involved in this process”, the questions arise about the role of vocational education whether it is a preparation for work or further study and the role of employers. This has been echoed by Gleeson et al. (2015, p.92) “A major effect of employer involvement overall has been to restrict learning and social mobility and effectively to reduce the funding of colleges and sector partners who are largely responsible for such work”. Although VET is seen as a solution to both social and economic problems but “the social processes associated with gender, ethnicity, and social class are manifested in VET and how they are mediated by the structural, cultural, institutional, and labour market formations in which they are embedded” (Guile & Unwin, 2019, p. 12). Hadawi and Crabbe (2018, p. 118) advocates a vision for the VET “that is targeted to develop an effective shared culture in the further education sector, close skills shortages and skills gaps in education, enhance community cohesion and improve productivity”.

There seems to be unanimity among academics on the original purpose of FE - as having social and economic ambitions via skills training, with strong concern for social justice (Allen, 2011); while the basic premise remains intact, the constantly changing social and economic conditions over the years, for example, de-industrialisation, new demographics, changing political priorities under successive governments (Conservative 1979-1997, Labour 1997-2010, Conservative 2010-Present), technological advances, have impacted on the current shape of our FE sector.

One of the momentous changes in FE in the recent years was instigated by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (FHEA 1992), implemented in 1993, it freed colleges from local authority control to become freestanding legally independent corporations, responsible for their own financial management, governance, staffing and estates. I



was a college governor during this transition period and recall spending endless hours trying to make sense of the incoming Instruments and Articles of governance for the new arrangement. The 'Incorporation,' as this transition is often referred to, reincarnated colleges into business-like entities, Spenceley (2006, p. 289) commented that this "re-positioning of FE as a market-oriented servant of the economy, via the imposition of various government agendas" included performativity, managerialism and marketization. The cultural ethos of FE, Gleeson and Shain (1999, p. 555) observed, favoured "greater economic and business competitiveness". Accordingly, the colleges became competitors with each other locally rather than partners in a national political thinking that the politicians had hoped. Prior to this change, the colleges were operating under the jurisdiction of 1944 Education Act which made LEAs accountable for supporting and managing education for its population through its education budget that was reflected in the number of students recruited.

FE's problem has been its defining role and its identity (Foster Report, 2005), according to Gleeson and Shain (1999) it serves too many interest groups while catering for diverse clientele, learners aged 14 and above, and the HE provisions – a two-sector structure. The FHEA 1992 that incorporated colleges also helped with widening participation in HE by creating new universities from old polytechnics- a move that was meant to improve social mobility for students of lower socio-economic backgrounds, but that specific point, Avis et al. (2017, p. 296) commented that "in the absence of broader policies on tackling poverty and inequality, HE came to be regarded, by default, as the only pathway to social mobility". But HE is also offered in FE colleges so choosing between the two can be bewildering for a prospective student. FECs offer HE courses by franchising from an HEI (higher education institutions) partner for instance Bradford College currently validates its HE courses via the University of Bolton.

But the conceptual role of colleges or how they were perceived publicly has not changed much over the years in that they were meant to develop individuals in two ways - personal, and the skills-development for the world of work. Other policy roles include encouraging widening participation, to "foster social inclusion and to address basic skills deficits in the population" (Salisbury & Jephcote, 2008, p. 151) and provide a progression route for those who have failed at school. Other less palatable descriptions include a provision for other people's children or the last chance saloon for those students who have left school without any qualifications. Thompson (2009, p. 30) echoes similar sentiments that the image of FE has been unhelpful over the years, "systemic neglect of FE that is class-based and related to images of FE as a second-choice institution concerned with low-status vocational or remedial courses".

On the face of it, the FE sector was being professionalised to raise standards but Lucas and Crowther (2016, p.583) observed disparagingly on the political rationale behind the move, "that FE was subjected to the introduction of a quasi-market in advance of wider neoliberal reforms in the public sector" which followed later on in other parts of public sector.

The post-1992 FE corporations became centrally funded with the intention of creating competition as per business-like thinking to bring down the costs, this was to be achieved internally through performativity measures and funding-linked targets, and externally, area-wide reviews were being undertaken. Lucas and Crowther (2016)

recalled at that time, that by 2018 the budget allocated to FE would be 43% less than 2010. This was corroborated by Corbett (2017, p.209) where,

between 2010 and 2015 there was 12% real terms cut in funding and there has been no increase in funding since 2010 for pay rises, which limits the sector's competitiveness in terms of pay and investment in resources to deliver provision.

The area-wide reviews, the review of post-16 education and training in general and 6th form colleges, were conducted from 2015 to 2017 in series of 5 'waves' on the premise of meeting local needs and to create larger, resilient, and efficient colleges with some specialist colleges (BIS, 2015) - this would inevitably lead to mergers and reduction in duplication of provisions thus making savings. But in response to DfE's recommendations following the reviews, David Hughes, Chief Executive of AoC stated in FE Week of 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017 that 33 college mergers and four 6<sup>th</sup> form academy conversions have taken place while 15-16 mergers and 10-15 conversions were expected in the next 18 months. While the conversions cost the DfE £120 million a year in grants but the college mergers on the other hand have meagre financial support.

Whereas, on the daily demands of work, Feather (2014) found that some lecturers acknowledged compromising the quality of teaching because of the additional pressure of meeting targets in an audit culture of colleges. Constant reformation of the curricular with the introduction of new qualifications, the new inspection regime, all impact on the retention of good staff and their job security, what Simmons and Thompson (2008) referred to as, a 'demoralised workforce'. This dilemma was noted by Corbett (2017) as having reported that the sector was struggling to recruit suitably qualified staff. These challenges were described by Allan, (2011, p. 956), while studying identity and power relations in education, as "pernicious effects of performativity and new managerialism".

Others (Lucas & Crowther, 2016, p.583) have reviewed the logic of incorporation and have argued that in the face of uncertainty, instability and a lack of strategic direction there is a need for the reversal of the incorporation as a whole to "be returned to some form of local or regional government".

Nonetheless when it comes to the vocational choice in FE colleges, Swift & Fisher (2012, p.219) claim that the 'second best' option is really "in response to their [students'] academic underachievement" – they also contend that students aspire for courses that have potential for higher future earnings, while, that may be the case Postlewaite and Maull (2007) previously posited that students' perception of their learning environment in the colleges, were affected by a number of factors such as their disposition, curriculum, resources and the college policies – all these are crucial to a successful completion of a course in a FE college setting for the aspiring students which must include higher earnings.

This section reviewed the FE system in England with FE role as an organisation, how it operates and its student make-up.

## Student experiences of FE

This section analyses the type and diversity of students who attend FECs, their prior educational experiences as they enter the college, how they could be helped with their educational journey and the college's own funding and marketing priorities.

When reviewing post-compulsory education and training in West Yorkshire, Swift and Fisher (2012, p. 219) found that many of the young people, "...who participated took up the vocational route as a 'second best' option in response to their academic under-achievement", in other words these very students would have followed an academic route had they achieved their qualifications. Some of these learners attend low-performing schools that undermined their confidence with low motivation and low self-efficacy. With the compulsory leaving age rising to 18 from 2015, it is paramount that our youngsters are equipped with sufficient skills to increase their life chances. The key here may lie with re-motivating the students who may have failed their GCSEs previously in a low-performing school. When exploring how an FE college re-motives students who had previously failed their GCSEs, Anderson and Peart (2016, p. 196) cite the strategy of "Professional and supportive relationships with teachers, classroom management strategies leading to learner ownership and autonomy, consistently applied behaviour management practices and visible senior leadership enabled learners to re-engage in education at FE...", small class sizes is also seen as a factor; lack of these approaches would presumably, lead to de-motivation.

Granted, that the student lives are complex in general, and more so when they consider entering FE for the first time in their lives, in the hope of achieving some qualifications that may lead to a change of circumstances for their future. Victimisation, bullying, repeated failures and limited contact with social or ethnic groups other than their own, all add to this complexity. Salisbury and Jophecote (2008) researched experience of learning and working in FE and found that FE tutors were critical of schools, while holding them responsible for failing many of the learners who join FE with often not so smooth encounters with college systems. Disengagement and participation remained stumbling blocks for many students as Wallace (2014) conjectured from studying the strategies teachers used in FE to motivate students, suggests that the causes lie in the students' socio-economic issues, the design of the vocational curriculum on offer and its perception – teachers' attitudes and attributes were also considered as the key factors in addressing this disengagement. On the worth of courses on offer in FE, Fuller and MacFadyen (2012) found when studying FE student motivation and experiences of vocational courses, that many courses were disconnected with the world of work and meant for low-attaining, lower-income students, and that these courses were not demand-led (Lucas & Crowther 2016) but at the behest of the funding bodies which have changed subsequently from FEFC to LSC and now from SFA and EFA to ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency).

Nevertheless, for the students in FE these internal issues are not so apparent and their expectation is to progress further despite their complex social issues, for instance Wallace (2014) contends that the information received from schools may be inadequate pointing to ill-preparation at the point of entry to college. This is further compounded by the performativity culture within colleges where the "competitive nature of education means that, (Fuller & Macfadyen, 2012, p. 89) - this intersection is clearly unhelpful for

any aspiring student who in addition to other issues may also suffer from financial hardships and the constraints of the life-struggles outside of the college. Learning for FE students, Gibson (2004, p.342) pointed out, was a situated activity “influenced by an individual’s perception and dispositions within a complex socio-cultural setting”, their decision-making, coping with the demands of the course, the appropriateness of the qualifications undertaken and any supported mechanisms that can be relied upon ; in the absence of such support the learners could be misguided and that “learners find themselves on such courses by default rather than through choice” (Wallace,2014, p. 348).

According to a report by ETF (Education and Training Foundation, 2017) in the academic year 2015/16, about 10% of the HE students were in FECs and 90% in HEIs, vast majority of part-time over 25 years of age and 78% of the recruitments were drawn from LEP (local enterprise partnership) areas, a marketing strategy that seem to work for colleges. So, the FECs have advantage of being local with saving on travelling, flexible enough to study without compromising on employment or family commitments but the FEIs have low visibility and status of higher education (BIS, 2012) compared with traditional universities and some students like to experience the student life by living away from home and socialising in a free environment away from the family’s gaze.

The funding of HE courses in FECs has been a complex matter, as prior to 2012/13 the funding took the shape of direct or indirect funding streams by the HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) but post-2013 it moved to student fees from the SLC (Student Loan Company). On 19 February 2018, the Prime Minister launched a review of post-18 education focusing on choice of options available, value for money, enabling access and the skills development. These steps will impact both higher education providers by creating further competition between HEs and FEIs.

The FE colleges have more diverse student populations, not least because of the variety of courses they offer from GCSEs to masters level qualifications, but students’ backgrounds and their abilities, the government policies of funding agendas are continuing to excluded adult and part-time students. Perhaps to replace the top-down, market driven policies a new model of incorporation is needed that works in partnership with other institutions, responding locally and regionally to educational needs of post-compulsory students.

This section reviewed the type and diversity of students in FE, their prior educational experiences as they enter the college, and the college’s own funding and marketing priorities.

## Structures and mobility

This section analyses the barriers to FE experience, whether the widening participation lived up to its expectations, the concept of equality of opportunity, promotion of social mobility for white and non-white classes in FE and the structural inequalities and institutional racism. The 2010 Equality Act with its emphasis on equal access and treatment of students of all backgrounds.

Education has not been easy for mature students who aspire for HE qualification in an FE setting. It has been accepted for a while that family commitment, lack of initial guidance, support mechanisms and finance were the traditional barriers, but Burton et al (2011, p. 26) also found from their study of mature students in similar position that, “personal and family circumstances, study experiences both past and present, geography and situational and institutional barriers”, were equally prominent.

Neo-liberal educational rhetoric of ‘culture of aspiration’, ‘equality of opportunity’ and ‘social mobility’ for disadvantaged, has remained but an illusion for most. When faced with criminality or other social problems, the media and official explanations are quick to point to the familiar narratives of cultural deficit, for instance poor parenting, lack of aspirations, lack of discipline but the structural inequalities or institutional racism is conveniently overlooked. Hence despite the expansion of higher education, these policies have benefitted the richest parents but overall have led to a fall in social mobility especially for the ethnic minorities. (Shain, 2012).

For students who enter FE for vocational training, a good IAG is deemed crucial for students to make well informed choices about the training that ensures their future employment, but Fuller and Macfadyen (2012, p. 87) found from FE students’ experience of vocational courses that, despite the range and content of courses available, “...vocational education still largely has much lower status than more traditional and academic routes...many vocational courses are rarely connected to the world of work, have little academic content and tend to be offered to low attaining, lower-income students”. This study might be contextual but it can have resonance with other similar providers.

In another study, while researching the impact of this educational expansion using a Youth Cohort Study, Sullivan et al. (2011, p. 234) deduce that, “social class inequalities persist and that they tend to be greater at higher levels of attainment...class inequalities are considerably larger than the gender inequalities.” ‘Life-long learning for all’ was another public policy framework to address skills development and social exclusion but Stenfors-Hayes et al. (2008, p. 637) examined practical realities of this policy Europe-wide and found limitations in that, “Where lifelong learning provision exists for service users they were clustered around basic skills courses, job skills training, and courses geared towards personal hobbies and interests”. Focusing on mental health care service users, they argue that there is a need to provide a curriculum for those with higher qualifications.

Social class inequalities in educational achievements using school ‘effectiveness’, also found that, “‘higher’ social class children attend more effective schools, on average...” (Hobbs, 2016, p.16).

While, the various government policy statements have been emphatic on 'widening participation' including expanding HE in FE, hoping for economic prosperity for individuals from socially deprived backgrounds, Robinson (2012, p. 465) gathered student perceptions of their foundation degree qualifications in HE and found that, "Whilst agency may offer some individuals opportunities to access possibilities of social mobility, the indication from this study is that structural social inequalities are a factor in limiting and defining individuals' identity and mobility."

As, many aspiring students who join HE in FE, are likely to come from lower socio-economic groups, Avis and Orr (2016) note that HE for them has limited traction in terms of social mobility but does serve more as a resource in the struggle for social justice -it is claimed that, only the social movements can bring about the wider social equality in society not just in education alone.

Moreover, under the 2010 Equality Act, all public bodies have legal obligations which applies to FE colleges, "to find ways to meet the unique cultural needs of minority ethnic populations groups so that no group should feel isolated or unsupported" (Peart, 2015, p. 194). stated while looking at support needs of black male students in FE. This also refers to structural discrimination that can occur when there is a power differential - institutional exclusion may continue unchallenged and suggests a "dedicated student support services in promoting equality and inclusion in FE for minority ethnic groups" (Ibid, p. 199). Other key factors are also added (See et al., 2011) such as the teacher expectations, peer pressure, negative experience at school as well as general apathy towards school. The question remains whether colleges are even aware of these legal duties as well as the specific needs of some of their students.

FE colleges are places where power differentials exist between various tiers of staff of even students, this systematic abuse of power can be construed as bullying. These practices systematically disadvantage black and minority ethnic communities thus reproduce inequalities in education, absence of diversity in decision-making can perpetuate this power differential, the colleges thus need to develop alternative yet more inclusive structures.

This section reviewed the experiences of students in FE in terms of equality of opportunity or social mobility for both white and non-white students. The 2010 Equality Act's emphasis on supporting students from diverse backgrounds.

## **Pakistani and BAME students in FE**

This section analyses the experiences of BME students in FE where the concept of 'warehousing' is discussed, The BME experience in HE is also discussed for its possible implications for FE students.

BME and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) categories are often used interchangeably while referring to non-white groups but it must be borne in mind that not all individuals comprising these categories are a homogeneous group and that there is also the regional variance.

While there is a serious dearth of literature on experience of BME students in FE, there is plethora of material on BME students and staff in HE provisions, both in colleges and universities - it may be that there is some correlation or insights to be gained from HE experiences such as the perception of BME students, attainments or their identities.

The participation of young Pakistani male students in FE as part of wider BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community, are acknowledged as those who are in a significant constituency in VET and FE. These students are often placed on low-status courses which have limited skills development or improvement in labour market - a process described as 'warehousing'. Avis et al. (2017, p. 293) contend that because of the current neo-liberal philosophy in FE "fractions of working-class youth, particularly racialized communities, are, in effect, being removed from the mainstream labour market" in this way. For FE, neo-liberalism encompasses the notions of performativity, privatisation, competition, national bench-marking, audit and so on, among others. Combine this with other mechanisms of disadvantage, such as discrimination or racism – combination of these can have detrimental effect earlier on in their careers, repercussions of which can lead to social immobility, un-employability and an overall bad FE experience – these experiences could easily compromise social equality.

But for the general FE student population, with the shrinking youth labour market, the FE colleges have come to play the 'warehousing' role, amid the government's rhetoric of individual agency but Colley and Hodkinson (2001, p. 345) warned that "It fails to acknowledge the functioning of deep-rooted, structural factors in society, such as class, race and gender, that profoundly affect young people's life chances". Without tackling the under-lying structural inequalities, the youth are going to be blamed for not doing enough themselves and remain in a disadvantaged position hence any educational experience, especially on a low status courses 'warehousing' is not likely to improve their social mobility.

Gleeson et al. (2005, p. 453) echoed similar kind of views when studying professionalism of teacher in FE, "The 'wake' of status is one of the forces behind the tutors' contradictory dispositions towards students and is reflected in their perceptions of government social inclusion policies as a form of containment or 'warehousing'", talking of a sector faced by increasing reductions in its resources.

Despite overt racism being less discernible these days, Avis et al. (2017, p. 294) contend that the students do "live race in practice, experiencing the world in ways that are mediated by racialised social categories and relationships" which Pakistani students can feel who too, are also part of BME community.

But for those students who may need more specific support due to challenging behaviour, education can be seen, according to Spenceley (2012, p. 318) while exploring special needs of students in life long sector, as, a “time-filler, keeping this group in a state of social quiescence”, until the age of 25 when education funding ceases rendering them economically inactive hence they ‘disappear into the system’”. So, participation alone may help colleges with funding streams but it would not help BME students with social mobility or breaking out of a cycle of deprivation.

In localities with high unemployment such as Bradford where a constant pool of BME students is available, due partly to increased youth population, to enrol on courses in large numbers, the college’s management of some of these students is designated as ‘mass incarceration’ or simply ‘parking’ students on low-level VET courses as the students are not being prepared for the world of work adequately.

The Muslim students’ availability can be explained in terms of the historical factors leading to spatial segregation in Bradford that has been subject to political debates and continued over the years. Commenting on this phenomenon, McLoughlin (2006, p. 137) writes “The evolution of various ‘self-sufficient’ Asian ‘communities’ in Bradford is best seen as an organic response to the ongoing uncertainties and risks of living as a ‘minority’ of largely rural origins in an urban setting characterised by racism, immigration controls and a permissive majority”, a view shared by others (Phillips et al., 2006). The college’s localised provision attracts the inner-city Pakistani-origin youth.

Avis et al. (2017, p. 305) found that “When black youth attend FE, they do worse than their white counterparts, and such graduates from HE and FE are more likely to be unemployed...compelling evidence that black youth are disadvantaged in relation to work-based routes and apprenticeships compelling evidence that black youth are disadvantaged in relation to work-based routes and apprenticeships”. They also warn of the FE colleges not to be complicit in producing racial stratifications where there is intersectionality of race, class and gender.

But Peart’s (2018, p. 551) study of black male students in an FE college found that while many of the students felt they were marginalised, undervalued and subjected to overt and subtle racism in secondary schools they “find both the culture and the academic offer of FE more positive... it appears there is space for other ways of being, without being othered”, as the students saw this as a second opportunity to gain qualifications to progress in life. While black youth might feel that FE is a much better option for them it may not produce the outcome they had hoped for. In another study of BME Muslim youth in Scotland, for their transition to FE by Riaz’s (2018, p. 386), suggested that cultural awareness training should be included in teachers’ repertoire of tools to support all young people since “Muslim communities, both within Scotland and across Britain, report experiencing incidences of religious discrimination and racial discrimination, supporting arguments of a ‘double burden’ of race and ethnicity”.

A retrospective study of students in an FE college in Birmingham by Abbas (2002) showed that nearly all students attended comprehensive schools located in the inner-city of older de-industrialised areas yet they managed to develop educational identities encompassing elements of the home as well as the school – ethnicity and education.



BAME experiences in HE has a number of research strands, with the attainment gaps for both male and female students and suggest how to address this imbalance. Bunce et al. (2019, p. 12) reviewed the attainment figures for BME female students studying health and social care related subjects in 2015/16 where 63% of BME students achieved a first or upper second degree, seen as a 'good' degree compared to 78% of white students – a gap of 15% and recommend that “By addressing institutional causes of a lack of fulfilment of the needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, universities can make substantial gains towards reducing the inequitable BME attainment gap”. Against a background of 'white curriculum' in universities. Jones' (2019) report on BAME students receiving good degrees found the attainment gap of 13% in 2017/2018 and argued that the BAME students were at risk of receiving a substandard university experience and ultimately a substandard chance of employment especially if the employers demand a good degree.

Bangurt's (2018, p. 267) doctoral thesis into BME's everyday experiences at a leading university concluded that “while examples of explicit racism may be less frequent than they once were, the university context within which the participants study, as currently structured, nevertheless reproduces racial inequalities that nurture implicit forms of racism (microaggressions), at both institutional and interpersonal levels”, and she suggests a number of inventions such as financial support, mentoring, Summer Schools, outreach interventions and IAG, other academics have added their voice in this debate too (Panesar, 2017).

But the Universities are not completely oblivious to this argument as McDuff et al. (2018, p. 96) describe how Kingston University narrowed the gap through outcome focused institutional intervention, “Our first point and a prominent factor in change was the institution-wide approach driven by an institutional KPI”. Closer to home, in his thesis on the attainment disparity in male students of Mirpuri backgrounds in Bradford, Nazir (2019, p. 3) concluded that “the argument of institutional racism posits that the attainment disparity persists after prior qualifications are accounted for, suggesting that institutional racism within universities explains the attainment disparity”.

Other literature on research in HE has focused on BME academics looking at organisational barriers to career trajectory towards senior roles (Arday, 2018), or those academics who mover overseas for better career development and progression (Bhopal et al., 2016). Some other studies have focused on BAME students' social identities (Crozier et al., 2019; Frings et al., 2020) suggesting that identity incompatibility can also affect material outcomes such as academic achievements. All these debates point to the of institutional role in addressing negative experiences of BME students or staff yet these inequalities can persist in FE (Avis, et al., 2017) settings too.

As for FE, Avis and his colleagues (2017; 2011) have pushed for a research agenda, similar to those in HE, that analyses experiences of BME students in what is seen as racialised sites with broader questions of employability and social equality. But Wilkins' (2014, p. 445) study of initial teacher education noted that “that race equality issues are marginalised within institutional policies that focus on procedural compliance rather than substantive challenge to practices that normalise and so perpetuate structural inequality”. For BAME community, labour market discrimination is particularly marked as racial inequalities are ubiquitous but Shain, (2020) hopes with the foregrounding of race onto the agenda, will confront the legacy of empire and colonialism and the ideologies

of white supremacy. Currently there is a serious shortage of research done in this area in FE particularly none, on Pakistani-origin youth.

This section reviewed the experiences of BME students in FE with the concept of 'warehousing' and whether they were being prepared for the labour market. Other experience of BME students are also discussed in HE, to gain some understanding of their experiences that could be relevant.

## **Social class in FE**

This section discusses the participation of different social classes in FE as a 'second-choice' provision and the notions of inclusion and social justice in contrast to the government's changing priorities.

Thompson (2009) found that all social classes were represented in FE colleges but for middle-class children it is because of their lower achievement and for low-achieving working-class leaving education entirely is more likely than going to an FE college.

The idea of widening participation was to encourage those under-represented groups by social class to enter further and higher education to be socially mobile. But See et al. (2011, p. 94) found that, while family, individual aspiration, peer influence, school support, work experience, IAG and government policies (now withdrawn EMAs) are some of the factors but students' "prior experience at school also determines participation in education or training at any age or stage". These students may mature with time and overcome some of the early disappointing experiences in education and achieve some qualifications in FE setting as mature students later on in life.

Against a popular belief of FE being 'for other people's children', Thompson (2009, p.41) found from a Youth Cohort study of England and Wales, on social class and, FE participation that "...high achieving working-class young people are less likely to attend FE than their class position might indicate, and low achievers from the middle class are more likely to find themselves in a further education college than might be expected". Therefore, it could be argued that the FE colleges can be 'second choice' rather than a blanket labelling of 'for other people's children'. But FE's lack of social and cultural resourcefulness over the years could contribute to its low status.

But in terms of young people's aspirations, which among other connotations for learners, can mean those who "may adopt a stance of pragmatic rationality, in which they consider contextual constraints alongside their own disposition and abilities." Baird et al. (2012, p. 294) write. Therefore, the middle-class parents' awareness of post-compulsory education sector and the processes within can place them in a position of advantage thus creating a disjunction of their career paths "students from lower SES backgrounds with more modest aspirations are more likely to attend FE colleges, and students from middle SES backgrounds with 'higher' aspirations are more likely to attend sixth form." (Ibid, p. 308), so both social and cultural environments play a role in their future choices as social class can become a demarcation point.

While FE has been regarded with a lower-status provider of qualifications compared with sixth-forms or universities for higher education, after seeking senior managers' views in FE, Wallace & Gravells (2010) suggest, that a sense of meaning can be created most effectively when organisational values and personal values of departmental teams are aligned. This ensures inclusive education for all, so for a college to encompass notions of inclusion or social justice at other levels, the management has to find ways of addressing inequalities, otherwise this may perpetuate disadvantage for some amounting to re-production of inequalities.

Despite all the rhetoric, British schools are becoming increasingly diverse with growing educational achievements among BME youth, at the same time both discrimination and inequality across education and employment is continuing. Against a background of British values and identities and the need for teaching a diverse curriculum, Alexander and Weekes-Bernard (2017, p. 490), state that "Such struggles need to be placed in a broader political and policy context which has seen the erosion of equalities issues in education in favour of a heavily centralising top-down agenda of citizenship and 'tackling extremism', which has placed schools and teachers as agents of state surveillance and BME pupils as the potential targets of their new civilising mission.", hence the need for a reassessment of political priorities.

This section discussed the participation of different social classes in FE as a 'second-choice' provision and the notions of inclusion and social justice in contrast to the government's priorities.

### **Perceptions of FE and the Vocational Education and Training (VET)**

This section analyses the composition of BME communities on VET programmes while some experiencing 'warehousing', and the disadvantage experienced despite the promotion of culture of aspiration. The concepts of social mobility and social justice along with cultural diversity are discussed in alleviating structural racial inequalities and managing diversity.

The VET programs, combining education and training, remains a significant choice for BME communities as a complex racialised site, "we live race in practice, experiencing the world in ways that are mediated by racialised social categories and relationships" (Avis et al., 2017, p. 294). These racialised communities are removed from the mainstream labour market by experiencing a VET programme with little educational or skills value – hence the notion of 'warehousing', with low teacher expectations, disproportionate levels of school exclusions and a restricted curriculum have been experienced by many BME students. There is also "compelling evidence that black youth are disadvantaged in relation to work-based routes and apprenticeships" (Avis et al., 2017, p.301). The prime aim of vocational education is seen as personal development and fulfilment through work (Guile, & Unwin, 2019) which is plausible enough but there has to be a job at the end of day, otherwise it would have been a wasted journey. The VET has potential to exclude some 'vulnerable' people inadvertently as Avis (2019, p. 378) explains, "The consequence is that whilst policy may seek to address the social inclusion of such young people, it simultaneously constructs them as the other and may in this way reproduce inequality", these

conditions ensue marginalisation leading to social inequalities, we are then back to the structuralist social cohesion discussed above and segregation of communities.

The learning process is a complex issue in FEIs that can inhibit or assist students by a number of factors which can act as mechanisms for success or failure, affecting career aspirations and social mobility. When studying the learning cultures, Hodkinson et al. (2007, p. 400) emphasised the significance of “wider social and cultural values and practices”, these include ethnicity, social class, family life and availability of employment opportunities in a locality. The role of tutors and the positive impact of institutional policy and management along with the status of the course and institution assist in this matter. In their study of the relationship between organisational culture and learning opportunities, Ahlgren and Tett (2010) demonstrate that individual expression (agency) in this milieu is better asserted by being part of a social group who are in similar position of struggle - seeing them in this way helps with confidence-building for individuals. On the choice of vocational programmes by young people in FE, Atkins et al. (2015) found that notwithstanding sophistication in their career paths, the young people placed high value on their VET programme believing it to be useful currency in future for either education or labour market.

The FEIs business-like orientation in terms of a culture of performativity and commodification of students mentioned in previous section can produce good success rates as Boocock (2014) found out from lecturers and managers of a FE college who claimed it was the result of top-down internal policy and means-ending college culture but the disadvantaged students due to their social positioning, are treated as part of a homogeneous college - a point for Ofsted to recognise- Boocock (2014) emphasises. Systematic funding cuts in FE sector can add external pressures on FEIs and ultimately and adversely affect potential students’ choices and outcomes.

While discussing the disturbances in 2011 (the London riots) and the labelling of black youth as ‘trouble makers’ or ‘aggressive’, Shain (2012, p. 153) noted the readings of “cultural deficit” in social discourses as a possible explanation for the cause of riots and the lack of discipline in BME youth when less credence was afforded to socio-political explanations such as the structural inequalities that eventually manifested in these eruptions. For the parents of these youngsters who are seeing their children progress onto FE, the culture of aspiration in schools, as reinforced by neoliberal education “policies such as parental choice is but an illusion for the majority.” (Shain, 2012, p. 160) was but unhelpful. Tomlinson (2005, p. 167) had previously alluded to the policies that “encourage parents and students to compete for good schools and educational resources, and allow for the further segregation of social and ethnic groups, do not ensure justice and equity” and with that social mobility.

Institutional racism needs tacking in education if we are to promote social justice and create opportunities for social mobility for all. ‘Social mobility’ is understood as the movement or opportunities for individuals or their off springs between different social classes or occupational groups (Robinson, 2012) and ‘Social justice’ is understood to mean, how people are free to improve their position in society (Cabinet Office 2011). While looking into this issue in HE, Tate and Bagguley (2017, p. 290) commented lamentably that “policies aimed at equality amount to no more than well-worded mission statements and some minor cosmetic changes which leave structural racial inequality intact”.

FEIs and HEIs often discuss equality with diversity and have formulated policies accordingly. Cultural diversity according to Tod (2011, p. 102), “is frequently synonymous with a view of individuals as the aggregate of their cultural attributes” and these attributes could include gender, social situation, place of origin, beliefs or physical characteristics amongst others and in an intercultural education, to manage diversity is to combat discrimination. Another term in usage is plurality, which is part of the human condition. It seems as if diversity is general, whereas plurality is specific when applied to social groups- these notions could be useful tools in policy formulations and verbal articulations.

There is need for education policies to counter xenophobic nationalism and general hostility towards economic migrants and refugees (Tomlinson, 2005) who often depend on FE, but instead, the education policy has shifted from “a social democratic model to an over securitised model of school in matters of race has largely been shaped by local and international events” (Miah, 2016, p. 1).

We may have arrived at a point in time where we need to shift to global citizenship education marked by the “responsibility to humankind, common values and respect for diversity, is therefore suggested to transcend inequalities and injustice at global, national and local levels” (Niens and Reilly, 2012, p. 104). These encompass contesting racism, sexism and other divisions to improve living conditions of others around the world by negating economic and political inequalities and structures.

Judging from the magnitude of people from BME backgrounds, the policy makers need to have a nuanced approach to managing diversity and addressing the issues of racial or ethnic equality. According to Alexander and Weekes-Bernard (2017, p.479), “Nearly, 17% of children aged 0–15 in England and Wales are from BME backgrounds, making up over 23% of state-funded secondary schools and nearly 28% of state-funded primary schools”. These figures alone would compel politicians from all persuasions to be prudent with their policy-planning, not just for now but for the future as well, as recent policies have been knee-jerk reactions to social upheavals – community cohesion was one of those initiatives discussed in the last chapter, “based on a fundamentally flawed interpretation of the sources of tension and conflict in Britain’s towns and cities” (Ratcliffe, 2012, p.262), implying, the correct interpretation being the social and material inequalities and not self-segregation as was the dominant discourse then and discussed in the previous chapter. The author links this to the neo-liberal agenda of individualism or meritocracy that provides equality of opportunity but, then, not necessarily the equality of outcome.

This section reviewed the BME participation in VET programmes and the educational disadvantage they experience. The management of diversity is discussed to mitigate any effects of structural inequalities to achieve social mobility and ultimately social justice.

## Conclusion

In this chapter 3, on Pakistani-origin youth in FE, the role and composition of FE is reviewed. The colleges incorporation (FHEA 92) stimulated perhaps the biggest change to the governance of FE colleges that resulted in more intense competition and performativity culture while its identity had been seen as representative of too many interest groups, from 14-16 to master's level student cohorts. The colleges public perception remains as the 'last chance saloon', 'for other people's children' for middle-class parents hence creating space for students from low socio-economic groups that also includes BME communities but failing to tackle structural poverty and inequality. But it has been pointed out that the high achieving working class young people are less likely to attend a college if given a different choice. Area-wide reviews are given as the rational to improve FE efficiency and create a customised yet localised post-16 provision.

For the staff working in FE, the constant funding cuts, potential mergers, reduction in provision with regular changes to qualifications can all add pressure on staff who have already been subjected of audit culture, inspection regimes and threat to job security – these changes can lead to a 'demoralised workforce'.

Students in FE face barriers to education, despite the 'widening participation' with the concept of equality or opportunity but social mobility for both white and non-white social classes remains a dream due to wider structural inequalities and institutional racism.

All students in FE have complex social and cultural issues which need to be recognised by FEIs for a successful outcome but it has been noticed that students can easily be removed from labour market by enrolling them on low-level courses that have little currency in the world of work, these 'warehousing' or 'mass incarceration' practices need to be addressed for broader social equality issues, and has been experienced by many BME students in FE.

Despite this, the VET programs are valued by students for their currency in the labour market.

But for more successful students in FE, the role of tutors, the impact of institutional policies and the management of the college can help students career aspirations.

The increased diversity in colleges mean they have to learn to manage diversity and not just in an over-securitised model, that disadvantages some students, that is seen as part of neo-liberal agenda emphasising individualism and meritocracy which may provide equality of opportunity but not necessarily equality of outcome.

HE in FE for mature students can face barriers to learning with lack of proper guidance, support mechanisms and worries over finance. Vocational education in FE is still ranked low compared with academic qualifications which implies social class inequalities persist. The presence of power differentials in FEIs can lead to institutional bullying creating structured social inequalities. The concepts of social mobility, equality of opportunity and widening participation are yet to be translated into practical reality.

BME community forms a significant composition in FE colleges, where their experience of racism, discrimination and disadvantage is highlighted along with their spatial settlement in the de-industrialised areas.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology.

## Chapter 4: Research methodology

### Introduction

The previous chapters reviewed literature pertinent to this study and to address the constituted research questions - specifically:

- 1 To what extent does an FE setting meet the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students to complete their courses and to progress further while negotiating any impending obstacles during their study?
- 2 To what extent does the students' cultural or class background enhance or impinge on their learning or educational experiences of an FE college?
- 3 How does the FE experience correspond with the student perceptions and expectations of their past or post-college trajectories?

The purpose this chapter is to discuss, develop and justify research methodology, namely, on how the research was empirically conducted and the various techniques used in performing research operations. This being an ideographic approach that is located in a particular time frame and locality. Silverman (2013, p.122) defined methodology, as “a general approach to studying research topics”.

I adopted a qualitative approach with a case study design of enquiry using research methods of semi-structured interviews conducted over two years with a group of young male students of Pakistani-origin who were enrolled on vocational courses in a FE college. The college professionals were also similarly interviewed but only once towards the completion of the study. For my role as a researcher who is both an 'insider' employed by the college and of similar ethnic background, I had to reflect hard on how I was perceived by the students and to what extent these two positions impinged on the robustness and reliability of the data generated. The ethical issues presented their own problems in terms of power differential that existed between me as a middle manager and my participants as college students. But the code of conduct as stipulated by BERA for educational research was adhered to rigorously covering informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, research integrity and no harm caused to anyone involved in the research study directly or indirectly. Prior approval was sought from the University's ethical committees before the commencement of the research undertaking.

For ease of navigation, the chapter is divided into nine sections on: Research Design; Population and Sampling Design; Research Instrument; Source of Data Generation; Data Collection; Data Analysis Techniques; Role of Researcher; Ethical Considerations and finally Limitations of the Study.



## Research design

The philosophical assumptions underpinning this research were drawn from the Constructivist worldview or paradigm, as my research approach was essentially Qualitative (Creswell, 2014) that incorporated a Case studies design. This implied that the fundamental nature of the world as conceived for the purpose of the study was a world basically viewed as a function of human thought, analysis and perception (Oliver, 2014) that is, it is socially constructed – hence having a constructionist ontology, while epistemological position, where my claim to knowledge or how reality was known came from the interpretive stance. I had hoped to explore and understand the phenomena via the use of research questions.

In my study the objective was to make sense of lived experiences and perceptions of further education from a specific group of students (males of Pakistani-origin) and the staff who worked with them, while my questions were of the nature ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’, rather than ‘how many’ or ‘how much’ – so my choice of methodology had to be congruent with not just my research questions but also with the “wider elements of the research design” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.118). I would choose a qualitative approach as qualitative research usually emphasises meanings rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. My research did not set out to prove or disprove a theory but rather to draw conclusions from the themes that emerged from the data generated.

The two dominant worldviews, naturalism, associated with natural sciences and constructivism associated with social sciences, have been called paradigms and defined by Kuhn as “the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community” (Kuhn, 1970, p.173 quoted by Moses and Knutsen, 2012, p.181). Naturalism’s ontological position is that the reality is conceived as independent of us, and the epistemological position is positivist, with knowledge gained through observation, experience and senses. For the current study I had taken the position of social constructivism, where individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. “These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas.” (Creswell, 2014, p.8).

The latter view, in contrast, was relatively new, and a preferred option among contemporary social scientists as it assumes that the patterns of interest are a product of our own making and that we, as reflective agents, are, in turn subjected to social and contextual experiences – thus, human perceptions on the same phenomena (patterns), can differ because of their individual or social characteristics as male/female, ethnic minorities, rich/poor etc. (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p.10). This introduces both ontological complexity and epistemological ambiguity for a novice researcher like me because of the multiplicity of realities according to all involved, the participant, the researcher, the researched and the research audience. Constructivism is, according to Bryman (2012, p.33) “an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors...are in a constant state of revision”. So, for the researched “efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within” (Cohen et al., 2011, p.17), as would be pertinent to the views, perceptions, experiences and feelings of a group of young males of Pakistani-

origin studying in a college of further education. I used inductive assumptions of qualitative research to build a picture of the phenomena I encountered.

Qualitative research was an obvious choice as the data was not in numeric form but descriptive and inferential in character and is therefore concerned with

..collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to focus on exploring, as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples which are seen as being interesting or illuminating and aims to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth' (Blaxter et al.,2010, p.65).

The data collected thus would form the evidence which enables the researcher to understand the meaning of what is going on. Gillham (2000, p.10) affirms that "Their great strength is that they can illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations: essentially a research for meaning –as is all research".

The findings are not generalizable to other colleges or to similar cohorts of students, which in itself is a criticism of this mode of research, and are bound in social and cultural context. A beginner researcher is cautioned by Grix (2010, p.121) regarding the ethical issues because of "the direct contact researchers have with people, their personal lives and the issues of confidentiality that arise out of this". But a qualitative research as a design incorporates other processes such as, goal, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity (Maxwell, 2013, p.4). Maxwell also contends that the research design has to be flexible accompanied with a reflexive process operating throughout the project while addressing any validity threats. While the choice between qualitative and quantitative approaches is discernible, it may be possible to opt for the middle way approach which is the mixed-methods research that incorporates strengths from seemingly these two polarised positions and supports multiple methods of collecting data in a single study. This approach would naturally secure confidence in the data as the triangulation (multiple methods of data collection), would deal with validity threat. As my current study was limited in its scope and breadth, a more detailed study may require a mixed-methods research in other researches.

Gillham (2000, p.11) advances argument for the use of qualitative methods by highlighting some of its strong characteristics such as, it being an investigation where other methods might not work; where very little is known about a situation; where complexities are beyond 'controlled' approaches; to 'get under the skin' of a group or organisation; see the case from respondents' perspective; and to carry out research into processes.

As the college was located at the centre of a large Asian community and historically appealed to students from the surrounding areas, with sizable young males of Pakistani-origin, while rightly championing its equality and diversity policies, I was interested in how this claim manifested in practice, that is, the ground reality of students' experience regarding inclusivity and mobility. Although the students were represented on all vocational areas of the college with apparently no observable conflicts between different cohorts of students, the college staff or its provision in general. Many of these students came from deprived families and had a bad experience of compulsory

schooling locally, however they were culturally supported by their parents while at the same time they were exposed to other sub-cultural distractions in their lives. In the circumstances, the college had a unique role to play in their lives in realising their career aspirations and affording less fortunate ones with an opportunity to advance their life chances. I was interested in these various strands of the student life.

## **Research purpose**

The purpose of this case study was to explore the experiences of British males of Pakistani-origin in an FE college in the north of England, where the 'experiences' was understood as an educational journey within the college setting for the students having a complex, cultural and social characteristics.

## **Research approach/strategy**

My research approach and design were essentially a qualitative case study, focusing on a group of particular students in a college of further education - a 'case' (a community of students/institution) in context. One of the definitions of a case study is, "a strategy that examines, through the use of a variety of data sources, a phenomenon in its naturalistic context, with the purpose of 'confronting' theory with the empirical world" (Piekkari et al., 2009: 569, quoted May, 2011, p.227). Gillham (2000, p.1) defined a 'case' in bulleted points as:

- A unit of activity embedded in the real world;
- Which can only be studied or understood in context;
- Which exist here and now;
- That merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw.

I had taken these ideas for my case study to answer the research questions, and may be worth recalling here that this design is only congruent with qualitative approach. A 'case' is also viewed as the 'object' of study or 'unit of analysis' (young males of Pakistani-origin) about which the data is collected (de Vaus, 2001, p.220), de Vaus also distinguishes between different components of a case, such as the staff in a college as in my study, "when taken together, provide a much fuller, more complex understanding of the whole than would the perspective provided by any particular element of the case [the students/institution]". While generalisation, extending the research findings to other similar contexts, in qualitative research is not strongly claimed, validity of findings within a case or institution (internal generalisation) is considered as a key issue in case studies (Maxwell, 2013, p.137).

A case study approach "has a narrow focus the case in point and can be used to explore, test a theory or theory-building" (de Vaus, 200, p.224) or used in description or "understanding of a phenomenon" (Grix, 2010, p.50). Some criticism is levelled at this approach in that it is subjective, leading to "bias with doubts on its reliability and validity" (May, 2011, p.220) but it must be borne in mind that the emphasis is on the context and time-dimension and particularity of the situation. Being an 'insider' researcher as in my case, it is paramount to remain reflective throughout the research process to address the challenges of subjectivity.

I had chosen to describe this as a 'case study' because I was interested in how the young people's experiences in my study were experienced during their time at Bradford. At the outset these students will have been enrolled on a number of different vocational courses, with different expectations and perceptions so their perspectives from when they first joined the college, to actually completing a full programme of study were of utmost interest to me in this study.

I was tentatively aware of the weaknesses inherent in this research design which was extended over two years, as it was laborious, involved repeated interviews etc. but I took comfort in its advantages, such as it gave a complete picture with accurate data at individual level for all participants. Case study had shown to have a number of features, (Cohen et al., 2011) such as containing rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case, chronological narratives, focus on individual actors or groups, in seeking to understand their perception of events, and to highlight specific events relevant to the case, researcher is integrally involved and the richness of case come from the written report.

The study provided complex information and "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973, quoted, (Cohen et al., p.17) of participants' own lived experiences in FE as they were influenced by social, economic and cultural factors beyond their control. In addition to the more focused research questions, the broader aims of the project were:

- To deepen understanding of how young males of Pakistani-origin viewed further education and its role in providing learning opportunities or otherwise in fulfilling their aspirations.
- To identify the factors which influenced the choice of an FE College as a venue for their post-compulsory education?
- To learn about the lived experience of FE and how the college's learning culture/structure correspond with students' perceived identities.
- To contribute to the development of a theoretical perspective to construct an understanding of the level of engagement and outcomes for the youngsters in an FE setting.

These aims, along with research questions were operationalised to form the interview schedules for focus groups and semi-structured interviews for students and college staff so the intention was to establish coherence in research aims, chosen methodology and research methods.

## Population and sampling design

The case study site is one of the largest FE Colleges in the country that also offers the widest number of HE programmes outside of the university sector. The main campus is situated in a new purpose-built building where my study was located, close to the city centre. From September 2015 the college underwent re-structuring giving rise to Departments as opposed to Programme Areas in previous years, where the Heads of Department managed the provision in a cluster of related curriculum areas, supported by Programme Area Leaders, formerly, Curriculum Team Leaders which I was one until August 2015.

The FE College is structured into Departments, with Heads of Departments managing the provision in clusters of related curriculum areas, supported by Programme Area Leaders. The Pupil Referral Unit is managed by a Headteacher. The Apprenticeship provision is managed by City Training Services, part of the Bradford College Group, and situated in the heart of Bradford's business district serving a broad base of organisations in Bradford (66%), the rest of Yorkshire (22%) and nationally (12%). The College departments delivered vocational and academic courses ranging from entry level to level 4 in for instance Construction, Engineering and Motor Vehicle; Hair and Beauty, Travel and Tourism, Public Services etc.

As a cursory look at student joining or leaving, there were 19,805 leavers in 2015-16 compared to 20,020 in 2014-15 – a reduction of 215 leavers (1.1%), although there was a 6% increase in the number of 16-18 age group and a further 18% increase in the 14-16 age group.

The College houses a diverse population comprising of nine ethnic groups with White being the largest with 40%, followed by Pakistani 31%, Black African 5% and Indians 2% plus few others. As the site draws most of its students from the local community, it is among providers with highest deprivation levels for level 3 EFA funded learners. The LEA averages 48% pupils leaving with maths and English grades A\*-C at key stage 4.

A simple understanding of 'population' and a 'sample' is offered as, "a sample is a portion or a subset of a larger group called a population. The population is the universe to be sampled...A good sample is a miniature version of the population – just like it, only smaller" (Fink 1995:1, quoted, May, 2011, p.98). This line of thinking is more pertinent to a quantitative study where generalisation is desired. I used a purposive sampling technique which is part of a broader non-probability sampling. This choice allowed me to select my participants according to the predetermined characteristics of young males of Pakistani-origin. I also selected staff for interviews who worked in the college in various roles such as lecturers, advice and guidance, security etc. - this data source corroborated and triangulated student experiences in the college.

## Population

To achieve my research aims, I first set out to secure my sample that displayed the necessary characteristics of the target population, being male, of Pakistani-origin, and aged 16 – 18, enrolled on full time courses and in a college of further education. The sample size deemed appropriate for this study was initially set at 30, to allow for any attrition but the total number of students who participated in the actual study was 26. The college was supportive of my research and had already agreed to pay half of my course fees too; this arrangement legitimised my position and made it easier to approach Programme Managers (PM) for their assistance in locating my subjects.

The hierarchical structure of the college at the start of the research in 2014/15 was such that the students were placed under the responsibility of a course tutor, who in turn was managed by a Curriculum Team Leader (CTL) who was managed by a Programme Manager (PM). I worked in the college as CTL and knew most of these individuals to lesser or greater extent hence, decided to approach 7 PMs directly by an email with a full explanation of the research enterprise, to be followed by a phone call two days later, then arranged to meet them personally a week later. These PMs were responsible for a range of Programme Areas (PA) that included, 'FE Business & Enterprise', 'FE Computing', 'Construction', 'Engineering', 'Centre for Academic Studies', 'Public Services & Sport' and 'Science & Maths'. Such an array of PAs would give me enough choice in terms of the variety of courses both vocational and academic, but the plan soon ran into difficulties when 3 of the 7 programme areas did not cooperate as anticipated, despite my perseverance, by personal visits or phone calls – they were allegedly either, away on a conference or engaged in a meeting. But on the positive side, other PMs were very supportive and referred me to their tutors for the sample; eventually I had collated enough names for a pilot study and for my research sample. This type of sampling is a non-probability sampling as the 'data from the selected cases can stand in their own right and there is no requirement to generalise from them..' (Aldridge and Levene, 2001, p.62).

## Sampling technique

The term 'sampling' is contested by Maxwell (2013, p.96) who argues that this term is "problematic for qualitative researcher, because it connotes a purpose of 'representing' the population sampled", as the sampling used in quantitative research. Purposive sampling or purposeful selection was adopted because 'the goal of a purposive sampling is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are posed' (Bryman, 2016, p.408). So, the deliberate selection of a college or a group of students furnished information relevant to research questions that may not have been possible in any other way. Consequently, nine members of the college staff were sampled - 5 lecturers (3 white female, 1 black female, 1 Pakistani male), 1 from Estates (white male), 1 Security (white male), 1 Connexions (white male) and 1 Progress Learning Coach (Pakistani male) – this sample selection was based on purpose sampling to allow for a range of representation from among the college staff.

## Research instrument

Interviewing is a popular method of collecting data but the approach is significantly different for quantitative and qualitative research where one approach makes use of structured interviewing and the other qualitative interviewing (both semi-structured and unstructured) but I mainly used semi-structured interview schedules as the research instrument in this study. The overriding aim was to access reliable (truth) data from the participants that would address my research questions. So firstly, I decided to conduct a one-to-one, face-to-face, pilot study to test out my questioning and responses although prior to that I was careful in formulating questions for the interview guide in order to access the respondents' world view. Surprisingly, I discovered a number of flaws in the interview guide, my checklist of topics to cover, so for the subsequent interviews I modified the order of questioning, rephrased the questions to avoid ambiguity and simplified the language used in questioning. The pilot study allowed me to assess students' verbal responses and behaviour through body-language and to make use of prompts and probes to keep them talking or to ask follow up questions as the students appeared more confident in interview situations as the interview was taking place in their familiar setting.

The semi-structured format of interviews have a number of advantages over others in that they are used in fairly clear-focussed investigation, for cross-case comparability (Bryman, 2016,p.469), to explore responses further, flexibility in questioning and responses, the researcher can guide and explain questions (Walsh, 2001, p.66); while the limitations with this method are that the validity of the data is queried (Robson & McCartan, 2015), there is usually too much data generated as in my case which had to be organised sorted and transcribed and the reliability can be poor because it is hard to compare responses when there is variance in questioning from one participant to the next. I used both closed and open-ended questions to allow for a variety of responses. By using interviews in qualitative perspective, I drew on the knowledge from participants "who were actors and creators of that knowledge which covered the issues of behaviour, beliefs or attitudes." (Robson & McCartan, 2015, p.286).

Robson and McCartan also state that the focus groups (or group interviews) which characterise both a discussion and an interview, and are conducted for the range and increase of data, for corroboration by participants and for flexibility, but the whole process has to be managed tactfully.

Here the "prime concern was to encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topic in the focus for the group. In the case of sensitive taboo topics, the group interaction, may facilitate expressions of viewpoints usually not accessible" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.150), focus group interviews also emphasised 'understanding participants' experiences, interests, attitudes, perspectives and assumptions' (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.90). But as the groups comprised of young people where the two extremes of participant involvements were possible with dominant individuals and the quieter members – these had to be handled tactfully to stimulate fair contributions from all.

## **Source of data generation**

The primary sources of data were my sampled students and professional staff working within the FE College, who responded to semi-structured interviews in the form of focus groups and or as individuals. I had to also draw on statistics from the college's internal systems as a secondary source, where student information on, enrolments, attendance and achievements was retained.

## **Pilot study**

Taking on a pilot study was not as daunting as I first thought; my previous experience of interviewing students proved advantageous in the circumstances.

I was nevertheless aware of my own particularity in this case - a Muslim male of Pakistani ethnicity, interacting with research participants who shared similar characteristics. My immediate concerns were how I would be perceived by the students, and how my presence was going to affect their behaviour and influence the eventual quality of data. I realised I was a middle-ranking manager (CTL) at the college prone to wearing a certain kind of attire that projected my managerial job role, but to create some understanding and rapport with the students, I had to address this power differential by dressing down appropriately and having the first meeting arranged in the presence of their vocational tutor. I was introduced as someone who worked at the college, who was undertaking a research study to seek the views of Asian boys in the college. I spoke to them about my role in the college, my background, and the importance of the study and how their contribution would be crucial.

When I discussed my background, where I lived, where I originated 'from back home' and the schools I had attended – this resonated with most of my participants which helped to create a trustworthy working relationship with them. I was after their honest and spontaneous views expressed without any pressure or coercion.

Once I had gained clearance from the PMs as 'gatekeepers' for the student participants, my next move was to access the students in their natural settings to try to develop some trust with them that would eventually lead to reliable data. Hence the first round of focus interviews with students began in December 2014 and completed by January 2015; initially with a pilot study where the cohorts of students were divided into 4-5 group-members for an exploratory study. I piloted my first interview schedule to serve different functions, firstly to evaluate if my participants made sense of the Participant Sheet or if the Consent Form was reasonably clear and importantly, the structuring and handling of asking research questions, teasing out interesting responses and seeking further elaborations. The piloting proved to be a useful exercise in revising the next set of questions, approaching interview discussions and other adjustments to research documents.



## Primary data

In essence, what became obvious from the focus groups was that the quieter members of the group became surprisingly very active - the interview process somehow facilitated this change. The interviews were held within the college premises either in a class room or in a secluded area with no interruptions that is, in respondents' familiar surroundings.

The following topics were explored as a guide in the first round of interviews without being too rigid as semi-structured interviews allow that flexibility:

- Students' self-description of their race or ethnicity.
- Their hopes and aspirations in the short and long run (2 and 10 years).
- The reasons and factors for choosing this FE College.
- And the course.
- Their view and perception of the College.
- And if the students discussed any college issues with their parents.

A participant Information Sheet was handed out (Appendix A) to each participant at the commencement of the interview process along with a sheet for the collection of demographic data (Appendix C). This extra information identified the sample I used in my study and also to explore any correlation between socio-demographic characteristics such as the parents' education or occupation and the students' choices or outcome. The consent form (Appendix B) was completed after the participants were satisfied with their role and the objectives of the research undertaking. The demographic sheet contained such information as the personal data, parents' settlement in the UK, their education, their employment status, the type of employment they were engaged in, any siblings in Higher Education (HE) and the language/s spoken at home.

The next round of data generation derived from the students via semi-structured interviews started in December 2015 and ended in May 2016, by this time the students had progressed onto the second year of their study. The choice of semi-structured interviews was determined by the type of data I was interested in: having insight into how participants viewed their world, with latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen as significant replies (Bryman, 2011, p.212). The interview questions (or guide) (Appendix J) can be evaluated in terms of thematic and dynamic dimensions with regard to the knowledge produced and the interpersonal relationship in the interview (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.131).

Consequently, there were four broad topics as a guide to explore with the flexibility of ordering questions and to follow up any answers deeper covering - college/education, self-ranked identity, family/culture and social/outside college interests:

College/education

- Expectations of students learning journey.
- Students' ranked view of the course in the second year.
- Congruence with course and students' future aspirations.
- Students' relationship with non-Pakistani peers and college staff.

- Suggestion of any changes to the course for the future.
- Students' experience of racism or discrimination at the college.
- The good and bad points about the College.

#### Identity

- Students' self-description of preferred identity. Students ranked a given list of identities according to their preferences.
- Students thoughts on, if the Muslim faith was respected in the college and how.

#### Family/culture

- Brief family information.
- Whether students had any responsibilities for any siblings before or after college.
- Parents influence on choosing the college or the course.
- If the marriage was a concern at the current stage of the study.

#### Social/outside college interests

- If the students did any part-time work and its perceived effect on their study.
- Any social, cultural or other interests outside the college.

Again, all this information was audio-recorded, organised, laboriously transcribed and anonymised for subsequent data storage and analysis.

The next set of primary data was furnished by the college staff who worked in their various roles in college – five were lecturers, one participant was from Estates, one from Security, one from Connexions (advice and guidance) and a Progress Learning Coach. I wanted to interview a sample of college staff that had direct or indirect dealings with these students and could enrich the overall data. I had to prioritise the staff sample so other potential sources such as the student services, receptionists and cleaners were overlooked for the sake of brevity. I approached the staff in similar fashion to the students, covering research protocols of anonymity, confidentiality and the voluntary consent. There was no rule-of-thumb guidance on how many staff should be interviewed but I had originally planned to interview twelve to allow for manoeuvrability in case of any attrition but I had to eventually settle for nine because of the constraints on the study in terms of time and resources and the potential volume of data. These participants were articulate in their utterances and provided extremely detailed data. This data had usefulness in its corroboration of the first set of data from students and also to contrast some of the claims by made the students.

As my approach to interviewing college staff was similar to that of the students, namely, a relevant participant information sheet (Appendix F) was distributed to the staff in the first instance, an interview consent form (Appendix G) was signed and a demographic sheet (Appendix H) completed, but this time the topics of interest were consistent with research questions:

- Experience of teaching or other interaction with young males of Pakistani-origin.
- Observable trends with these types of students over the last five to ten years.
- Student engagement in lessons for these students.
- Any differences in attitude towards learning between these and non-Pakistani students.
- Trends in behaviour and motivation over the years.
- Reasons for underachievement for these students compared with others in the college.
- Ensuring high achievements for these students.
- Interpretations for any dropouts.
- Other people or agencies involved in ensuring increased success rates for these students.
- Any specific measures in place for these students.
- Staffs view on how the college is perceived by students, parents or the community.
- Students' understanding of the next steps or the career pathways.
- Any specific issues with this group of students.
- Any issues outside the college that may impact negatively on the college experience.

The data derived from these interviews was audio-recorded and treated in similar fashion to the students' interviews. This process followed a revised time-line (Appendix D) for the different stages of the research development, detailing interview ordering, data analysis and the completion dates.

### **Secondary data**

The secondary data source was the college's ProAchieve data-base where the student information regarding recruitment, retention, enrolments and achievement were stored. I had access to this data as a CTL as it was readily used in college's Self-Assessment Reports (SARs) and for profiling the college's student movements. The system is password protected so with access to the system this information was easily retrievable. This data was particularly imperative for observing the trends in enrolments and achievements over the years but the system only allowed this information from the academic year 2011/2012.

## Data collection

The data collection first began with focus groups where the real understanding developed when I saw the students in their respective cohorts for the focus group discussions away from their classes. The focus group approach worked well for these students since it allowed for a range of data, checks and balances for the quality of data was provided by the participants, it was relatively easy to administer and the participants felt empowered (Robson and McCarton, 2016).

They were all handed information sheets explaining the nature of research study, covering the research purpose, what the research was about, why it was being done, why they had been asked to participate, what will be asked, what will happen to the information provided by them and who else was involved in the research. This information sheet covered a number of important issues on ethics such as the informed consent, right to withdraw, anonymity and confidentiality - the consent form was signed by each participant without any hesitation.

The quality of data in terms of the issue of validity can be addressed “through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher”. (Cohen et al., 2011, quoted, Winter, 2000) which was provided by the students and the staff. The question of validity and reliability is a hallmark of quantitative research where replicating an experiment or generalising the results of some findings count, but it is a contested issue in qualitative research in this format. Instead, other terms such as ‘confidence’, ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘authenticity’ (Creswell, 1994, p.158) are used, but validity could be equally applied to transcriptions of interviews, there is also the internal validity, whether the data gathered through interviews is an accurate account of the participant views. Some researchers suggest the criteria ought to be ‘credibility’ replacing internal validity, ‘transferability’, ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’ (Cohen et al., 2011, p.181 quoted Lincoln and Guba). It was hoped the number of interviews conducted with each participant over the two-year period, and with a specific group, ought to triangulate my data. Some of the data was checked back with students to verify for its correct recording and meanings - the integrity of any research would depend on how accurately and fairly the data was collected which then lends itself to reliable findings.

Twenty-six students were interviewed in the focus groups from December 2014 to January 2015; five of these students were interviewed again from December 2015 to May 2016 whereas the nine College staff were interviewed from February 2017 to June 2017. The students were drawn from Plumbing, Business, Construction, IT and Electrical vocational areas.

## **Fieldwork data**

During the audio-recording of the interviews, the notes were made on the seating arrangements of the participants and a reflective log written after each recording. The recording equipment was hired from the University who also transferred the audio recordings onto CDs; these were labelled with relevant dates and anonymised participant names. The duration of interviews varied from thirty minutes to an hour. I carried out almost all the transcriptions fully using my own method with guidance taken from transcription conventions, such as for pauses or hesitations. These transcriptions improved in speed and complexity as more transcriptions were completed but despite the practice, it took about ten hours on each transcription which varied from 2,000 words to 7,000. This was mainly due to the mundane method of starting and stopping the digital recorder while transcribing the interview contents. With hindsight, a software package or paid services may have saved time.

## **Data analysis techniques**

Managing and organising capacious volume of the final interview data from both students and staff was going to be a mammoth task when developing categories of themes, it would not be just baffling but elusive too. My approach to data analysis was a thematic coding analysis, as it “reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants or as a constructionist method” (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.467).

I applied a standard approach of: reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to achieve some form of familiarity with the data then used both pre-determined and emerging initial codes dictated by the research questions and the respondents' own labels (*in vivo*). Once I had the codes in place I tried to merge codes wherever possible to identity themes, these themes were then cross-tabulated in a table. The next step was to look for patterns, associations or concepts in the various themes to describe, interpret and conceptualise the phenomena.

I had planned to reduce the data to themes and categories using manual methods like matrices, although computer software such as NVivo was another option, in which I have had some training, but due to lack of practice in its applications I did not feel competent – so this option was temporarily abandoned. There are advantages of using the computer software, this computing ability “to use codes, memos, hypertext systems, selective retrieval, co-occurring codes, and to perform quantitative counts of qualitative data types” (Cohen et al., 2011) has a massive advantage over traditional manual methods in that it saves time, it's quick and it's efficient.

## Role of researcher

Though this study was specifically on FE experience of young males of Pakistani-origin, one could not pretend it was not an issue as 'racialized fields and social relations are complex, dynamic and changing' and the questions of analytical frameworks and methodological processes need to be explicit including one's own reflexive role in the research process (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 49).

The most pressing issue in the current research was my own reflexivity, how skilfully I conducted the interviews to minimise bias and to accumulate data from alternative sources that would corroborate the findings. It was hoped that semi-structured interviewing of the students, twice during the life of the study and college staff once would address the issues of validity. I used the term reflexivity as it is used commonly to mean "that social researchers should be reflective about the implication of their methods, values, biases and decisions for the knowledge of the social world they generate" (Bryman, 2016, p.388). There is also the notion of "researcher-as-instrument" which has potential for bias (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.171). I took care in not allowing my own prejudices or biases to influence my perspective on the phenomenon before me, but as qualitative research is an interpretive process, my ingrained values may have influenced my interpretation of the events, this is something hard to verify. Equally, being neutral and rational, and 'bracketing' any pre-conceived ideas can be claimed easily but difficult to substantiate.

As I was someone of Pakistani ethnicity, middle-aged and worked in the college for about 13 years, first as a tutor then as a middle-manager (CTL), having had the experience of teaching similar students as the participants and being aware of some of their educational issues. I had been a local Labour councillor for the city for eight years for one of the city's most deprived wards and served on the college's governing body as a governor in the early 90's during the time of incorporation of FE colleges. I had also lived in the city for over 40 years and had some understanding of the state of city and its schools in terms of their educational performances compared with national bench marks and the struggle by the parents to find good schools for their children; my own three boys passed through the comprehensive schooling system in the city.

When I approached my participants, I had adopted a professional yet friendly stance, minimised any symbolic superiority in, for instance the way I dressed up or spoke to them. As a consequence, I built rapport with all participants and they would assume a common understanding of their responses about the college and its culture which I had to interject and clarify that I was seeking their views from their perspective and that I was a tutor who worked for the college, so I sought further explanations and elucidations where it became necessary. In retrospect it is possible that they may have been more critical of the college if I had approached them as an outsider and not as a college member, but still feel they were candid in their expressions thus avoiding 'Heisenberg effect' where they may have answered my questions the way I wanted to hear.

## **Ethical/ considerations**

'Ethics' is now an integral part of any empirical research, mainly to protect the participants, to promote integrity of research findings and to benefit stakeholders.

The ethical approval for my research was granted in September 2014 by the School of Education and Professional Development under the auspices of the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Committee. The research process was bounded by the British Educational Research 2011(BERA) Ethical Guidelines which stipulated responsibilities towards all concerned – the participants, sponsor of research as the College in question was my sponsor, the community of educational researches and the College staff. In practical terms this would manifest in respecting all individuals concerned, ensuring no harm was caused as a result of their participation, and being fair and just in the research endeavour.

Students were briefed about the research, its purpose, informed consent, confidentiality, assurance of their anonymity; their right to withdraw from the research process at any time and that the research project was supported and approved by the college.

All participants were provided with written details of the research purpose (Appendices, A and F) along with clear explanation of how their contribution would help with the findings and that their participation was informed and entirely voluntary (Appendices, B and G). Their right to withdraw from the research process at any stage of the research study was clearly articulated; although for me, any withdrawals would have posed a serious challenge to the very survival of the project. The data was audio-recorded then transferred onto CDs and finally to a password-protected computer hard-drive. As a legal duty and research protocol, all participants were assigned pseudonyms and the interview transcripts, codes for anonymity – thus assuring confidentiality. Gaining the confidence of students and the college staff was the key to successful collection of reliable data and this was hugely helped especially when I interviewed the college staff by being an 'insider', the students may have felt obliged to show full cooperation because of this status but this is hard to establish.

## **Limitations of the study**

Qualitative studies in general are influenced by personal biases or idiosyncrasies of the searcher and their ability to handle the research enterprise meticulously, while this encompasses a range of issues such as the choice of research topic, the selection of sample, collection of data and the final interpretations. On personal level I tried to be reflexive throughout the process to be more rigorous to mitigate any shortcomings.

This study being a case study was both context and time-bound so the findings were not expected to be generalizable to other FE institutions, or participants with similar characteristics; the youngsters and the college staff interviewed were functions of socio-cultural and economic discourses of the present time.

This study was time-consuming for a single researcher like me, from the starting point of approaching gatekeepers to actually identifying potential participants, arranging face-to-

face interviews, recording and transcribing recorded data. A small team of researchers could have interviewed a much larger sample and possibly interviewed the college staff twice, once at the start of the research and then at the end, this would have given more credence to the research study.

### **Gap in knowledge**

As mentioned in the above, the literature or studies pertaining specifically, to Pakistani young males' experience of FE is not found, although there is ample literature on broader but related issues such as, integration, spatial, (Meer & Modood, 2012; Kundnani, 2007; Kelly, 2009; Loader & Hughes, 2017; Lewis, 2011; Thomas & Sanderson 2012.), ethnicity (Bulmer & Solomos, 2009; Garmer & Selod, 2014; Samad, 2013) and even on global conflicts that may impinge on young males education (Dwyer, Lewis & Markwick, 2016), while some other studies have specifically focused on young Muslim women (Hussain, Johnson & Alam, 2017: Scharff, 2011).

There is also plentiful literature on FE, but most of this can be categorised into: the role of FE (Avis et al., 2017; Allan, 2011); student motivation, success and attainment (Fuller & Macfadyen, 2012; Boocock, 2014; Wilkinson, 2014; Berrington, Rogerts & Tammes, 2016; Bhatti, 2011; Frumkin, Koutsoubou, 2013) and culture, perception and social class in FE (Gibson, 2004; Orr, 2013; Atkins & Flint, 2015; Robinson, 1998; See et al., 2011; Swift & Fisher, 2012; Avis et al. 2017)). Hence it can be fairly assumed that there is limited literature that directly reviews the FE experiences of Pakistani-origin students.

While all these are valuable contributions in FE, I have not yet stumbled across any study that documents FE experiences of young males of Pakistani-origin that explores the FE setting that meets the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students, who may be experiencing numerous obstacles, or how their culture or class background impinges on their learning experience and whether this corresponds with their perceptions and expectations of the college. Thus, it can be reasonably assumed that there is limited literature on the perceptions and experiences of FE amongst BME students especially Pakistani-origin male students.

Pakistani-origin lived male youth experiences specifically in Bradford, a post-industrial city with spatial social exclusion on education, employment, youth culture and post-school choices.

The segmented assimilation theoretical framework is employed to analyse Pakistani-origin youth experiences in a post-industrial city.

It is anticipated that my study will address this shortfall by bridging this gap which is based on the results of an empirical study conducted with students by way of focus groups, individual semi-structured interviews with students and the college staff with additional secondary data obtained from the college's own data sources. It is hoped the final recommendations will contribute to policy and practice within FE.



## **Establishing truthfulness and credibility**

As mentioned before the two research approaches – the positivist (quantitative) and the naturalistic (qualitative) were epistemologically different with different concepts for measuring quality or rigour in empirical research. It was noted that the qualitative research was context and time bound which would entail the non-generalizability of the research findings. As the concepts of validity and reliability are taken for granted in quantitative research however, these become problematic in qualitative research, so alternative criteria for evaluating qualitative research are proposed - trustfulness or trustworthiness, and Credibility. So, the qualitative validity would mean “that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures”, and the qualitative reliability, that “the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Creswell, 2014, p.201); in other words, the method of collecting data by any one at any time would yield the same findings. On validity, Silverman (2013, p.285) puts it succinctly as, “validity refers to the credibility of our interpretations.”

As my case study extended over two years period with a specific cohort of students, where I had established some form of rapport during the field activities, I was able to respondent validate the data by going back to my respondents to verify the interview transcripts following digitally audio recording of the interviews, thus rendering the interview transcripts more reliable. The interview transcripts, though valuable in terms of data familiarity and initial analysis, were arduous tasks, oscillating between listening and transcribing with particular attention given to hesitations, pauses and overlaps. As I was working towards valid conclusions, I had to minimise validity threats by focussing on two well documented terms used in qualitative research - the researcher bias (reflexivity) and the reactivity. Reflexivity refers to the researcher being “reflective about the implication of their methods, values, biases and the decisions for the knowledge of the social world they generate” (Bryman, 2016, p.388), in other words “the inquirer reflects about how their role in the study and their personal background, culture and experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations” (Creswell, 2014, p.186). Reactivity on the other hand is “the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals’ studies” (Maxwell, 2013, p.124).

The above concepts were particularly relevant to this study on two levels, firstly I belong to the same ethnic group, ‘from back home’ as my informants, and secondly, I worked in the same institution in a middle management role, so there was visible hierarchy of power between me, as the researcher, and the researched. I could see two undesirable outcomes when interviewing these students either, they over or under-state their responses, rather than giving the honest account of their experiences. I had to minimise this power differential by dressing down for them as an ordinary lecturer, choosing an agreed location for the interviews and relaxing them before the interviews began with clear explanation of the purpose of the study. I reflected on the way the question would be orchestrated to; for example, avoid any leading questions so that honest utterances could be gathered.

The data gathered was from focus groups and semi-structured interviews with students over two years period but then I also gathered data from college staff and utilised the college’s data sources as secondary source to shed more light onto my findings – this

acted as 'triangulation', "to counter the weaknesses that exist in different methods of data collection and analysis" (Walsh,2001, p.69).

I also used a research journal throughout my research activity to note any critical incidents or any notable events to inform my enquiry. This was particularly useful with students when piloting initial interviews and noting any discrepancies or where modifications to the interview questions or the information sheets were required.

### **Scope of enquiry**

I endeavoured to stay within the narrow bounds of the study's aims and tried to find focus and depth when reviewing the literature (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). As the study was based in a post-industrial town where the fourth generation of Pakistanis were settling down and diversifying economically, having first originated from rural areas of Pakistan in the post-war period. There were several factors which united the Pakistani community in Bradford – most came from the same area in Pakistan (Pakistan-administered Kashmir), shared the same religious affiliation, worked in the same industry (textiles) and lived closed by creating a close-knit community. This gave them the muscle needed to take on the authorities at the time of grievances as discussed in Chapter 2.

While the background to Muslim presence was complex, I tried to focus on those areas that directly impacted on my study and overlooked others that may even have had some relevance to my enquiry such as Islamophobia.

In the literature review chapters I then focused on the Pakistani males' evolving identities, their experiences in society, education and employment. I explored the role and experience of FE and, to whether this represented mechanisms for mobility. The Pakistani young males' socio-cultural negotiations and employment prospects were also discussed. I had hoped by restricting myself to these themes ought to address my research questions namely:

1. To what extent does an FE setting meet the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students to complete their courses and to progress further while negotiating any impending obstacles during their study?
2. To what extent does the students' cultural or class background enhance or impinge on their learning or educational experiences of an FE college. To what extent is the nature of student cultural/class background congruent with the structures, culture and expectations of FE institutions?
3. How does the FE experience correspond with the student perceptions and expectations of their past or post-college trajectories?

I endeavoured to seek answers to my research questions in the empirical data.

## Chapter 5: Analysis and discussion – student motivations for choosing college

### Introduction

This chapter explores the theme of why and how the student respondents came to attend the college. It draws on and discusses data around this theme and identifies issues of perceptions of college, college location, the course on offer, family and friends' endorsement and limitations in accessible educational choices, within this theme. Choosing a FE college for your next stage of study is a complex matter for any young person let alone the young males of Pakistani-origin with additional apprehensions and disadvantage to contend with (see Appendix E)

Student respondents' assertions on other issues covered a wide spectrum of their expectations and aspirations in a FE college environment regarding this new undertaking. The rationale for coming to the college is firstly, cited in the college's location (convenience); secondly, the suitability of the course on offer – a decision arrived at after conducting some research, comparing colleges, asking tutors, friends and family; thirdly, the friends and families' endorsements, based on some subjective experiences and lastly, the limitations (additional opportunity) placed on the options available due to poor prior attainments.

Firstly, I wanted to know the fundamental understanding of what the expectations of a college, as an institution meant to these students and their outcomes from it- they articulated their perceptions of the college in conceptual, occupational and social terms. For Hamza, a Level 3 Business student who is hoping to go to university eventually, has university-educated parents who are both working full time, to Hamza, it's fairly clear that the college has something to offer and it's his duty to realise that dream - from being competent in learning the skills to career development:

A place to learn, study hard and make a future for yourself.

Bilal is a Level 3 Electrical Engineering student who also wishes to go to university, he has a sister already studying at university, shares Hamza's vision as an opportunity to help get ahead:

Somewhere to study and get ahead in life.

These young respondents are clearly expecting the college as a place of opportunity to further their career goals – a place of social mobility. Both these students speak English with their parents and siblings – this is significant as it implies a certain level of segmented assimilation materialising. But there is also tacit acknowledgement, for instance by Hamza that the journey does not come without hard work.

While Waqas, a Level 1 Plumbing student, adds the social aspect as the prevailing priority:

It's also a place where you can chill a little.

However, an educational vision of the college is perceived Jawad, a Level 2 Construction Management student, whose father is self-employed and has a doctorate from university, he contends that:

Mostly it's study and chip...meet new people – that's good.

Postlewaite and Maull (2007) have argued that students' perceptions of their learning environment is affected by many factors including sociological perspectives (Mac an Gaill & Haywood, 2017), these may include, social class, curriculum, resources, lower levels of social mobility (Garner & Battacharyya, 2011) or the 'second best' option (Swift & Fisher, 2012) due to inadequate grades at the point of entry to college, to be discussed in the section below.

## **Convenience**

As the college is located in the heart of the community, in a city that has 24% of its population less than 16 years of age, which presumably, should not ring too many alarm bells for the future student recruitments for the college. The college is sited in an area of significant social deprivation that includes indicators such as employment rates, crime rates etc. that contributes to the city's ranking of being the 5<sup>th</sup> most income-deprived local authority in England, according to the local council's Intelligence Bulletin (2018). So, for a cash-strapped community any savings to be made in time and travel is a bonus of living closer to the college. One of the recurring reasons highlighted for coming to the college, is its proximity to home, along with some additional attributes. For Fraz, on a Level 3 Civil Engineering course, and lives with university educated father, the reasons for choosing this FE College are:

It's my local college, easy to walk here or taxi here or bus here, it's closer that's the only reason.

So presumably for Fraz, there are savings to be made in terms of money and time. In a close-knit local community, the probability of having friends or acquaintances at the same local college increases as Junaid, on IT and Networks course, illustrates:

It's closer to home and I've got lots of friends and family that come here.

Another respondent Omer, on the same course echoes similar opinions:

I prefer Bradford College because it's closer to me where I'm living right now and the course is perfect here.

And Adil, a Level 3 Business course student adds:

...so it's easier for me to get here than go to any other college such as [alternative college] or...so distance

Therefore, for Adil, travelling to a distant college whatever its merits is not an option. So, the preference to choose a local college may inadvertently consolidate the existing segregation but it is a consequence of social constraints rather than wilfully exacerbating the integration by the community – a charge levied against the Muslim communities for lack of social mixing. This situation plays into the hand of some social commentators as Thomas and Sanderson (2011) explain that, this form of spatial ethnic segregation along with economic social exclusion epitomises political view of ethnic and faith identities with negative consequences such as living parallel lives or 'othering' (Hussain & Bagguley, 2013) that carries connotations of a self-segregation, deviant and

underachieving community. The 'othering' or exclusion, is part of the 'modes of incorporation', as discussed in the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation and fosters conditions for downward assimilation, quite the opposite of social mobility that is hoped for.

It may be worth recalling that the city's under-16 population outside of London, is the highest and the college is also one of the largest FE colleges in the country with approximately 23,000 students which perhaps suggests that the college need not to struggle much with student recruitments at least for its FE provision, as it also hosts the largest HE provision outside the university sector which has its own challenges with recruitment, retention and, funding of course primarily, as a result of intense competition between HE providers. But the systematic cuts in FE sector over the years, along with local competition, as a New College Bradford (16-19, sixth form college) opens in September 2019, can affect potential student choices and outcomes, what Shain (1999, p.555) observed as "greater economic and business competitiveness."

## **The Course**

Choosing a course to study at a college ought to be a much more thorough process for students which entails entry-requirement considerations, how the course may link with the next stage of study, how the course compares with the same course offered at other institutions for its content, assessment and credibility. The students' own unique status plays a huge role in this - their prior educational experience, their own confidence or even competences in meeting the demands of the course and their long-term career ambitions and aspirations. There is sufficient evidence from the respondents to suggest that some students, in addition to the convenience of being residing closer to the college, also compare providers for the best course available before they make a firm commitment, by researching on line, speaking to the course tutors, attending college open-days or even seeking guidance from past students.

Abbas (2002) has stated that young people culturally depend on parental advice for best education but this was challenged by the respondents' accounts that may indicate a cultural shift where students themselves are now mainly the agents of change with less dependency on parents as Ibrahim, a Level 2 Construction Management student with university educated parents testifies:

I wanted to be more creative, buildings and graphics, I did research about architect, it had answers to all my questions.

Another respondent, Iqbal, a Level 3 Civil Engineering student, elaborated on this by including other compensations:

I looked into [this] college that they do this course...came here because it was closer, it was financially cheaper and basically, I thought that the teachers were good here because I had a cousin here doing it before...

This account corroborates with Swift and Fisher (2012) who state that students aspire for financially rewarding courses in FE in terms of the cost and the likelihood of eventual employment.

The more ambitious students, who are aspiring for a university place, use FE as an alternative but indirect route to HE by accumulating UCAS points attached to Level 3 (BTEC) courses. It may be worth recalling (EFE, 2017) that about 10% of the HE students were drawn from FECs in the academic year 2015/16. This also shows shrewdness on the part of students as to how an alternative route can be exploited to ensure entry into a university, as Majid, whose mother is a university graduate, explains:

I wanted to do one-year course like, just to boost my [UCAS] points up, I was thinking of going to uni ...its Business Level 3.

And the comparison with the more traditional, yet demanding route of 'A' levels is made and challenged by Ali, a Level 3 Business student, who said:

I picked this course because you get 3 'A' levels from it, so you got chance of going to university and do what you like...

For both Majid and Ali, at least there is an opportunity in the form of a FE college, though it may be the 'last chance saloon' (Salisbury & Jophcote, 2008) for those who may not have done well academically for direct route to HE.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, many of the students in FE have complex social issues where learning (Gibson, 2004) is influenced by individual's perceptions and dispositions, also Wallace (2014) found that the learners can find themselves on courses by default rather than through choice. This is entirely plausible for those students whose options are limited due to poor or no prior achievements who may end up on low-status courses leading to 'warehousing' of students that particularly removes racialized communities from mainstream labour market (Avis, et al., 2017). But this claim is at odds with those who are aspiring for a university place as is evident from my respondents' data. The more able students find the most appropriate course for themselves with a view to progress onto a university. So, it seems as if the respondent students on low-level courses are happy to be at the college for its convenience of being local, for other more ambitious students the choice of the correct course is important.

### **Family and friends' endorsement**

For a close-knit community that shares many social and economic attributes, it is not surprising to imagine the influence that friends and family can exert on the choices an individual makes regarding education or a career pathway. Shah et al (2010) have drawn parallel to Bourdieu's concepts of economic or cultural capital and introduced the ethnic capital that these youngsters rely on in the form of decision making. So, the less able youngsters, perhaps lacking self-confidence are most receptive to this kind of influence. For Fahad, a Level 2 Plumbing student, choosing this particular college was a decision based on others endorsement:

I know a lot of people who come in here, they said it was ...good for business

Here Fahad has placed his faith in other people's endorsements without convincing himself as to the suitability of the course for him, 'good for business' is a rather vague insight which could be problematic for Fahad later on or even drive him to the 'warehousing' process mentioned before.

Gibson (2004) views learning as a situated activity influenced by an individual's dispositions in a complex socio-cultural setting while Hodkinson et al. (2007) remind us that in the study of learning cultures, it must be borne in mind that wider social and cultural practices play a significant role.

Danish was another student who had his eye on another course but then listened to his cousin without evaluating and convincing for himself:

...I was looking for something else to do, then this came and he [a cousin] told me about this then I thought I take [it]

The family and friends well-meaning advice can be unhelpful, since something appropriate for one person may not suit another, so the criteria ought to be self-convincing that suits personal circumstances. The teachers on the other hand may be more reliable as they have the duty of care with responsibilities for pastoral care and for guiding students onto career pathways (IAG), but the advice on the next step very much depends on the quality of the guidance and the motives of the teacher concerned as Haris, a Level 3 Engineering student explained:

...the teachers at school recommended that it's a good college to go to...

While most of these recommendations are accepted at face value and perhaps, constitute sound advice too, but the college staff's view, which will be discussed later, is that the teachers are incompetent in this respect when it comes to giving right advice to students which incidentally supports Wallace's (2014) view, who argues that the information received from schools may be inadequate.

As well as incorporating advice from different sources, students may have other reasons for choosing a course that is to escape from other form of regime, as Asif, a Level 3 Electrical Engineer described:

...I had the interview and I wanted to do HND anyway, because I got recommended and I didn't like the 6<sup>th</sup> form so I came here

Abdullah, a Civil Engineering student, is another respondent who took a friend's advice on doing a specific course in civil engineering:

...my friend came along and he said he'd doing civil engineering he's in 2<sup>nd</sup> year and he said it's really good and he told me like, the possibilities of actually doing the course...

However, it was not as straight forward for Fahad on a Level 2 Plumbing course, who had been expelled from school and had not settled for any course – he is a potential candidate for 'warehousing'.

Mine was a random selection sir, you know, I was under family pressure, cos I got kicked out of 6<sup>th</sup> form and they were saying this – apply for a course in college, I didn't know what to do what course to choose, I had no idea.

Students can easily find themselves enrolled on courses by default where they are not sure about their future plans and may change the course once they realise the course is not for them. Spenceley (2012) states that the lack of support for more challenging students can leave them in a state of 'quiescence' where there is no tangible progress made which sounds analogous to the 'warehousing' of students. Some of the accounts imply that higher level students take the initiatives themselves in locating or evaluating

the course while the lower level students depend on others for guidance or take the chance and unwittingly enrol on a course

### **Additional opportunity**

The FEIs have a role in upskilling their students to overcome social and economic marginalisation while also catering for those who may not have done so well in school or just for widening participation for those students who may be returning to education after a career break. The FEIs do tend to serve a certain stratum of our divided social classes hence the designation of 'the last chance saloon' or 'a provision for other people's children' (Salisbury & Jephcote, 2008). Swift and Fisher (2012) also stated that a FE College is a 'second best' option for students who have underachieved academically so this additional opportunity can be a relief for those students who may have been squeezed out of education due to poor achievements.

While dwelling on this theme - there were those students who chose the courses because all other options had been exhausted or just missed that important mark. Shamoon, a Level 3 Civil Engineering student was one of those students who says:  
Right, I messed up in my 'A' levels and I didn't get the results I wanted, so I was looking into civil engineering or structural engineering...

Even though Shamoon did not attain his expected grades he was nevertheless prepared to pursue his dream of doing civil or structural engineering rather than capitulate and seek employment, though seeking employment would have had its own problems in an area of high unemployment.

For Zaki, a Level 3 Civil Engineering student, there was clash of courses as he explains:  
Yes, basically what happened was, I wasn't given the opportunity to do it [the course] at 6<sup>th</sup> form, even though I had the grades but it collided with my other courses

And Usman, a Level 3 Construction Management student, thought his weakness in maths may be more suited to a course with less maths content than engineering:  
I was not so clever with maths, so the best thing I thought was construction...

Another respondent, Kashif, a Level 3 Construction Management student articulates his choice of a course for its career prospects, a view supported by Atkins et al. (2015) who says the young people place high value on their VET programme for its currency in education or in the labour market.

I did not like the 6<sup>th</sup> form and I got recommended by a friend...there are a lot of jobs available in this course, so I thought it's a good course for me

For Kashif, the course has its value in the local labour market.



## Conclusion

This chapter covered the theme of student motivations for choosing college. Starting with analysis on the students' notional perception of the college which was viewed by student respondents in conceptual (learning), occupational (upskilling) and social (friends) terms, for example, a place to study, learn and get ahead in life. This corroborates both Spenceley, (2012) and Salisbury and Jophcote (2008) view that the college provide progression for those who have perhaps not done as well or even failed at school. The student respondents then explained their motivations for choosing the college.

The college's location within the community made it convenient for the students to attend as they would save in time and money but this arrangement has undesirable effect of keeping the Muslim community in a cluster thus also inadvertently compounding the issues of spatial segregation. Education and Training Foundation (2017) state on the role of FEIs in that they have the advantage of being local with savings on travelling, flexible enough to study without compromising on employment or family commitments which is attractive for those student respondents who are less motivated and not aiming for higher education.

Choosing the right course was another reason cited for coming to the college for more motivated student respondents, but this was done carefully by comparing the courses by different providers before they made a firm commitment. For other student respondents, the course would have other characteristics such as being financially rewarding, with employment potential, a stepping stone for a university place or less demanding than 'A' levels and one that accommodates students' academic weaknesses.

For particularly less able or weaker students, friends and family endorsements carried a lot of weight. These could be low achieving students, those expelled from school or those unsure about their future plans such students are at the hands of college administration how they are placed on relevant courses. Fuller and MacFadyen (2012) found that many courses were disconnected with the world of work and were not demand-led but delivered due to ease of funding. These students were principally at risk of becoming part of the 'warehousing' process discussed earlier. But for the more able students, there is less dependency on family or friends for choosing the best course for them in view of their social and cultural imperatives. Their choices are driven by their aspirations for the future including the wish to progress onto HE which some of them do by using the college as providing another opportunity to improve their grades as Ajmal articulated.

Following the enrolments, the college's management of students for their successful educational journey, is the matter for the strategic policy makers of the college, be it the ELT (Executive Leadership Team) or the college governors to ensure that there is a clear progression and achievement as the final outcome particularly, for those students at risk of failing.

It may be noted here that student respondent demographics (Appendix E) shows plainly that almost all students speak English with their siblings and majority of the students speak English with their parents. Another notable feature of the demographics is that

majority of the working fathers are self-employed, this may be due shortage of local jobs forcing people to start their own businesses. Some of the students have their siblings studying at universities. These three factors, speaking English, self-employment and HE are signs of positive segmented assimilation despite the spatial segregation seen in the city.

The next chapter will discuss the college experiences, initial, latter and non-educational.

## **Chapter 6: Analysis and discussion - experience at college, initial and later & non-educational**

### **Introduction**

This chapter analyses the themes of the Pakistani young males' experiences at college both at initial, at the point of entry usually the first year and later, when students' progress onto subsequent years along with non-educational experiences. It draws on and discusses the data around these themes and identifies the issues of the environment, barriers to education, students' experience of external support, educational experience and the perception and status of FE. This data around experiences of college is supported by broader data around how respondent view their own identities and their preferred identifications as their social and cultural experiences frames their changing identities.

### **College experience**

When the respondents were asked about the college experience, one of the key responses was the environment. College environment can encompass a host of different perspectives for a student or an outsider, it could include the physical environment, resources, college culture, the learning process whether it promotes or inhibits social mobility, tutor roles, institutional policies, course or institutional status, characterisation of students, structural inequalities, segregation or integration, progression and discrimination. Some aspects of this 'environment' such as the structural mechanisms that may inhibit or promote social mobility or latent discrimination are difficult to spot for any unsuspecting student unless its manifestation is starkly overt.

Firstly, the respondents have positive vibes about the college and this may indicate the difference between the school, and the college culture where there is relative independence and relaxation of strict rules as students are treated like adults as Omer, enrolled on IT and Networks course, explains:

...there's more freedom, you're more treated like an adult than in 6<sup>th</sup> form...

Hasnain, an Electrical Engineering student has a broader understanding of the environment as he clarifies:

Good, lots of facilities, open spaces, the classrooms are very...got new building as well, all near to each other, so yeh, I like it here, good people, good teachers.

But the general consensus is that facilities do exist that can be used to students' advantage as Uzair, a Civil Engineering student explains:

The flexibility with being able to, you know, go do what you want to do, there's a library, just come and study whenever you like, it's always open.

These observations by the respondents as they settle down in college are the early impressions which may change as they progress onto the subsequent years.

The respondents also do not refrain from levelling criticism as they found IT services below the mark. This implies the students understand the significance of this resource in their studies as Junaid again, complains:

The equipment is bit old, other than that the course structure and everything is perfect, it's alright for me

Another grievance on the same issue is expressed by Haris, a Level 3 Engineering student:

There are crap resources here...they are nowhere as near as good, the laptops inside the laboratory...half of them don't work...and when they do work, the software is out of date

These negative experiences can be reverberated to other potential students who may be thinking of joining the college in future.

It is conceivable however, to think that these grievances will have been taken on board by the college management but to address them properly, is a matter of financial imperative in a culture of performativity and commodification of students (Boocock, 2014) with squeeze on college finances.

Some respondents speak disparagingly of their own peers and do not see their motives being educational; Zain, an Electronics Engineering student was one such respondent who said it succinctly:

They're just here to mess around mainly; they're not here to learn

So, students are also aware of other students who are not applying the effort.

Moosa, an Electrical Engineering student hoping to go to university also notices some students who are not serious about their education despite all the available facilities:

Education's OK, teachers are OK, but students, a lot of them mess about, shouldn't be here, I think resources are better than the other colleges

Ibrahim again, observes the dichotomy between the two groups of students:

I think it's a kind of split into two where there're people that come here to study, you see that in the library then there's people who come here to socialise with the friends...

But the students' low attainments and placing on low level courses can affect their disengagement in a FE setting. This disengagement, not so apparent to these respondents could be due to other less obvious means, it may be that they are marginalised due to their ethno-religious characterisation (Mac an Gaill & Haywood, 2017), or due to their socio-economic positioning, the parents' role not being as prominent as it should be (Abbas, 2002), even being on the wrong course or even structural mechanisms causing this apathy.

Wallace (2014) suggests that in addition to socio-economic issues of the students, the design of the vocational curriculum and its perception and the teachers' attitudes and attributes are the key factors in addressing this issue of disengagement.

It was stated earlier that Pakistani-origin students do have complex social issues; one of them is their supporting role in family matters, ironically, not just in the UK but back in their country of origin they refer to as 'home'.

Hammad again, complains about the tutors:

My grandma is ill at the moment [ in Pakistan], I've got to meet them [her] but these lot [the college/tutors] don't understand.

For Abdullah, a trip back 'home' leaves him struggling to meet the course deadlines:  
It's too much sometimes... they chuck all those assignments at once at you. I have just come back from 6-week holiday [in Pakistan]

These cultural norms are not really understood by the college yet they interrupt young people's studies in an adverse way.

And the expectation for the young males is to try to balance college studies with family demands; this may include part time work as Shamoan again, explains:

...it [part time work] doesn't interfere with my college work at all...

Then there is the urgency to complete studies and move onto the next stage of career ladder as Zaki again, articulates:

A lot of people want to get college done and over with, so they can move on

There is also a comparison made with school's strict regime with the college's much more relaxed culture since the students are treated as adults as Jawad illustrates:

I enjoy it, better than school, I find it a lot... treat you like adults, I enjoy it here, it's more relaxed, I get along with everyone, and it's good.

## **The barriers**

Many of the Pakistani-origin male students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are already placed in a precarious position as far as their educational outcome goes. They are already dispositioned to be influenced by their peer culture, more worrying if it's negative, and, lack the social capital which encourages studying as a key to being successful (Dwyer, 2008) in life. The media portrayal of these youngsters, as deviant or potential terrorists – and the 'othering' exacerbates the situation further and the spatial segregation due to (socio-economic) class means there is less interaction with other ethnicities or communities as they live close to the college.

The respondents in the study were very positive about the different ethnicities interacting and collaborating with each other as Hasnain again, says:

We've got white people as well and black people from Africa, we get along perfect

Moosa again, also expressed similar sentiments:

...different types of people, different background.., different ethnics. I like it better here, get on well with everybody

These young males' views are in sharp contrast to their characterisation in the media and in the wider political discourses - their hyper-masculinity (Kalra, 2009) and their association with criminality and aggression despite living segregated lives from those students who have to travel to Bradford. To Kundnani (2012) this has resulted in racialisation of Muslims, while Hall (1993) stated that the capacity to live with the difference is going to be the coming question of the twenty-first century. Racialisation is noted by some (Chao, 2015) as a process of essentialising the difference between the privileged and the others. Anthias (2011) showed that in addition to social divisions, there is also need to include transnational migration and racialisation when considering diversity.

While there seems to be no conflict between the different ethnicities in the college, the integration process is far from ideal:

...as you can see in college most ethnicities stick together, if its white, there'll be a group of white lads... (Asif)

Kundnani (2007) suggests that an integrated society can be built on universal human rights values, which these students adhere to, but the government's flawed approach on community cohesion has been based on seeing the segregation as dysfunctional behaviour (Samad, 2013) while blaming the multicultural policies of the past governments disregarded any socio-economic factors that these students live through, and created more social problems than it addressed.

The sticking-together of different ethnicities may indicate that they have been in school together or live in the same locality – a common sharing of experiences since there is no visible animosity between different ethnicities. But on the point of discrimination or racism due to religion, dispels specifically:

I don't think there's any discrimination or anything in terms of the Muslim faith...

Some more respondents conceded similarly:

No, no racism at all. (Haris)

No, everyone is treated fairly. (Usman)

These accounts must be treated as contextual where any kind of overt racism is challenged since the Equality Act 2010 renders it illegal for public bodies such as the colleges to treat ethnic minorities less favourable but the more latent form of racism such as institutional or structural form of racism is difficult to detect.

But there was an acknowledgement of racism as Adil states without giving any specific examples:

...you can't say racism doesn't exist, there's racism but it's not like, it's under the surface, it's not like spilled out to be honest

Kashif believes the media is responsible for peddling such views but thinks people know better:

To say what's going on in the media, people that are mature and have a clear understanding know that it's not true.

Some of the respondents in the study, while generally happy with the teaching were critical of the college's delivery and processes that can act as mechanisms for exclusion. It was cited before that the teachers' attitudes and attributes were the key

factors in engaging students (MacFadyen, 2012) but teachers were often critical of schools, holding them responsible for failing the incoming learners. It was also pointed out that the audit culture of colleges adds extra pressure on teachers' time and resources.

Being mindful of these concerns, some of the criticisms are expressed as:

Instead of procedures like meetings, if we have problems we have to talk to our representatives – why can't we just like talk to our teachers... (Majid)

These issues emanate from college's procedures and processes. Then there are issues of pedagogy:

Just one point though, teachers, they don't like, explain it a bit more, details like explanations, not to the point, straight forward (Kashif)

I don't like the fact that everything's on internet...I prefer handouts...straight to the point, I don't like Moodle. (Shamoon)

Then Bilal again, had complaint against an individual teacher:

I'm not the only that has issues, cos when you ask him for help...he doesn't come to help...he tells you you're gonna fail...

While Ali again, feels the work is too demanding in terms of quality:

There's not enough help, the teachers are 'A's, once they give you the work

These may sound like routine complaints that students experience daily, but the point here is that there is a lack of congruence in what the college expects and what the students expect – a fine line between mechanisms for inclusion or exclusion. Students need that important good learning journey experience to build their confidence otherwise they are likely to drop-out or worst become part of the 'warehousing' process.

### **Student experience of external support**

All the participants in my study have their parents or family members in the background who were valued and are consulted to varying degrees, as and when necessary in progressing with the course. Iqbal again, has an advantage of speaking to parents because they speak the same language:

My parents born in Britain...can relate to them...some students don't speak to them as much because of the foreign language barrier.

Ali, also has confidence in his parents:

If I want to change my course I would discuss with my parents.

Omer only speaks to his parents when he has an issue:

And if there is a[n] issue then I do speak to my parents

Whereas Majid again, bypasses his parents and consults his brothers instead, who he feels have better understanding of educational issues as some siblings in the family have higher education experience:

[sisters]... going through university phases...if I have an issue I'll go to them.

But some parents may not be in a position to help students in educational matters as Fahad again, illustrates:

...if I try explain the work then obviously they don't know much about it because it's quite complicated

Nonetheless it's not a one-way traffic, parents themselves may make checks on their children's progress as Akeel and Ameen explain:

They ask me, like, if I've got any homework or need help, stuff like that...[Zain]  
They [parents] want to know that if I'm doing good or not [Hamza]

Social and parental influences are paramount for any young person's progress and achievement as, See et al. (2011, p.95) reminded us that "strong parental support and positive family influence were determining factors in participation in schools, in post-16 education..."

The above accounts illustrate the complex socio-cultural backgrounds of the young Pakistani males in the study which are not really understood or empathised by the college.

### **Experiences and perceptions of college staff**

Once the students have been enrolled onto courses, their programme of study becomes their next educational experience until the studies are completed; this covers the tutors' dealings with students, the challenges associated with the course, the ensuing workload and the students' coping strategies with the daily demands of student life.

The student respondents identified many examples of good practice and complimented their tutors' role as Ibrahim again, testifies:

It's really nice, lovely place, it looks nice, it is nice and the teachers are really, really welcoming.

Some of the inspirational tutors were also praised as Uzair again, says:

I didn't know how to study maths, he's [tutor] the one who inspired me

One participant, Fraz, again was particularly struggling to understand a foreign tutor:

I don't understand because it's a foreign teacher...

Another participant, Asif again, protested angrily at the suggestion by a tutor of changing his course to something else as he was seemingly struggling:

...now he [tutor] just told me today, I have to work out something else to do, change my whole plan...

Adil again, is understandably shocked by this decision which leaves him devastated but the solution to such conundrum is suggested by Majid again:

...but if teachers could get more work done in the class...then, yeh, a lot more could be accomplished.



Some respondents identified difficulties with new courses in terms of the support from teachers for instance Zaki again, complains:

...the course [is] new, it's gone stricter...that's why teacher support is not like, fully there...

Ali again, meanwhile vindicates teachers:

...the teachers can't really do much about it; they just have to do what they've been told.

Bilal again, found the work in the New Year more intense:

More intense, a lot more work, you have to do a project which is completely different to the first year...

Haris again, feels one-to-one support is more effective than the referral to the learning platform:

Aside from Moodle, I don't have any other issues...

There is a partial acceptance of the difficulties due to being a new course, its intensity and the teachers' inability to interfere in the process. Moodle is the college's educational platform where students can upload or download assignments or assignment briefs which, it is felt can be better explained and achieved through hand-outs in class. Feather (2014) highlighted some of these issues in FE where teachers due to heavy workload, such as meeting KPIs, acknowledged compromising teaching in an audit culture of colleges dealing with new qualifications, inspections and funding etc.

The demands of the course are perceived as manageable for one respondent as Iqbal again states:

It's like quite big workload but I can handle it

But the assignments are an issue for Asif, who struggles with understanding the actual brief and the expected outcomes:

The only issue that I've discussed so far with my parents – assignments...

But students are resilient enough to meet these challenges as agents of change themselves who are determined to succeed as Fraz confidently feels:

I'm on the right track hopefully; all I need to do is whatever they throw at me I need to pass

Bilal was confident in the second year:

...last year... the teachers were guiding me, this year I can guide myself and I know more of the course.

Jawad seemed to have developed some understanding of how to understand the requirements of the course in the second year.

There is also a word of advice for the tutors for combining the theoretical with the practical as Haris again, suggests:

They should do educational trips as well for the classes, so that everyone can have understanding of how stuff works...

It may be recalled that Wallace (2014) suggested the causes for student disengagement, in addition to socio-economic conditions, were the design of the vocational curricular.

## **FE status**

While the college is generally perceived as a place of learning to improve one's life chances, the participants observed some peculiarities, as one participant was surprised at the ease of enrolment as he must have been expecting a much more rigorous process:

I came in and he [tutor] goes yeh, you're right for the course here – put me straight in, enjoy it! [Jawad]

This approach on the part of college may also suggest the 'warehousing' of students on low-status courses as colleges are desperate to increase the student numbers to meet their financial targets, or just lack of support. These pressures can leave students in a precarious position regarding their whole educational experience.

There is even the allowance for the students to pray if they wished as Ihsan says; ...take timeout and pray if I wanted to...

Allowing this freedom to practice Muslim faith is not seen as a threat as the college has willingly accommodated student needs in this respect by provided spaces for worship as well with allocated prayer-rooms in most college buildings.

## **Non-educational experience**

It is interesting to note that, how the segregation of students into their respective ethnic groups is interrogated by one respondent, which suggests the student, prefers integration as Waqas again explains:

I like to see more people like, mix in with different groups, like more Black and Asians and Latinos...

So Waqas is not choosing to self-segregate in educational setting but finds himself in a college where other ethnicities are absent.

As has been covered in literature review, religion is an important component of Pakistani young males' identities and its manifestation in daily life but despite the religious discrimination elsewhere, Zain is satisfied with the college arrangements:

You can dress in either a Muslim, whoever you like, nobody will say anything...multicultural as well.

Identity, in the form of self-definition of a person's values and beliefs including political, social and personal are important for the young males of Pakistani-origin as it is a key to how the student respondents participate in a diverse society and to deal with long term issues of integration. I gathered two statistics, firstly how they saw themselves in terms of their self-description of social identities without any imposition – there were 26 responses. The second statistics were from 5 student respondents who were asked to

rank 8 identities in order. Both these results have been set in tables and pie-charts below before my discussion.

There were 5 groups of students totalling 26 students their self-descriptions as 13 British-Pakisani, 7 British and so on.

Table 6.2 Identity Ranking, shows student respondents ranked identity with corresponding results displayed in the pie chart.

This study also explored the Pakistani males’ ranked description of themselves as opposed to their just self-identification to establish their national identities.

The categories were British (B), Muslim (M), Pakistan (P), British-Muslim (BM), British-Pakistani (BP), British-Asian (BA), Asian (A) and Other (O). Again, a cursory look at the 50% of the top preferences show that 10 responses are for BP/P and 8 for BM/M, 2 for B, and none for BA/A. These results corroborate earlier findings, above in this chapter. The young males of Pakistani-origin are happy with a dual description, BP or BM and a single descriptor of Pakistani or Muslim. The Asian connection does not show any prominence, as Asian description is seen as a too vague category, yet the early political activism as discussed in chapter 2, was a collective ethnic representation as Asians (Amin, 2013), this may be a sign of Muslim empowerment.

Table 6.1 Student Self-description

Student’s self-description of their race or ethnicity							
Group	British-Pakistani (B-P)	British-Muslim (B-M)	Pakistani-Pushtoon (P-P)	British-Asian (B-A)	Asian (A)	Other (O)	Total
A	1	2	1	1		1	6
B	1	3				1	5
C	5	1					6
D	1	1		1	1		4
E	5						5
Total	13	7	1	2	1	2	26

## Students self-description of identities

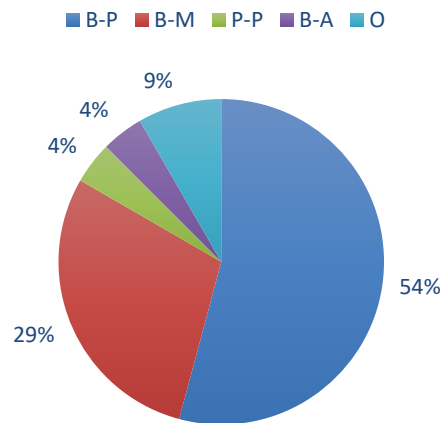
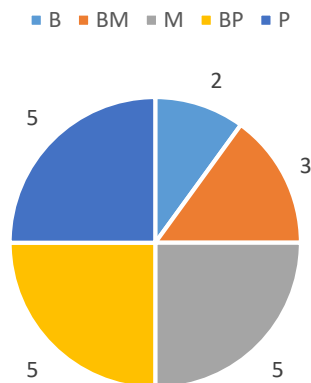
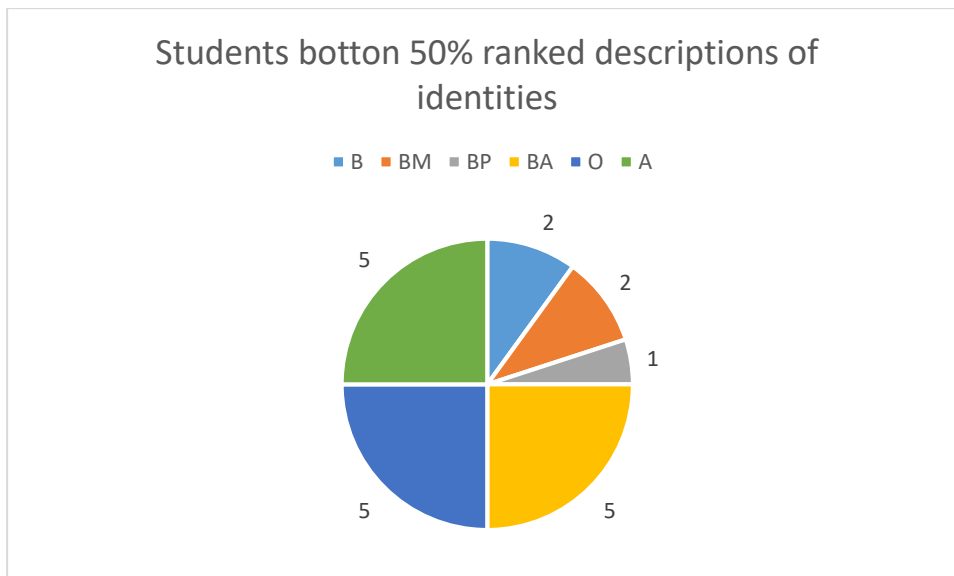


Table 6.2 Identity Ranking

Ranking/Respondents	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1st	B	M	BM	M	BP
2nd	M	B	BP	BP	BM
3rd	P	P	M	BP	M
4th	BM	BP	P	P	P
5th	BP	BM	BA	A	B
6th	BA	BA	B	BA	BA
7th	A	O	A	O	O
8th	O	A	O	BM	A

## Students top 50% ranked descriptions of identities





This research case study is both situated and contingent which looks at a FE setting where the students were asked to self-identify without any prior identifications. As discussed in Chapter 2, the notion of identity is “nebulous intangible and in the process of change” (Bhatti, 2011, p.84) - implying the extent to which a person is subjected to in terms of social and cultural experiences.

These findings also challenge the narrative that young Muslims identities are somehow confused and are doubted for their British-ness.

To gauge an understanding of how the respondents, who are third or even fourth generation Pakistanis, identified themselves, explains to some degree how this ‘process of change’ is influencing how they see themselves; referring to Table 6.1, Student Self-descriptions - 50% (13 out of 26) identified themselves with British-Pakistanis, 27% (7/26) described themselves as British-Muslims leaving only 23% (6/26) for four other categories.

Some of the reasons for these choices are articulated as:

Yeh, it's British-Pakistani, you got to respect your roots, where you come from yeh, basically that – [Danish]

I'd go with British-Pakistani, because it's a racial thing here, its nought got to do with religion, you know what I mean – [Ibrahim]

I'm British-Asian, because my origin was Asia, but being born in England, I think being called British would be appropriate as well – [Asif]

A cursory look at Table 6.2 Identity Ranking reveals that in the top 50% there are 5 Muslims, but none in the bottom 50%, 5 British-Pakistani in the top and 1 in the bottom, 5 Pakistani in the top and none in the bottom. There were no Asians or dual Asian identities in the top. Both the above statistics confirm the young males of Pakistani are very much British in their identity formation and while respecting their roots they consider their future in this country.

The notion of dual identity (e.g. British-Pakistani) is significant as it also concurs with Parekh's (2008) understanding as mentioned in Chapter 2 - that there are three clear dimensions to identity, namely, the individual, the social and the personal. There is a slight distinction though, between the individual and the personal, the former being their expression of themselves and the latter being one's diverse self-hood.

The respondents' comments suggest that they respect and recognise their lineage but as Hamza voiced, he sees 'British' as an appropriate designation too. There seemed to be a shift and openness on how the young males of Pakistani-origin see themselves – these may change further with subsequent generations. Lynch (2013, p.257) asserts that being Muslim is not incompatible with British identity, "in fact, quite the opposite, through expressions of their faith they are increasingly incorporating a British identity, both personally and communally".

## Conclusion

The college experience of young males of Pakistani-origin varies for different students as all students should not be mistaken for a homogeneous group, their motivations, abilities, their social class and parental contribution in their studies. They have complex socio-economic formulations so they have to be treated as individuals with particular but specific needs.

The students' responses mainly referred to the physical environment, the building, the classrooms, the library, the computing facilities etc. as these are the most tangible experiences. Some students appear to be messing about and this could be due to deeper disengagement issues. While the environment was perceived as generally good, there was criticism of IT facilities.

One participant articulates his awareness of Muslim representation in the media but the general consensus is that different ethnicities work collaboratively in classes though they do tend to stick in their own ethnic groups at other time – an issue that need to be confronted by the college management. There seems to be no animosity between different ethnic groups and no visible religious discrimination though there is an acknowledgement of latent discrimination though on the question of identity the student respondents see themselves as British while respecting their roots and their religious belief.

Parents and siblings play an influential role in young males' education by either being consulted for advice or parents themselves checking on their children's academic progress. There are also added pressures due to cultural expectations of caring for older generation and part-time work.

The teachers are complimented but the course content and its demands for increasingly independent study are questioned.

It was felt that some of the courses were easy to enrol on in college, its open culture, with mixed ethnicities and adult approach is valued by students, and there is no overt experience of discrimination by the participants and that there is religious freedom of expression as well as facilities for prayers.

It is clear from both self-description and the identity ranking that 83% of the youth in the study identify them-selves with British-ness and 75% of the ranking is with British-ness, this being either a British or British-Pakistani or British-Muslim. This is a significant shift from their first-generation parents who perceived their stay as temporary with a strong Pakistani identity. Students in my study are overwhelmingly in the favour of Britishness which implies a positive assimilation taking place

## Chapter 7: Analysis and Discussion – Student aspirations for the future

### Introduction

This chapter analyses the theme of student respondents' aspirations for the future that may be further or higher education, professional careers or self-employment. It draws on and discusses data around this theme and identifies issues of, short- and long-term aspirations and whether the college has contributed to social mobility.

### Short and long-term aspirations

The young male student respondents appear to be quite optimistic about the future and responded passionately about their future prospects. This is in contrast to the negative prospects and trends in all spheres of social activity, including education attainments, the rates of employment amongst Muslim males both nationally and in Bradford and marginalisation, as discussed in literature review.

I have taken Berrington et al. (2016) understanding of 'aspiration' being a student's desire for a certain level of education and 'expectations' what is likely to happen in future. Returning to the respondents, there are those who see their future in their family-established businesses:

...older brother he's a MOT tester, younger brother, he's doing a course for MOT testing...they're all mechanics [Asif]

Many of the Asian businesses in Bradford owe their success to entrepreneurial vigour and joint family effort and these include restaurants and grocery shops but also moving into new areas such as automobile businesses. This kind of self-employment tackles economic and social marginalisation (Alexander, 2004) in an area of high unemployment among the young Pakistanis where job opportunities are limited in service sector. Bolognani (2009) as discussed in literature review made an interesting point by claiming that the collapse of family structures was part of the reasons why the Muslim community experiences marginalisation.

While others respondents also have entrepreneurial ambitions by learning the trade then becoming self-employed:

...qualified plumber innit then self-employed [Danish]  
I'll be in Uni...hopefully I'll have good stable job working for a company or myself.  
[Usman]

But higher aspirations are also on the agenda for some student respondents– a higher education then moving into a professional role:

...do may be HND in Construction...and may be surveyor or domestic buildings  
[Kashif]

...in Uni after college and long term probably as a Civil Engineer [Zaki]  
...do my 'A' levels then go to Uni becoming an architect...[Ibrahim]



I need experience first; how business actually works...I'll be able to work for a company for several years. [Hamza]

The college only keeps data on student destinations to the point of university placements and it would be interesting to know how many students actually complete their university education to graduate level in specialised careers.

But for some students the choice is not an easy one as they express hesitation about their planned careers with perhaps a backup plan:

I was thinking of doing international and business management but don't know still thinking [Ali]

Pilot is not guaranteed so engineering is to fall back on, so, I thought I can do a piloting degree after my civil engineering degree [Abdullah]

But like all other ambitious young people, the young males in this study also want the independence from parental influence and to break new grounds by being innovative in their career:

I prefer probably moving out because then I'll see myself being more independent and I won't have to rely on my parents [Bilal]

For university, I'll probably stay close but for long term future, I wouldn't mind going abroad [Iqbal]

Young males of Pakistani-origin are aware of their responsibilities towards their families and feel cultural obligation to support them:

My family would need my help, my family's not rich you know, they need extra help so probably will stay here [Jawad]

Young Pakistani males seem to be just as ambitious as any other ethnicity who wants to improve their socio-economic condition by balancing hard work with cultural obligations as they indicated in their perception of the college when first interviewed. Going abroad may provide with more opportunities which are not available in their home city and may help with social mobility hence the segmented assimilation into a better social class.

Most respondents' experience of the college revolves around selecting the right course with its successful completion, their approach has been that of self-help as Harris and Junaid explained:

I did a bit of research on internet...they had a big variety of courses and stuff got to do with electrical installations, electrical technology... [Zain]

When my sister came here last year and she was telling me...good teachers, good environment... [Abdullah]

This confidence was shown by another respondent; Israr was proactive by being a student representative on course committees to raise any issues on how his peers were coping with the course.

Because I'm a course rep so, I can talk to them [tutors] about it

Yet, any complaints expressed by participants are more directed at the everyday teaching practices:

They asked for our CV and we provided that, they [tutor] said they'll go further into it but they never did. [Asif]

But the upshot is the students take charge of the college matters as one respondent elucidated:

I think the students - they just wanna find out for themselves now and not rely on the teachers much [Moosa]

## **Social mobility**

The respondents' approach to social mobility has been first, to exploit job opportunities by joining in with their family-established businesses or in some cases contemplate job prospects abroad. Haris offers apt advice in this regard:

Just concentrate on your course, concentrate what your tutors are saying...just get the criteria done.

But there are times when people adopt to changing social conditions as Asif recounted his father's experience some years earlier:

He [dad] did a degree in computer engineering, he didn't get a job then...they were all racists...

Asif's view is that his father abandoned his dream of being a computer engineer and started driving taxis instead due to racism at that time which Asif thinks has changed since then.

The respondents may not experience overt discrimination now but there are enough reminders through others experiences. One other barrier to social mobility is due to the social pressures on these young students which seem to become a personal responsibility in Pakistani society:

At the end of the day...we don't want our parents in the old persons home, you know what I mean... [Waqas]

I'm the eldest one, so I have to look after, in a way, but my father obviously does that as well [Junaid]

These obligations on the part of students' limit where they can work or to progress in their chosen careers as they feel they need to stay closer to their dependent adults for care and attention.

These social practices are not easily comprehended by the tutors or the college as an institution.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion on both short and long-term aspirations reveals a mixture of aspirations ranging from working in the family-owned businesses, professional occupations to self-employment. There are good teachers and facilities but for most part, the more able students feel that they have to help themselves to take the lead in educational matters rather than relying on others including the teachers. Some student respondents need to adapt to changing circumstances as they are socially under pressure to take care of the older members of their families but despite these issues they are ambitious enough to go onto university education and follow a professional career, even contemplating moving abroad if the circumstances allow. This is how they view their social mobility improving which is indicative of segmented assimilation into a better social class.

## **Chapter 8: Analysis and discussion - staff perceptions**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the theme of staff or professional perceptions, from ten staff-respondents, and draws on and discusses data around this theme, and identifies issues of experience of teaching or interaction with the students, trends in behaviour or motivation over time, how the parents or the community views the college and specific issues pertaining to the young males of Pakistani-origin in Bradford context.

Staff respondent contribution in this study was of a paramount importance not just for its corroboration or otherwise with students' findings, but also to provide an alternative perspective on student experience.

Just to recapitulate - there were 5 lecturer respondents comprising of 3 white females, one Afro-Caribbean female and one Pakistani male, totalling 58 years of teaching experience between them; Security respondent had 8, Connexions 5, Progress Coach 2 and Estates 8 years (Appendix I). All staff respondents had extensive experience of dealing with young males of Pakistani-origin in the college, either directly as in teaching or dealing with them on daily basis and part of college Security on occasionally as IAG advisor, and as expected their contributions are comparatively much more detailed than students. Staff respondent comments are opinions expressed on broader college students who are young males of Pakistani-origin and not specifically on those student respondents who participated in the study.

### **Specific issues pertinent to Bradford Pakistani males**

Some of the issues faced by the young males can be attributed to the city itself - its past social and industrial history and the current socio-economic settings, while others can be domestic or in some cases college-linked.

These issues can act as obstacles in educational outcomes or for social mobility as Khalid, who teaches Business and has 8 years teaching behind him sums up the milieu as:

A lot of learners feel let down by the system, by the state, not a lot of opportunities in Bradford – it's a rundown town...

This coupled with poor educational experience in schools, dampens their enthusiasm or motivation for further or higher goals as they join an FE college. Amin (2003) contends that social stigmatizations, of unemployment, unpleasant housing, health, low educational achievements contribute to these conditions. Khalid elaborates further:

A lot of them did not have higher aspirations, maybe they didn't have any role models; they did not have motivations or are demoralised in schools.

Clearly some students enter FE from a position of disadvantage that could be associated with their social class.

This corroborates many of the student respondents' accounts who felt they did not do well in schools so the college was their second chance and perhaps the last hope too.

Andrew, an Estates Manager with 8 years' service at Bradford College, feels that BME students' negative portrayal in popular discourses alienates these youngsters even further thus increasing marginalisation for these students:

I don't think it helps with the daily bias of ethnic minorities doing this, this and this...

This is in corroboration with some student respondents' views as discussed earlier that constant negativity associated with young males is unhelpful for social cohesion or assimilation and is also a source of divisiveness among different communities, a condition described as 'modes of incorporation' that affects the pace of segmented assimilation.

Other huge social problem that the young males of Pakistani-origin face in the city is the drugs. As the drug problem is rampant in the city, it is bound to affect the most susceptible young males who, in the face of social deprivations, idealise the drug dealers as their de facto heroes. Georgina with 16 years' experience at Bradford College who teaches many of these young people and an active member of the UCU, comments of the situation:

Drugs are a big influence and I think over the 6 years that's become more spread.

She can compare the trends and see how young people are drawn to drugs thus becoming part of a downward assimilation process.

The vulnerable youngsters can become pawns in this underworld as Sarah, with 18 years' experience at Bradford College and teaches Functional Skills to these young people observes:

There's a lot of influence by people who want to make fast buck, drive fast cars try to lure these students...

She alludes to the outside influence where these impressionable youngsters become duped.

The prevalence of drugs and ease of earning extra cash can be luring for some young students, as Donna, who lives in the city and knows the area very well, and has been teaching at the college for 14 years, explains:

...drugs are more prevalent now than 10 years ago, there are more pressures on kids these days.

She also noticed the increased trend in drug dealings and agrees with Georgina above.

Sadiq, who works with youngsters at the college as Pastoral Support and lives in Bradford, blames the local conditions for the deviance found in some young males combined with family or domestic pressures which leave these youngsters vulnerable to abuse by the local drug dealers:

It's not that these students are criminals, no, but they are vulnerable, I think people in the community take advantage of that... [gangs/drugs] that kind of stuff

happens outside or around the college...pressure of work, personal family issues, bickering at home...peer pressure who are discouraging.

Sadiq clearly alludes to the social class disadvantage that affects these youngsters' downwards assimilation.

It is interesting to note the two contrasting views from student respondents and the staff respondents regarding the drug situation in the city - the student respondents rarely mentioned the drug problem, the only reference was to 'messaging about' and this could be because the student respondents in the study themselves were not directly involved in any way or that, drug sales and use is normalised, while the staff respondents had a wider perspective on the city and personal experience of dealing with students who may have been affected by drug dealing in use in some way.

Khalid expresses his disappointment at limited promotional prospects (social mobility) in the city, though not linking it direct racism, but its discomfiting impact on young males and the choices they then make:

...up north there's still a lot of prejudice, a lot of negativity, a lot of hidden racism.....deprived of employment in professional area, others are working in areas not being promoted there's a glass ceiling for them, that stunts their ambition.

These are the students who may have succeeded in completing their studies at college or elsewhere. Here, Sarah thinks they go into self-employment by force rather than by choice, as some student respondents also claimed:

Some of them realise there's not much opportunity for them so they open up their own businesses...people are forced into that side

This incidentally corroborates the city Council's own statistics on new start-ups.

But the other strategy that students adopted was to look for work elsewhere including the possibility of working abroad if local conditions are not conducive such as employment opportunities in the skills gained.

And the consequence of lack of opportunities in the city also affects those who have been successful in attaining their university qualifications but then, do not secure a matching employment. It does not fill the new entrant to university with enthusiasm if that is what they see happening to graduates in the city. Khalid observes again:

People choose not to go to university...got a degree and used to work in a supermarket, so there's no point...some see the 3-year period and big debt that plays a big role...not being guaranteed a job...

Widening participation had expected to open up social mobilities for working classes but it seems the qualifications themselves are not enough for these Pakistani-origin youngsters.

The city's feeder schools have also come under fire for failing to provide proper guidance or promoting learning cultures as Sadiq, discovered from his pastoral support role with young people:

...I don't think its [IAG] is good enough at schools and I don't think it's good enough at college to help people make decisions

On student disengagement with studies, Sarah explained that:

I think a lot of them bring their school culture to college, for instance, so if they come from same schools they tend to go on the same courses, just because they're friends.

This continued association with your neighbours who may be living in inner-city wards having their own familiar spatial areas, stops them from mixing with other communities beyond their familiar spaces. This also hinders their assimilation.

Parents' role is of paramount importance (Abbas, 2002; See et al., 2011) in ensuring their children achieve the best possible outcomes educationally. But some of the cultural practices create mechanisms for exclusion for their children, Donna explains:

There are some language barriers but especially in English, because of lot of them brought up in a home where they're speaking Urdu, and so even though they may be born in England...

This usually happens with the first-generation migrants who wish to retain their culture through language but often children speak English among the siblings but English with parents if they do not speak English. Being able to speak the language is part of the segmented assimilation.

Parents' inability to ensure regular attendance or to support their children with reading is another example of this apathy as Khalid reasons:

There are things outside your remit that you can't do anything about, which are social reasons why students don't do well in school or college...low ability, can't read, might not have been to school for year...a lot of parents I deal with, want the best for their children but don't know how...

Even when the young males attend the college, some parents show indifference:

...a lot of parents won't know whether they need laptop at home or not, internet connection...it comes round to being able to afford it. [Jessica]

And when the misdemeanour gets out of control some parents use more severe methods as means of chastisement and to rectify the bad behaviour as Sarah explains:

We get drop-out where their behaviour's been so bad; the parents have sent them to Pakistan...

But in times of austerity with constant squeeze on family incomes, the choice between paid work and study becomes starker; these are the domestic barriers for some students as James, who works in IAG with 14 years of experience, elaborates:

Financial issues at home, encouraged to work, few put off by the fees, is it going to be cost-effective, a lot of them get in contact with graduates who did not get graduate jobs, and were told don't do it...

Low-income families have to make compromises and priorities their choices.

In the student respondents accounts too, it was discussed that a number of students were engaged in part-time work to supplement their family incomes.

The college environment though complimented by student respondents, is seen as challenging which can cause inadvertent barriers for some students explains Paul who is responsible for Security with 8 years of service and in contact with all types of students regularly through his role:

Massive environment with people from all different ages and I think it's hard for them to adapt.

The college caters for 14-16, through to HE, almost all provisions close-by so the college can be daunting for some younger students.

All students on vocational courses are required to achieve a GCSE pass in maths and English at Grade 4, if they have not achieved this before. This is done along with the vocational programme of study.

This imperative can be challenging for weaker students who have struggled with these subjects in school and opted for non-academic route of VET, but it has satisfying effect of making entry to universities a little easier for high achievers:

Our big problem is now maths and English... a lot more are going to university now than before... [Khalid]

### **Staff perceptions on student motivations and understanding of FE courses**

The staff respondents working in the college had a unique insight into Pakistani males' college experience as they are at the sharpest end of the student interaction. As BME students remain a significant constituency in FE (DfE, 2011) including the Pakistani males, many of them are drawn from local schools where they have not done well in GCSEs as Sadiq, a Progress Coach with pastoral support responsibilities explains:

...a lot of them have come from schools where they haven't done very well...come with below C or at D, their opportunities are limited in terms of what level of course they can do...college is a second chance that's how students see us...

This weaker foundation predisposes these youngsters to a challenging journey ahead which can act as a mechanism for exclusion - hence affecting their social mobility as they will be struggling to progress through different levels of BTEC qualifications. It is only when working at Level 3 by gaining 3 merits the students can hope to go to university but by then they will have wasted time hopping from course to course. When combined with other social complexities the task becomes even more arduous for students in terms of the choices they make or opportunities available to them.

Jessica, a Functional Skills teacher observes similar pattern:

Same issues, not been to school for years, or socio-economic background, still doing same courses...takes time for them to adjust to realise what they're doing...

The colleges can be accomplices in this pattern of students switching courses, this could be construed as racial warehousing, since students are not placed on courses that have real labour market value.



The socio-economic issues for lower classes, as Macey (1995) argues, are structures of oppression which are highly pervasive and resistant to change that maintain status quo. Khalid, also expanded on other difficulties that these students face:

I think the big problem is they don't understand the system, how the FE system works, in terms of funding for an instance, they don't realise that after a certain age it won't be free anymore...by the time they go onto Level 3 they're 18, 19, that's when they start paying for the course and if they're not working...they're restricted...

The above reference by Khalid is to a much wider student population who are at risk of not completing their studies because of the length or the cost involved which could have been avoided had they been adequately prepared, perhaps with meaningful IAG at the outset. The college management need to be wary of this issue and incorporate timely supervision for these students at risk.

There is ample evidence from the staff respondents to suggest that, while the students join the college with inadequate career information (Wallace, 2014), the college continue to exercise racial 'warehousing' by placing these students on courses that lack real currency in economic terms, the students become disengaged or have to figure out what is best for themselves. The warehousing of students as such, acts as a mechanism for exclusion in college that stifles social mobility, hence assimilation, Jessica, an English teacher is quite explicit on this issue:

I would say in the Business area, there are more Pakistani boys that don't attend...some of the Business courses tend to be a bit dumping ground...and they swap around between Business courses...they want to guide these young people into the right courses, but in my own experience, it's not just working out that way.

This view implies that the college is aware of this situation in Business area where the students are being 'warehousing' intentionally.

It has been well documented that placing students on the wrong courses causes disruption and disengagement as was mentioned before (Wallace, 2014). FEI are under tremendous pressure to retain students for their financial survival, as marketisation dictates, and it may be that the statutory duty of care that ought to be afforded to students, is not being demonstrated or the student themselves are not mature enough to realise they are wasting their time by not progressing. In either of the cases the students' experience is being compromised.

Georgina, an English teacher and Sarah, a maths teacher respectively, are of the same opinion:

A lot of them come at 16 not knowing what they want they do a lot of swap and switching, until they finally hit on what they want...may be because of they see their friends do it...so they stay at the same level.

You can see they're probably not on the right course, you're trying to encourage them to think about what they want in their own future, but they still mess around and then eventually they're withdrawn or moved along...

Khalid, a Business Lecturer thinks similarly:

The kids that come to FE courses, they kind of not geared towards the final outcome... they're sort of shopping around until they find something they like...affect engagement

Presumably, the course details are not made clear at the time of entry to college or even followed up within the 42-day window the college uses for retaining or withdrawing students. Students are often rushed onto enrolments when the admissions start with less time for them to think about the appropriateness of the course, when they could be facing pressure from parents to find a place to study.

However, there is evidence of help from staff respondents but it needs to be a college-wide policy as tutors are often under heavy workload (Feather, 2014). Khalid describes his strategy:

I can engage with students where other tutors can't handle, basically finding our learners background

And Khalid also offers some guidance in the tutorials:

We do group tutorials...one-to-one tutorials, to give them pastoral support or whatever it is, that we can help them to progress.

Andrew, from Estates who also deals with student behaviour regularly, feels the adult environment in the college might explain the disengagement:

College is more an adult environment...more freedom...relaxed...I think a lot of young males take advantage of that.

This was also endorsed by student respondents before where the strict school regime is absent.

Jessica, exemplifies and feels misbehaviour could be attributed to students' young age:

Tend to congregate in groups, smoking, spitting, may be rebelling or its age thing...

While the above account may make unpleasant reading and sound like the whole college population is out of control, Paul, from Security commenting on the level of incidents gives the caveat:

...99% of the students are here to learn, very few that aren't...

So, when this nominal percentage is applied to a student population of around 20,000 it translates to 200 students from the whole college not just young males of Pakistani-origin, though the number is still enough to cause disorder, Paul, then details the types of incidents:

Amount of serious incidents such as fighting, anti-social behaviours, assaults gone up in monthly basis and incident-type, more assaults this year than last year and more last year than the year before that...

So there seems to be currently an upward trend in the levels of serious incidents at the college.

## Trends in behaviour and motivation

According to the New Ofsted Inspection Framework for FE colleges – Further education and skills inspection handbook (2019, p.51) stipulates ‘Behaviour and Attitude’ as one of its four key judgements with the proviso that “This judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, disciplined and positive environment within the provider and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of learners”. This new directive places the emphasis on college management to ensure the provision of an environment that fosters good behaviour and attitude in students. This may be achieved through policies and structures that permeate the college-wide compliance. However, the lecturer respondents identified some of the disturbing trends in behaviour in the classroom.

Jessica’s view is:

Still not putting in that effort to get through...on the phone all the time, Facebook, can’t focus, particularly thinking of those who bunk off.

Sarah’s observation is:

I haven’t seen any improvement...is gone downhill...it’s more their attitude to learning rather than their academic achievements...changed over time.

And then Sarah’s experience is:

...they could be rude, uncooperative, think nothing of swearing and cursing in the classroom using the mobile phones, I think that’s huge...rather than doing as been asked, they’ll argue back

These observations can lead to low expectations of such students’ outcomes by staff and without timely interventions these behaviours are normalised which would ultimately translate into non-achievements for these students. One staff respondent observed some of this poor behaviour in other groups too as if it was a societal or local phenomenon among all young people irrespective of their ethnicity; for instance, Donna says:

But it’s not any particular group of people that are more, you know, argumentative than others...

This may be due to the social class of these students rather than the question of ethnicity.

In contrast to the motivation and focus that student respondents claimed for themselves and peers, staff clearly had a different perspective on general behaviour of young males of Pakistani-origin. But the danger of characterising students as, badly behaved and resistant to education (Wilkinson, 2014) can also hamper their progress as well as how they are regarded by the teachers.

The college draws many of its students from immediate locality which would mean that there are students who know of each other from local connections, either they have been in school together or are just neighbours as James informs:

Many of the young Pakistani students come from schools where they mix with young Pakistani boys, that the main difference they don’t mix beyond their social groups or cultural group...inside the classroom you get divide but not conflict...in Pakistani culture boys and girls tend to sit separately.

This may explain some of the segregation that exists in college though without any racial conflict. This staff respondent account is in variance with student respondents' experience who claim to work collaboratively with different ethnicities in the class. But the social mixing outside the class is lacking and this could be because the student respondents tend to live in the vicinity of the college, this lack of 'contact' can cause spatial segregation and affect segmented assimilation.

In fact, if there are any issues between the students they tend to be intra-cultural rather than inter-cultural as Paul explains:

Serious issue like gang-culture over last few year...a lot of issues come from their home-areas they bring to college some are family matters...

It is possible the friction arises due to living in a close-knit community where the young people share many social experiences such as going to the same school or living in the same street against another part of the town with similar set-up. The competition for supremacy of one gang over another can cause turf-war. But other insignificant events can also blow out of proportion, for example a young man could be accused of harassing another's sister – these scenarios can lead to fights between rival groups if there is already a history of conflict between the groups.

And Khalid confirms:

They often talk about other students they may know from their own localities, they might have had trouble with the boys which can cause concerns...

Andrew again comments on behaviour and integration as:

Worse, deteriorating year-on-year...seen good examples but worse side getting worse...not a lot of interaction between Asian and white students...social segregation...more conflict with Asian groups than with white groups.

This is another area of concern the college needs to work on, that is, to create an environment where there are tangible examples of integration between different ethnic or racial groups. The nature and continuity of challenging behaviour can frustrate tutors who may feel helpless in controlling learning environment and achieving any satisfactory outcome for learners. This frustration is apparent from these staff respondents:

Some don't work and constantly on the phone, saying they don't need English or maths...you can't make them do it. [Jessica]

Come under the influence of drugs [cannabis], reported to security several times, but not withdrawn from the course...peer pressure [Donna]

Cohort I found them a little bit more stand-offish, reluctant to engage at the start of the year... [Georgina]

There is obvious need for some form of intervention at policy or structural level as the college's apparent indifference is criticised by Jessica whose has been teaching for 10 years at Bradford College as:

There don't seem to be enough consequences at college, you know you can miss lessons and you're still on course...it's amazing how many of them know their own personal rights in the class room...1<sup>st</sup> year mess around like a year-out.

Although the conditions further afield, including Leeds city region are much more promising in terms of employment opportunities. But due to the local conditions in Bradford such as the low wages with restricted occupational mobility as well as entrepreneurial drive, more and more people from Pakistani backgrounds living in Bradford are turning to self-employment and the young males are influenced by this mode of thinking.

This is even propagated by low-performing students who see their future in family businesses, and this is reflected in their choice of courses at college as Sarah explains: Majority of students in this department [motor vehicle] ...made up of mainly the young males Pakistanis...the cohort stayed pretty much the same [over 6 years] ...students automatically think they're going to work for family members, so they're not interested and I feel sometimes the only reason they come in is to get the bursary

Parents and families do influence young males' choices at college while the same family control and discipline might bring them into line once they start working in their family businesses. But the explanation for the young males' behaviour is attributed to several sources such as, the lack discipline at home, the school, lack of family support and the transition process from school to college. James, who works for the Connexions and sees students on home visits, observes that:

...tends to be young lads of the family, so there is some kind of discipline issue there...young people tend to be successful when they move on...

Georgina expands and states that it:

Varies from learner to learner...those that have done badly at school...carry that behaviour over.

While Khalid has a broader take:

Those who don't do well, restricted to working class boys, to do with family education, lack of support, parents not involved in education...don't understand the processes...little siblings need help.

And Sadiq makes further addition to the debate:

It's a transition from school to much more relaxed college you can hit and miss...Its motivation, if they're on the right course and level, if not then its work avoidance behaviour.

While these claims may be credible to a degree, some members from the same family do so well educationally, the answer to this discrepancy may lie in the social conditions of the city. James feels the handling of the transformative process from school to college lies with an individual student:

...the individual himself has his responsibility as well they need to start becoming more independent in what they do.

It was noted in Chapter 6 that the more able students were active and independent in their decisions while the lower-ability students depended on tutors, friends and family for future directions.

But the staff respondents have to have parents on board as Sadiq explains:  
...but we do speak to parents about what their son can do, a lot of them are pretty happy with the opportunity...

But Jessica, after 10 years of teaching, sums up the feelings with the current daily routines:

Need smaller groups...its hard work, mentally and physically draining.

If the college is to provide a successful learning experience for the students with positive outcomes, then they have to ensure their workforce is not demoralised (Simmons & Thompson, 2008) due to unrealistic demands placed on staff.

### **Staff views on how college is perceived by parents or community**

College tutors do communicate with parents in varying ways, at enrolments, parents' evenings and for general enquiries regarding issues such as behaviour and attendance, they also understand their individual students in terms of their needs and progression. It's likely that some parents may have some understanding of the college expectations from students, Progress coaches or teachers who may communicate with them at times in terms of readiness for learning and the need for compliance with college rules and regulations as Khalid explains:

Some of the parents that we speak to, have high regard for the college...the tutors, the department and the college as a whole...they have good understanding of expectations... attitude, behaviour, achievement, attendance, punctuality...

While 'some' parents do this, there is clearly need for more parents to be involved in cases of challenging behaviour and disengagement displayed by their sons – it must be remembered that a parent is contacted when there are issues of behaviour when they are likely to agree with the tutors.

But the ground reality is that some students see the college experience in a different light from staff as Jessica explains:

Parents and community expect us to deliver courses to prepare youngsters for future, but students treat it as a massive social club.

But Andrew from Estates, suggested a way to overcome some of these problems is to have parents represented on college committees:

Perception of college good but unaware of problems...students probably intercept letters to parents that bring bad news for them or been in trouble...parents' representatives to sit on college committees to help.

Khalid feels the parents need educating with regards to their children's education; after all it is parental responsibility to understand what the college is doing for their children:

Lack of adult guidance...parents don't know what you're doing...need to educate parents.

Young males' expectation needs to match with the commitment required for a successful outcome, as Donna says:

Doing the course by default, given the impression that they'll be doing Electrical course, it requires a high level of maths even at Level 1...

This suggests that doing a course by default can be tougher for students to complete as there is a requirement for some levels of mathematical skills which students are lacking. The college would appear to be wilfully failing these students by knowingly ignoring their weakness in maths. The students would be forced to change their course the following year, having wasted a year of their life.

Tutors have a difficult task in motivating reluctant students and those, who may have been teaching for some time, may rely on their experience to see through as Imran explains:

The culture here is that there are those tutors full of energy, lively and the students will be lively, those who are just clocking out get more stressed out.

### **Additional staff augmentation**

The other pathways that young males choose at college are the apprenticeships route, but even this is not a challenge-free endeavour:

Some may want to do an apprenticeship, so we'll talk about the challenges that it brings, they have to find their own employer...[Khalid]

Ironically, none of the 26 student respondents in the study discussed apprenticeships though this route might have been implied when some student respondents considered working in their family businesses such as motor vehicle.

Young people can be misinformed into thinking it's a paid training without its other concomitant requirements.

The college also retains students (warehousing) who have been placed on dummy courses until they are certain about the course they really want to do. Imran makes this point openly:

In Business department we get students who are not sure what they want to do, or not enough qualifications to go on to Science or Engineering course...probably sees as something generic.

The 'warehousing' of students was discussed in the last chapter with its adverse implications for the student and the college in terms of outcomes for the labour market, hence affecting the segmented assimilation process.

The college's expectations from students are relayed to them and the parents at an early stage of the course via handouts given to students who may not pass on to their parents and reinforced again during the induction week so any incongruence between the students and college expectations is likely to have adverse effect on students. This could be regular attendance, discipline in classes, general behaviour or compliance with the college rules.

Its lack of resilience...the amount of work we expect them to do does not tie in with the amount of effort they want to put in...on particular courses, students

know they are going to university but on low-level course they haven't made up their mind yet, personal motivation and aspiration is the difference...[Sadiq]

As it was discussed with the student respondents in the previous chapter, the low-level students on low-level courses are more likely to become part of the 'warehousing' process.

When students join the college, they are cautioned on arrival to settle down quickly in their respective courses in terms of attendance and commitment to avoid likely expulsion within a set period.

If they want to stay they need to settle down fairly quickly, the college has 6-weeks period to decide who stays. [Donna]

This could be the opportunity for the college management to confront the accusation of 'warehousing' students and vindicate itself.

Some staff respondents are critical of their own practices and feel, the right and the consistent approach is helpful for students as Andrew explains:

I think it's... staff that needs to be educated, yes, we all have different personalities but we can expect to have the same approach which is crucial I think when working with students.

Whereas Khalid's suggestion is for one universal approach:

I think equality is the issue...equality is not about getting the same outcome for each student; it's about giving the same opportunity to each student...

Some criticism is levelled at the management by Andrew, for not treating some ethnic minority students as their own and for not promoting ethnic minority staff to senior levels either:

I think there are a lot of issues with the senior management as to how seriously take education, do they see ethnic students as their own or others and therefore not given the priority...no ethnic minorities at senior level...

Here the allusion is to the 'othering' of students discussed earlier as opposite to inclusivity. This is a challenge for the college management as is the promotion of ethnic minority staff to serve as role models for the ethnic minority students.

But despite the pressures of working in FE, Jessica still feels there is cause for optimism as there are still tutors ready to do their job:

We've had really good new tutors; it's been more positive impact, where a lot of students are actually doing something.

The college and students need to learn more of these positive vibes.



## Conclusion

This chapter discussed the staff respondent views which covered their experience or interaction with young males, the trends in behaviour, how the college is perceived by the community and the specific issues specific to young Pakistani males. These views are on the young males of Pakistani-origin students at the college, taught by or interacted with in any other capacity such as Security. It must be borne in mind that these views are not specifically on the student respondents in the study.

The students appear to join the college as a second chance, with poor prior attainments, lack of proper IAG from schools, and undecided about the course they want to pursue but Business area in the college seem to attract a lot of students, as if it was a holding course – all these affect students' motivation and engagement with their studies.

The warehousing of students is noted on as some of are placed and retained on courses that do not have much currency then change the courses in the subsequent years. The college seem to be complicit in this practice which needs tackling with sound advice when the student enrol for the courses. The Pakistani-origin students' negative characterisation affects their social integration.

Some of the behaviours recounted by staff respondents are; attitudes to learning, lack of discipline, anti-social, rude, using phones in classes, uncooperative, rude and lack of effort in classes - basically non-compliance seems to have deteriorated over the years and is attributed to a number of factors such as, bad behaviour transferred from schools, discipline issues at home, parental support and their own education or understanding of FE system, low ability, language barriers, being in adult environment in college or retaining friendship with old school peers. These are all social class issues along with spatial living in the city which can affect social mobility by exacerbating segmented assimilation negatively.

There seems to be very little integration between different ethnicities in college and this can be understood at many of the Pakistani-origin students are drawn from the inner-city areas, although no racial conflict is cited, and where there is any tension it is within the same racial group, brought into college from their local rivalries outside the college with issues such as the drugs.

The college seems to be perceived well by the parents when contacted by tutors or Progress Coaches in terms of expectations and attitudes but despite this tacit understanding the students treat the college as a social club and can mislead parents regarding their progress.

The staff respondents feel there is need to educate parents on the activities of the college, regarding their sons' education, and one proposal is to have the parent representatives on the course committees where student issues are routinely discussed.

A few tutors address student issues in their individual capacity, though these interventions may help students temporarily but there is a need for a concerted policy shift so that the students are advised and placed on the right courses at the outset for a

successful outcome. When students are disengaged in a more open college environment they are more likely to play truant and use the college as a social club rather than a learning site, in contrast to how the student respondents understood the college role.

The city has some socio-economic problems which impact on these young males' future aspirations as there is inadequate preparation from schooling, the job opportunities as well as the promotion at work is limited that seems to be forcing more youngster onto entrepreneurial options, hence more opting for self-employment or seeking employment further afield or even abroad. The drug problem seems to be affecting young people in adverse ways and to exacerbate the matter, parents are not playing their part. The management at the college is interrogated for not promoting ethnic minorities into senior roles to serve as role models for these youngsters.

The college management has a number of challenges to address if it is to see the college serve its statutory duty of care and address the wider issues of social justice for all its students, placing students on correct courses, provide pastoral care, organise smaller class sizes, reduce pressure of work for staff, find effective ways of communicating and educating parents about the provision. Avoid 'othering' the young males and promote ethnic minority staff to senior management positions to serve as role models for these students. Find ways of integrating different ethnic groups more effectively and provide real opportunities for social mobility through education.

## Chapter 9: Conclusion – FE experiences of Pakistani-origin young males

This doctoral thesis is a case study, which has a number of features (Cohen et al. 2011) including the rich descriptions and chronological narratives from individual actors. The study is situated and contingent in a timeframe that specifically explored the perceptions and experiences of FE among a specific demographic category of students in the form of research questions:

1. To what extent does an FE setting meet the aspirations and motivations of Pakistani-origin students to complete their courses and to progress further while negotiating any impending obstacles during their study?
2. To what extent does the students' cultural or class background enhance or impinge on their learning or educational experiences of an FE college?
3. How does the FE experience correspond with the student perceptions and expectations of their past or post-college trajectories?

The insights from the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation and modes of incorporation (Portes & Zhou, 1993) were used, probably for the first time in the UK context, to gauge an understanding of the significance of FE in terms of post-16 pathways for facilitating upward social assimilation, or otherwise, of Pakistani-origin youth in the city.

As FE remains a preferred route for many BAME students from low socio-economic backgrounds possibly due to their early social or educational experiences as in case of Bradford, the concerns for the differences between attainment gaps for Pakistani-origin students and others at Bradford college, the paucity of literature on BAME experiences of FE in general, and more specifically on young males of Pakistani-origin while much of the contemporary literature dwells on HE activities. My own interest and understanding of the young males' educational issues in Bradford and the new application of segmented assimilation theoretical framework are the reasons this study is intended to make original contribution to knowledge in this regard. Contributions from this study could also stimulate debates in policy and practice about the effective delivery of FE provision to improve educational outcomes in terms of the student progress and achievements for upward assimilation.

The study established the context of the research and its theoretical framework through two inter-related literature review chapters. The first literature review established the parameters to the study by locating the study in its historical, social and geographical context explaining migration and the experience of employment of the first generation that originally created historical disconnect with the next generation who had to resume their economic struggles de novo. Other iconic events linked to the city (July 2001 riots, Rushdie Affair, 7/7) reified Pakistani-origin youth quintessence causing further marginalisation. The occurrence of these events had lasting effect on the Pakistani youth in their characterisation in social discourses. The concept of *biraderi*, had its merits for the early migrants' social dealings and explained the behaviour of first-generation Pakistanis but it has lost its popularity with the current youth for being too insular and restrictive for global outlook. The overarching social bonding is in the form

of religion that proffer both identity and ethnic capital- a self-prescribed outward identity and success in educational attainments in families where education is valued.

The second literature review chapter established the popularity of FE amongst BAME students but it has also been noted how FE was under immense strain from performativity culture with threats to its very existence due to perennial funding cuts and performance targets while its public perception is low which implies that social inequalities in society continue to persist. FE ought to have a significant role in providing post-16 pathways to students from lower economic backgrounds and evade those practices that render some students unemployable by placing them on courses with little or no labour market value. The FE colleges' internal processes such as the institutional policies or tutor training has to realign to benefit their diverse student population to afford a positive educational experience including the awareness of religious or cultural needs which may transpire in, a day of leave for Eid as an example or sensitivity to bereavements in the families.

The literature review and the overarching research questions guided the design and implementation of the field research, which consisted of deeper understanding of how young males of Pakistani-origin viewed FE and its role in providing learning opportunities or otherwise, in fulfilling their aspirations; to identify the factors which influenced the choice of an FE College as a venue for their post-compulsory education; to learn about the lived experience of FE and how the college's learning culture/structure correspond with students' perceived identities; and to contribute to the development of a theoretical perspective to construct an understanding of the level of engagement and outcomes for the youngsters in an FE setting. The key findings below show how these aims and objectives and the study's research questions were addressed through critical analysis of the empirical data and how it can be understood in a meaningful way.

## **Key findings**

### **FE setting's meeting of student aspirations and motivations**

Students' perceptions corroborate the literature in the study that Bradford college is a 'second choice' (Thompson, 2009) venue for individuals from socially deprived backgrounds (Robinson, 2012; Avis & Orr, 2016), yet where the future can still be resurrected for one-self. Some former 'A' level students felt that a BTEC might have been a better option from the outset as it opens up both vocational and academic pathways which the college also provides from its wider curriculum (Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2017). It must be born in mind that some students had failed their GCSE or 'A' levels before they join the college which indicates a bad educational experience that could be due to many factors including social stigmatisations (Amin, 2003) and if the college experience is unchanged then then downward assimilation is a foregone conclusion.

The low ability students with low attainments or those students expelled from school, also enrol on college courses however, the college environment can still be challenging for these students as passing GCSEs in both maths and English is mandatory for all college students including those on vocational programmes of study. This expectation

from students along with pressures of performativity (Anthias, 2016) in colleges, that emphasises retention and achievement of students, adds pressure on individual students and deflate their confidence. This predicament creates an environment revives bad educational experience likely to result in failure leading to downward assimilation.

Some students suggested that it was easy to enrol onto a college course – implying a ‘warehousing’ process (Avis et al., 2017) was in evidence. The college seem to encourage students to enrol on courses on annual basis, knowing fully well they were unlikely to complete their course and waste a year in the process. The lower level students are more likely to be part of this process in FE as they have limited choices hence prime candidates for downward assimilation – this process by the colleges may be seen as structural impediment (Colley and Hodkinson, 2001) to student outcomes thus needs to be addressed by FE colleges alone.

For these students, their individual needs are greater so the college is expected to have additional strategies in place – identify their needs at an earlier stage of their studies with an infrastructure in place that mediates their progress to inspire equality of opportunity (Shain, 2012; Hobbs, 2016), otherwise their qualifications will have no real currency in the local labour market on leaving the college, rendering this cohort of students to a downward social assimilation.

Students’ motivation for joining Bradford college are manifold, ease of access to, encouragement from family (Modood, 2004; Abbas, 2002) and friends, location, college reputation and the students own research and reflection on choosing the best course that is compatible with their social or cultural imperatives. Here Pakistani-origin parents’ encouragement and support could be interpreted as social capital in the form of ethnic capital invoked for students’ successful outcomes (Thapar-Bjorkert & Sanghera, 2010), the family support here doubtlessly induces resilience and enables an upward assimilation

More high ability students feel they themselves are the agents of change rather than relying too much on teachers for help, they feel confident enough to deal with demands of the course while, they show resilience in the face of mounting course work and impending deadlines and work hard to complete their assignments in time. Conversely, the low ability students seek help from friends, families and teachers, for choosing the course and help with the course work. These students are presumably vulnerable to a downward assimilation.

Some students coming from the same school or neighbourhood tend to do the same course mainly due to peer pressure. All students need one-to-one advice and guidance on their needs and their options rather than feel obliged to follow others under coercion perhaps. Such restricted social cohesion (Boucher and Samad, 2013) can act as a barrier to upward assimilation by reifying group relationships.

Some students appear to join the college ill-prepared with low grades along with some history of interruption to education such as being out of education; some of them are not sure about the course they need to be on or to show systematic understanding of FE. The feeder schools appear not to give clear guidance (IAG) on career choices or the next steps and some students are placed on courses that do not have much currency (warehousing) which they tend to swap around until they are sure what they really want

to do - this can result in disengagement and disruption in classes (Wallace, 2014) affecting their educational outcomes with plausible vulnerability to downward assimilation.

Young tutors seem to be more motivated than old established tutors in college, they are more driven to help students for better outcomes (Gleeson et al. 2005). Young tutors seem to interact better compared with older tutors and this could be due to the generation gap. So, the implication here is that the young tutors are more effective in nurturing an upward assimilation for students.

There is evidence of incongruence between college expectations and student placement on courses – regular attendance, engagement in classes and compliance with college regulations. The college is under pressure due to performativity and marketisation (Lucas & Crowther, 2016) to retain students as the funding is linked to retention but the more persistent culprits are withdrawn after 42-days cut off period. These withdrawn students experience yet another failure which probably leads to downward assimilation.

### **Effect of students' cultural or class background on their learning**

Some of the factors articulated by college staff when commenting on the declining behaviour and attitude of some students at Bradford college were cited as, the lack of discipline at home (Macey, 1999), prior issues carried on from feeder schools (Tomlinson, 2005), lack of family support, transition process from school to college, lack of cross-cultural mixing, being on the wrong course, open environment in the college, not understanding educational processes, lack of role models and the social conditions in the city, parents' role is identified as crucial here (Abbas, 2002). The consequences of such behaviours potentially lead to either failing the course outright or face expulsion from the course. These factors can be viewed as 'modes of incorporation' according to the segmented assimilation theorisation as they inhibit upward assimilation implicitly.

As effective learning cannot take place without the correct behaviour and attitude, the continuation of which frustrates tutors and managers- the college needs a strategy of training staff accordingly (Riaz, 2018), or employ specialist staff for enforcing behaviours policies more effectively by introducing enticements and consequences. Such students are unlikely to complete their course or progress further and their trajectories are likely to be downwards hence propensity to downward assimilation.

Students feel positive about the facilities, education and freedom but negative about IT facilities and disruptive students who 'mess- around'. This is particularly true of those students who wish to do well after a bad schooling experience and want a fresh start which implies the willingness on the part of students to succeed. These students are negotiating impending barriers. This display of resilience on the part of students can act as a positive assimilation as they are more likely to succeed through their perseverance.

Some may choose motor vehicle because the family has businesses related to car maintenance. Other students appear to aspire to progress onto HE by taking a less rigorous vocational route which suits them, possibly because of their learning styles and with colleges' wider portfolios this should not present a major problem. These students

are relying on their families' networks (See et al., 2011), so despite doing a seemingly low-value course, they are more likely to be employed with upward assimilation.

All ethnic groups work and interact well and collaborate in classes but there are signs of segregation (Miah et al., 2020) between ethnic groups outside the class, though racial discrimination is not identified as a problem among students. This is plausible as many students of Pakistani-origin know each other from their neighbourhoods or schools or even go to the local mosque for prayers, and mostly live within the inner-city catchment area while the white students mainly tend to live further afield. This spatial segregation (Thomas & Sanderson, 2012) is detrimental to community cohesion as the student interaction (contact) ceases after the end of classes. These practices are impediments for social assimilation.

Cultural and social obligations regarding the care of siblings, the family members or part-time work can be a barrier to educational outcome. There are cultural expectations in Pakistani communities especially for male members to contribute to family needs and finances as soon as they are able to work. Some students take this responsibility upon themselves and either work in their family businesses or find part time work elsewhere. Others may look after some elderly member of the family or even visit them in Pakistan if they are ill. Both these issues are cultural (Neal et al., 2013) and need to be acknowledged and addressed by the colleges. These cultural pressures can be seen as affecting the upward assimilation by creating barriers to educational attainment. But for more aspiring students while they are aware of the family responsibilities yet, they seem to be equally ambitious, motivated and strive for independence and to succeed for upward segmented assimilation.

The parents' lack of cultural capital (Shah et al., 2010) or lack of interest in their children's education undermines children's progression and achievement. This void has to be filled by colleges by developing interventions (McDuff et al., 2018) specifically for those students at risk of failure because of lack of parental support and this could be due to many reasons, inability to speak the language, having little understanding of the assessments or the parents may have personal problems of their own. This downward propensity can only be addressed by the college.

The students showed an awareness of global conflicts in the wider Muslim world and the negative portrayal (Archer, 2003) of young Muslims in social media and political discourses. These are the modes of incorporations likely to affect the pace of assimilation as the negative portrayal can marginalise communities as 'others' with potential for securitisation (Heath-Kelly, 2013).

Media portrayal of ethnic minorities is having a negative effect on young people whether its child sex exploitation or terrorist activities, the young Muslims seemed to be implicated and characterised with these activities.

Financial pressures and lack of job opportunities (Alexander, 2004) for low-income families, are forcing some students to abandon their university aspirations and look for work in service industry. There is also added pressure of university fees which can accumulate up to £30,000 on graduation which is quite demanding for families on low incomes. There is case here for low income families to be given bursaries that have their youngsters going to universities for the first time to overcome their position of

social disadvantage and to promote social mobility (Hussain et al., 2017), without these measures the students implicated will be vulnerable to downward assimilation.

The college staff had a much more mature perspective on student issues and articulated in length as expected, to accentuate their meaning, for instance the young male respondents hardly mentioned the drug problem in the city or structural issues (Hamid, 2011) at college or the issues of unemployment or lack of promotion in the city.

## **FE experiences and student expectations**

The issues of behaviour and attitudes is restricted to a small percentage of the students in college as one of the staff members claims that '99% of the students are here to learn', so for the college population it translates to just 200 students.

These issues need to be considered individually by colleges to develop a coordinated approach where all those parties interested in the young persons' educational attainments correlate and collaborate, otherwise the issues of discipline are likely to affect more focused students as well and contribute to downward assimilation.

The college's strict adherence to rules on expectations, such as attendance, punctuality, engagement in classes or the use of mobiles can put some students unaccustomed to strict regime, in conflict with the college culture) Holliday, 2008). Depending on the seriousness of their misdemeanour, these students are likely to be withdrawn or expelled, after a long process of involving parents who may not have shown much interest in their son's education from the outset. The college needs a strategy to positively engage and succeed these students.

Notwithstanding some of the classes being dominated by male students of Pakistani-origin, such as Business and Motor Vehicle, there is an atmosphere of harmony among diverse ethnic students both in-classes and outside at break time, although students are not expected to locate institutional discrimination (Kundnani, 2007), but it was articulated that racism does exist but it is 'hidden' and not blatant. Hence, some students may be experiencing racism which is mode of incorporation in segmented theorisation likely to promote downward assimilation.

There is evidence of discrepancies between tutors' and the students' expectations (Berrington et al. 2016) with regard to the course requirements particularly for low level courses as the students need more time to embody the college expectations but tend to improve in the second year, possibly due to maturity or experience of repeated sanctions. This incoherence creates misunderstanding of expectations that can inhibit student achievements resulting in downward assimilation.

Many students aspire to complete their university education after FE then work in respective fields as professionals before launching their own businesses or even moving abroad for work (Arday, 2018). This suggests that their outlook is more global (Boucher, 2013) than their parents who may have lived in a given locality having worked for the same employer until their retirement. These students can conceivably have an upward assimilation. The segmented assimilation theorisation does not accommodate second-generation migrant children who may opt for overseas exploits but such a move is likely to be upward assimilation.



Senior managers at college need to 'own' ethnic minority students and promote ethnic minority staff to senior positions (Boocock, 2014) who act as role models to infuse self-confidence and ambition in students, lack of such models promotes 'them' and 'us' dichotomy which leads to downward social assimilation for both students and staff. College staff need training to understand students' socio-cultural backgrounds (Riaz, 2018) to empathise with them on religious and cultural matters. This helps with planning lessons or adapting other services by the college so that they all feel part of the bigger college cohort.

There is evidence of social segregation in college but no conflict between the different ethnic groups of students. The college needs to address this imbalance by finding ways of collaborative work, introducing enrichment activities that promote understanding of the cultural or religious differences. This segregation by the staff is not seen as ominous but understandable from students' local acquaintances where spatial segregation or clustering (Din, 2006) can provide a sense of belonging and empowerment. If students make progress in their studies then these experiences can afford upward assimilation.

On the question of how, the young Muslims viewed themselves, an overwhelming majority of students interviewed allied themselves with the dual British identity such as British-Pakistani or British-Muslim both in self-descriptions, and in ranked identities which endorses the view that young Muslims do see themselves as British while also respecting their origin (Hussain & Bagguley, 2005), this is a demonstration of the second-generation being integrated in a national identity that should encourage upward assimilation.

Bradford, as a city faces many socio-economic challenges (UBD, 2020) for social mobility for its young males, including inadequate schooling, lack of job opportunities, scarcity of promotion at work locally and vulnerability to exploitation by local drug dealers with lure of quick rewards (Wilson, 2016). These wider issues are beyond the remit of this study but the college for its part, has to make students aware of the safeguarding issues that could also include radicalisation (Qureshi & Zeitlyn, 2012) and prepare students for the world of work in the local labour market and beyond (Salisbury & Jephcote, 2008). Unless these issues are confronted candidly, the young males could plausibly be facing a downward assimilation.

This case study focussed on a cohort of 26 student participants at Bradford College with supplementary contribution from 10 members of the college staff, the findings of this study may resonate with similar respondents in other settings nationally with similar social conditions or immigrant history especially in the northern towns but cannot be otherwise generalised to other FE institutions. The role of FE in addressing the social inequalities with promotion of social mobility (Robinson, 2012) remains an issue for students with low grades and from poor backgrounds in Bradford, exacerbated by the lack of parental involvement in the young person's education and it may also be true of other similar young people nationally whose parents display indifference to their educational welfare.

### **Suggestions for further research on this topic**

The literature review identified lack of research studies undertaken in FE where the young males of Pakistani-origin have been the subject of study. This study can be augmented by conducting further research, continuing with the modes of incorporation, this time into the young women's FE experiences and compare the results. There could also be follow up study conducted to trace the student trajectories beyond their FE experiences and on their final destinations. It would also be interesting to know what happens to students who leave college within the 42-day window and the subsequent career choices they make.

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## Participant Information Sheet

### **What is this research about?**

This research is about finding out the views of young British males of Pakistani-origin who are studying in an FE College.

### **Why is this research been done?**

There has been much discussion about the educational and economic experiences of young Pakistani-origin males in cities such as Bradford and about their place in society. It is this lived experience of being students in an FE College which is being explored in this research project. I hope to gain an understanding of the reasons for their decision for choosing FE and the expectations and outcomes recounted as they progress through vocational courses. This study will lead to recommendations about how to improve services to students.

### **Why have I been asked?**

You have been asked to participate in the research project because you fit the profile i.e. a young male of Pakistani-origin studying at the college.

### **What will I be asked?**

For the research purposes, you will take part in a focus group and audio-recorded interviews conducted over two years. There will be one focus group lasting for about one hour and two interviews lasting between 30-60 minutes each, but taking place at the end, and the middle of each year. The focus groups and interviews will take place at a time convenient to participants with the minimum of disruption to their work or study.

### **What will happen to the information I give?**

Any information you give will not be used unless you have given your prior permission to for its use. All participants will be given false names to protect their identity and the information, including interview transcripts will be password-protected on computer and kept confidential so that you are you are not traced, though my final PhD thesis will be publically available. Participation in the research process is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from this at any time without giving reasons.

### **Who else is involved with this research?**

This research project is being supported by Bradford College as part of their scholarly activity and supported by its Programme areas. It is supervised by the University of Huddersfield staff, Professor Paul Thomas ([d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk](mailto:d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk)) and Professor Pete Sanderson ([p.j.sanderson@hud.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.sanderson@hud.ac.uk)).

Contact details: Ashiq Hussain, 11D Old Building, Bradford, BD7 1HY  
[a.hussain.1@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:a.hussain.1@bradfordcollege.ac.uk) Tel: 01274 438986



Further Education experience of young British males of Pakistani-origin – expectations and outcomes.

Focus Group/Interview consent form

**Please tick**

I have been fully informed of the nature of this research project and I consent to taking part in it.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without giving reasons.

I give permission to use interview quotes in publications so long as I am not identified by name or traced in any way.

I understand the interview is audio-recorded and the recordings will be kept secure.

I understand that no one will have access to interview transcripts other than the researcher and the transcriber.

I understand that my identity will be protected by using false names and that I will not be identified from the information I have supplied.

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher: Ashiq Hussain

Signature

Date

## Appendix C

Please complete the questionnaire on the dotted lines and tick in the boxes where appropriate. Thanks

### Personal Data:

Name .....

Student No .....

Course .....

Age .....

Nationality .....

Place of Birth .....

### Family:

When did your parents settle in the UK? .....

Parents' education:

	GCSE	'A' levels	Degree	Post Degree
Mother				
Father				

Parents' employment status?

Mother	Employed	Unemployed
Father	Employed	Unemployed

If employed – type of employment? .....

Any brothers or sisters studying at a university or have completed University education?  
.....

Language spoken at home with parents: .....

with brothers and sisters: .....

Appendix D

Please indicate your preferred identity in rank order by placing numbers in the boxes below - from the most preferred (1) to the least preferred (8).	
British	
Pakistani	
Muslim	
Asian	
British-Pakistani	
British-Muslim	
British-Asian	
Any other	

Ref:

Date:

## Appendix E

### College student-respondent demographics

Anonymised Names	Course	Age	Nationality	Country of birth	First settled in UK	Parents' education:		Parents' employment status:		Siblings in HE	Language spoken at home with:	
						Mother	Father	Mother	Father		Parents	Siblings
Danish	L2 Plumbing	18	British	England	Don't know	GCSE	GCSE	None	Self-employed	None	English/Punjabi	English/Punjabi
Haris	L3 Engineering	18	British	England	40 years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	Self-employed	None	English	English
Abdullah	Civil Engineering	18	British	England	30 years earlier	None	GCSE	Employed	Employed	Sister	English	English
Hammad	L3 Electrical Engineering	17	British	England	35 years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	Self-employed	None	English/Punjabi	English/Punjabi
Asif	L3 Electrical Engineering	18	Pakistani	Pakistan	35 years earlier	None	GCSE	None	None	None	English/Punjabi	English/Punjabi
Zain	Electronics Engineering	17	British	England	Don't know	'A' Levels	'A' Levels	None	Gas safety	None	English/Punjabi	English/Punjabi
Bilal	L3 Electrical Engineering	18	British	England	Don't know	Don't know	Don't know	None	None	Brother	Urdu	English
Hamza	L3 Business	18	British	England	35 years earlier	Degree Level	Degree Level	Employed	Employed	None	English	English

Adil	L3 Business	17	British	England	Don't know	GCSE	GCSE	None	Self-employed	None	English	English
Majid	L3 Business	20	British	England	45 years earlier	GCSE	Degree	None	Employed	Sisters	English/Punjabi	English
Ali	L3 Business	18	British	England	45 years earlier	Don't know	Don't know	Employed	Employed	None	English	English
Omer	IT & Networks	19	British	England	20 years earlier	'A' Levels	Degree	None	None	None	English/Urdu	English
Junaid	IT & Networks	17	British	England	18 years earlier	Don't know	Don't know	None	Self-employed	None	English/Urdu	English/Urdu
Waqas	L1 Plumbing	18	British	England	40 years earlier	'A' Levels	'A' Levels	None	Self-employed	None	English/Urdu	English/Urdu
Jawad	L2 Construction Management	17	British	England	20 years earlier	Don't know	Post-Degree	None	Self-employed	None	English/Urdu/Arabic	English
Ibrahim	L2 Construction Management	18	British	Pakistan	18 years earlier	Degree	Post-Degree	None	Self-employed	None	Pashtu	English
Fahad	L2 Plumbing	17	British	England	Don't know	Don't know	GCSE	None	Employed	None	English/Punjabi	English
Iqbal	L3 Civil Engineering	18	British	England	45 years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	Employed	None	English	English

Fraz	Civil Engineering	18	British	England	20 years earlier	Degree	Degree	None	Self-employed	Sister	English/Pashto	English
Shamoon	L3 Civil Engineering	19	British	England	45 years earlier	Don't know	'A' Levels	None	Self-employed	None	English/Punjabi	English
Zaki	L3 Civil Engineering	16	British	England	45 years earlier	GCSE	Post-Degree	None	Employed	Sister	English	English
Uzair	Civil Engineering	18	British	England	45 Years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	None	Brothers and sisters	English	English
Usman	L3 Construction Management	18	British	England	45 years earlier	None	GCSE	None	Employed	None	English	English
Hasnain	L3 Electrical Engineering	17	British	England	40 years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	Employed	Brother	English/Punjabi	English
Moosa	L3 Electrical Engineering	18	British	England	45 years earlier	GCSE	'A' Levels	Employed	Employed	None	English	English
Kashif	L3 Construction Management	16	British	England	45 years earlier	GCSE	GCSE	None	Self-employed	None	English/Punjabi	English





## Participant Information Sheet

### **What is this research about?**

This research is about finding out the experience of young British males of Pakistani-origin who are studying in an FE College; these include their perception of vocational courses and their experience of being in FE etc.

### **Why is this research being done?**

There has been much discussion about the educational and economic experiences of young Pakistani-origin males in cities such as Bradford and about their place in society. It is this real-world experience of being students in an FE College which is being explored in this research project. I hope to gain an understanding of the reasons for their decision for choosing FE and the expectations and outcomes recounted as they progress through vocational courses. This study will lead to recommendations about how to improve services to students.

### **Why have I been asked?**

You have been asked to participate in the research project because you interact with these students in your capacity as a professional of the college in your varied roles.

### **What will I be asked?**

For the research purposes, you will take part in a face-to-face audio-recorded interview lasting for about 20-30 minutes. The interview will take place at a time and place convenient to.

### **What will happen to the information I give?**

Any information you give, will not be used unless you have given your prior expressed permission for its use. All participants will be given false names (pseudonyms) to protect their identity and the information given. The interview transcript will be stored in a password-protected computer hard-drive and kept confidential so that you are not traced, though my final doctorate thesis will be publicly available. Participation in the research process is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw from this at any time without giving reasons for your withdrawal.

### **Who else is involved with this research?**

This research project is being sponsored by Bradford College as part of their scholarly activity and supported by its Departments. It is supervised by the University of Huddersfield staff, Professor Paul Thomas ([d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk](mailto:d.p.thomas@hud.ac.uk)) and Professor Pete Sanderson ([p.j.sanderson@hud.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.sanderson@hud.ac.uk)).

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Further Education experience of young British males of Pakistani-origin – expectations and outcomes.

Interview consent form

**Please tick**

I have been fully informed of the nature of this research project and I consent to taking part in it.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this research at any time without giving reasons.

I give permission to use interview quotes in publications so long as I am not identified by name or traced in any way.

I understand the interview is audio-recorded and the recordings will be kept secure.

I understand that no one will have access to interview transcripts other than the researcher and the transcriber.

I understand that my identity will be protected by using false names and that I will not be identified from the information I have supplied.

Name of participant:

Signature

Date

Name of researcher: Ashiq Hussain

Signature

Date

Appendix H

Please complete the questionnaire on the dotted lines. Thanks

**Demographic information:**

Name .....

Professional capacity .....

Gender .....

Department .....

Number of years worked at college.....

Any specific responsibilities .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Appendix I

**College staff-respondent demographics**

Anonymised Names	Department	Ethnicity	Gender	Years of service	Responsibilities
Georgina	English & Maths (cross-college)	White British	Female	16	GCSEs and Functional Skills, WJEC Examiner, Academic Board member, UCU activist
Sarah	English & Maths (cross-college)	White British	Female	18	GCSEs and Functional Skills, Safeguarding Officer, IV link tutor.
Jessica	English & Maths (cross-college)	White British	Female	10	Maths GCSEs and Functional Skills
Donna	English & Maths (cross-college)	Afro-Caribbean	Female	14	Functional Skills maths from Entry level to Level 2.
Khalid	FE Business & Enterprise	Pakistani	Male	8	L3 course tutor, Lead IV
Sadiq	FE Computing	Pakistani	Male	4	Student Pastoral Support
Andrew	Estates & Facilities	White British	Male	8	Manager
Paul	Security	White British	Male	8	Student safety, student discipline, Security Department.
James	Connexions	White British	Male	14	Career Adviser

## Interview Guide for focus groups

Introduce myself

Obtain permission to record

Thank for cooperation and its benefits

Record Day/Time/Setting/

Note seating arrangement with respondent positions

- I'll start off with you Q. the first question is how do you describe yourself ethnically or racially?
- OK, Can you think of any other category, how you might describe yourself?
- Where do you see yourself in 2-years' time and 10-Years' time. So what we're looking at is, see yourself in 2-years and project yourself in 10-years time?
- In terms of work, would you work for yourself or somebody else?
- OK, right, that's fine. Can I also ask, would you be around here or would you be somewhere else in 10-years' time? (*prompts/follow up questions if necessary*)
- What made you come to Bradford College?
- I'm going to move to you [ ] now for my next question. How do you decide what course to do? As you're doing this course you could have done any courses, how did you decide? (*explore/prompts/follow up questions if necessary*)
- The atmosphere, here at Bradford College, how do you find other students, your colleagues here for instance?
- Right, do you have any issues with tutors? (*explore/prompts/follow up questions if necessary*)
- And the overall environment in the college, how do you find that?
- How do you get on with other ethnicities, other students who are not Pakistanis? And, how do you find tutors?
- Would you like to see any improvement in this college, anything that you're not happy with?
- (*explore/prompts/follow up questions if necessary*)
- : Do you feel you've ever been discriminated against, racially or otherwise? (*explore/prompts/follow up questions if necessary*)
- Have you been to any other colleges?
- Do you discuss any college issues with your parents?
- Do you feel there is pressure on you by your parents to do well in education?

