Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families

Insights from Young People and their Parents in Britain

MICHELA FRANCESCHELLI



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Michela Franceschelli UCL Institute of Education London, UK

ISBN 978-1-137-53169-8 ISBN 978-1-137-53170-4 (eBook) DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53170-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016957532

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Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Macmillan Publishers Ltd.

The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Preface

My interest in the research questions that I address in this book, about identity and upbringing in South Asian British Muslim¹ families, emerged from a combination of personal life experiences and intellectual curiosities. I have been asked many times since the start of this project why I decided to research the experiences of Muslim parents bringing up their children in Britain, and those of young Muslims growing up in a Western non-Muslim society. I normally have more than one answer to this question: these are topical and relevant issues; the project provides an understanding of diversity in contemporary societies; and it produces new knowledge about communities that are often stereotyped. Moreover, this research does not exist in a void and another strong motivation for me to undertake this work was to try and understand how it is to be a British Muslim today. The aftermath of 9/11, and the other more recent terrorist attacks perpetrated by extremist Islamists, have created perceptions of Muslims in Western countries that leave little space for the people behind the news stories. As researcher, I have always been committed to going beyond bland generalisations.

While these points answer why I became interested in the topic, the other question I am often asked is how these interests developed.

¹South Asian Muslims are Muslims from Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani ethnic backgrounds.

To answer this, I have to make reference to my own upbringing and coming of age, which occured between Italy and the UK. I grew up in Italy as a Christian Catholic and all my friends and the people in my childhood were also White Italian Catholics. Although substantial migration flows started reaching Italy from the 1980s, migrants have been confined into marginal positions in Italian society. This is why I did not meet any of them at school, church or amongst my closed circle of friends in the neighbourhood. The first contact I ever had with Muslim people was during an organised trip to Tunisia with my parents. I was about eight years old and prior to that I cannot recollect any image or experience that had anything to do with Islam (apart from the Moroccan street sellers on the beach at the Italian eastern coast where I used to go on holiday). Of the trip in Tunisia, I remember the heat, the dunes and the thin sand of the desert, the busy markets, couscous, palm trees and an excursion on a camel. I precisely remember men with turbans and women with veils. Covering the head made complete sense to me because of the strong sun: even my mum used to wrap a bandana around my head, or she made me wear a baseball cap of some American team. A decade after that, during my late teens I spent a summer in London to learn English and to get some work experience. I got a job in a fast food chain and I managed to find a room to rent in the East End. At the time, I knew nothing about East London and I moved there only because of its affordability. I recollect carrying a heavy suitcase out of Bethnal Green tube station and finding myself catapulted into the vibrant atmosphere of the area. Mr Hassan, from Bangladesh, was my landlord and introduced me to the area and the community. He explained about the calls for Muslim prayers, the Adhan; he told me about halal meat; he suggested some local restaurants where I had my first curry; and he showed me the local market. After graduation in Italy, I moved back to the East End and spent many years there until it became my home-or one of my homes, at least. There I met many Muslim people from different ethnic backgrounds: new friends, colleagues, neighbours and other landlords. A Bangladeshi Muslim colleague, who was working with me in a part-time job I had while studying, helped me to recruit research participants for my Masters dissertation. In the dissertation, I explored the

unusual success of a girls' school in a deprived London borough where the majority of students were from a Bangladeshi Muslim background. It was that small-scale project that raised many questions for me, about what it is like growing up as a Muslim in Britain, furthering my interest in the topic. After completing my Masters, I got a job as a researcher in a college in Southall, a prevalently Indian Sikh area where I shared an office with three women: a Pakistani Muslim, an Indian Sikh and an Indian Hindu. The time there was very important for me to gain a first sense of South Asianness and the boundaries between religion and cultures. My colleagues and friends, Dr Fatima Husain and Nilufer Rahim, were also primary influences in developing an interest in South Asian ethnicreligious communities. While listening to their personal stories about their families, experiences of growing up across different continents and cultures, and their relationships with their siblings, I reflected on both identity and upbringing.

Together with the places I visited, London, and the people I met, both novels and other academic research stimulated my curiosity and increased my interest in the questions addressed by this research. Reading *The Black Album*, by the British Pakistani writer Hanif Kureishi, while at university in Italy, inspired my interest in the issues of identity negotiations. Kureishi tells the coming-of-age story of Shahid Hasan, a Pakistani student in London who finds himself torn between a love affair with a bohemian and eccentric college professor and a conservative group of young Muslims in the community. My friend Dr Fatima Husain introduced me to the academic work of Dr Harriet Becher with Bangladeshi families in London, which inspired my interest in family life. 'Invisible Inequality' by the American sociologist Annette Lareau, was also highly influential in the development of the research and, in particular, in thinking about how social inequalities shape practices of upbringing.

A couple of years ago I started following the blog of the photographer and journalist Brandon Stanton who travels around the world taking pictures and collecting the stories of people. Each photo comes together with some text extracted from conversations with the photographed people, giving a taste of their experiences and life circumstances. A particular photograph taken in Pakistan of a man and several children caught my attention. This is what was written below the image:

It's not that terrorism, patriarchy, and violence aren't real problems in Pakistan. They exist and the country is battling these issues every single day. Pakistanis are very much aware of the extremism in their midst. The problem is that so many people seem to only be aware of that extremism. Because just as in the hypothetical example above—the other 99.99% of life just doesn't make the news. When there's only room in the newspaper for a single column about Pakistan, it's going to be filled with the most compelling story. And unfortunately, that tends to be the most violent story.²

These words unfold an important message emerging from the many conversations with South Asian Muslim parents and young people in the research: the need to look beyond the news stories and focus on real people and so on their everyday lives, values, beliefs, concerns, challenges, failures and successes, aspirations and worries, on their various experiences of family, upbringing and on their coming of age during times of rapid change and increasing uncertainty.

London, UK

Michela Franceschelli

²Retrieved from Humans of New York website: http://www.humansofnewyork.com/post/ 127078073936/a-final-word-on-pakistan-imagine-that-every-time

Acknowledgments

A special place in the acknowledgments must go to Prof Margaret O'Brien for her tireless support throughout the whole duration of this project, her continuous encouragement and her constant intellectual guidance. My thanks go also to Prof Jonathan Dickens, Prof Neil Cooper and Dr Penny Sorensen at the University of East Anglia where I completed the research, for their comments on various drafts and advice on methodology. I am particularly indebted to my colleague and dear friend Dr Fatima Husain, who taught me so much about social research and pointed me toward the scholarship at the University of East Anglia. I am grateful to The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and The Family and Parenting Institute (now Family and Childcare Trust) for funding the research, and I am particularly thankful to Clem Henricson who mentored me during the early stages of the research design. My previous colleagues at Inclusion and more recently at LLAKES, UCL Institute of Education have also been amazingly encouraging during different stages of the project and writing up the book.

Looking back, I have to highlight the contribution of the many people who have shaped my journey in education: from my teacher Paola Morsiani, who provided me with a strong grounding allowing me to progress well into the next steps of the journey, to Prof Luciana Brunelli, who introduced me to philosophy and social theory. My tutor and supervisor at University of Perugia, where I graduated, Prof Massimo Rosati, sadly died early in 2014 at only 44 years old. I am profoundly indebted to him for passing his passion for the sociological inquiry on to me. His ability to shift between complex theoretical issues and empirical facts was a primary source of inspiration and, to me, an invaluable example of a proper 'sociological imagination'.

When you commit to a project that will last for a few years, it is difficult to predict what will come along the way. I especially feel for my parents, for believing in me and for supporting me unconditionally during the many ups and downs of the last few years. I am grateful to all my family and close friends in Italy and London, who made me reflect with their questions, engaged me in debates and took me out and bought me a drink when I needed a break. At the outset of the project, I met my now husband Ali Ahmed, who has been by my side ever since, patiently listening to my worries, encouraging me or challenging me when I most needed it. I am also extremely thankful to all of Ali's family for making me feel so welcome amongst them and for supporting me in countless ways.

Finally, this project would have not been possible without the contribution of the parents, young people, the schools in London and one college in North West England. I remember the initial worries I had when I started looking for research participants: why would anyone want to speak about identity and family life with a stranger? In Italy, we are often taught to only trust family and close friends. So, based on this assumption, and considering the challenges that Muslim communities are currently facing, I thought they were going to be reluctant to take part. Against my negative expectations, I had a good response from schools, I managed to engage young people and, finally, I spoke to their parents. I am so deeply grateful to all the young people and parents who sat down with me for hours and shared their stories and views. They had me for dinner and tea and discussed identity and their experiences of growing up. I asked them at the end of the interviews why they agreed to take part in the research: some wanted to challenge bad stereotypes about their communities and wanted me to report what I learnt from them, but mostly they told me: 'I just want to help'.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Identity and Upbringing in Multicultural Britain

Identity, there is so many ways you could define identity. It is quite a complex question. It's like where you are from, what is your favourite thing. I can just say that I am a twin, that's my identity or that I'm British, that's my identity. [...] Could say I am Muslim, I call myself a liberal Muslim or your race you could say you are Asian, there is so much you could define yourself by. (Mariam,¹ 17-year-old, British Bangladeshi)²

Family is the biggest influence on who you are and the person you'll be and your identity as a person. Friends can support to a limit but your family can support you all the way. You always need your family. (Saleem, 18-year-old, British Pakistani)

¹Please note all names have been changed into pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants. A full list of pseudonyms is provided in Appendix 1.

²Please note the quotes are direct transcriptions from interviews with research participants. Generally they have not been edited, and minor editing was applied only when strictly required to make certain extracts clearer. Most edits consisted of adding missing words (often the subject of the verb) which will appear in square brackets, based on text which was not reported, but part of the same interview. Grammar, the use of slang or abbreviations were not changed.

1.1.1 Exploring Parenting and Growing Up

2

This book has a twofold focus in exploring both identity and practices of upbringing in South Asian (those with Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian ethnic backgrounds) Muslim families in Britain. It looks at the everyday lives, relationships, values, beliefs and aspirations of South Asian Muslim teenagers who were mostly born in the UK, and of their parents, who instead grew up and became adults elsewhere—either in Bangladesh, India or Pakistan.

I first met Fatiha during the rush hour. I went to pick her up at her office in a busy street in Inner London and, while carrying several shopping bags, walking toward her flat, she started telling me her story. Fatiha was a 41-year-old Bangladeshi woman, who arrived in the UK when she was only 11 years old. Although at the time she arrived she knew no English, she was able to catch up quickly and did well in her GCSEs and O Levels³:

I did five GCSEs and two O Levels, Bengali and Chemistry and I got good grades. I was the second person to get a B in Chemistry out of all my year and I got a B in Bengali as well.

As a child, she dreamed of becoming a pharmacist, but when she turned 18, her father found her a husband. She genuinely liked the man—she said—and so they got married and she quit studying. Her coming of age happened quickly and quite smoothly, until she had her first child, Mo, who marked a turning point. Even though she had missed out on her education, Fatiha managed to find work soon after Mo was born. She began working as an interpreter from Bengali to English, initially for different charities, social services and local authorities. Once she had established herself as an interpreter, she progressed and, at the time of the interview, she had a 'proper' full-time position with the local council. This was still very much an unusual path in her community, where women of her generation are still less still likely to work than men, particularly if they have

³ The O Level (Ordinary Level) was the British school leaving qualifi cation which predated the GCSE. Note: GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) is the secondary school exam taken at 16 years old in the UK. The O Level (Ordinary Level) was the British school leaving qualification which predated the GCSE.

children: 'We needed the money and I wanted to contribute; it's my family too,' she told me. During the walk, she explained something about the person she was and her dual sense of belonging and identity. Moving to Britain as a child and growing up in Inner London involved a different personal journey compared to other Bangladeshi women of the same generation, who often arrived in the UK as adults to get married:

I came here when I was little so my understanding mostly was this way of thinking in this country: the Western way of thinking, but with an *'Islamic perspective'* if you know what I mean.

As a mother of three—two boys and one girl—Fatiha explained that the meaning of motherhood was about passing on a 'British way of thinking' that was entangled with 'Islamic perspectives,' such as religious views and values. Hence, being 'independent, ambitious, work-focused, [and] successful' and believing in social mobility enhanced by education—she said—must come together with Islam and the boundaries of behaviour that religion sets out. By embracing this principle, she was able to act as a role model for her children, turning the quite challenging task of negotiating different priorities and ways of life into actual practices to follow:

So as a parent I have to maintain the value of Islam for myself and if the children see that in me then it is easier for them to do it for themselves.

Being a 'practising Muslim working mother' was her way to bring together her 'Islamic perspectives' with her British identity.

Fatiha's husband, Sakib, was a bit older than her. What he had to tell me about fatherhood and what being a father involved was also a reflection of his personal history. Unlike Fatiha, Sakib grew up in Bangladesh and moved to the UK as a young man in his early twenties. He said 'working hard,' was all he did from the first day of his arrival in England. While laughing, he told me that the only day he could remember having off work was the day he got married: 'And even that was hard work!' Since that day, and particularly after Mo was born, the pressure on him to provide for the family grew even higher and there was no time for anything other than 'work, work'. He worked in a mill and then in a factory for several years. He was made redundant and drove taxis in the night while helping in a Bengali restaurant during the day. Now, he was finally running his own business, he told me very proudly. Money was still tight and the competition was high but he was hopeful. 'This is why my English is so bad', as he had never had the time to study, he explained. He admitted that at times things had been really hard, but he said that he had no regrets and was happy with how life had turned out for him:

I can look [at] a better future through my children's eyes. So my work has [been] of some use. I'm happy as a father.

Sakina, the daughter of Sakib and Fatiha, was a bubbly and chatty young woman whose ambition was to become a medical doctor. She was very determined and, at 18, she had already received an offer from one of the best medical universities in the UK. At the time I spoke to her, she was in the middle of her A Levels, but she appeared both confident and carefree, and I realised she did not mind interrupting her revision and spending time talking to me. It was evident that she fully took on board her mother's message about negotiating 'British thinking'-she described her determination to do well in her career-with her faith in Islam. Sakina believed in God, prayed as many times as she could-most often five times a day, as Islam sets out-and, like her mother Fatiha, she wore the hijab.⁴ Like her mother, she also strongly believed in the primacy of motherhood for women, which she did not see as clashing with her future career as a doctor. She said that negotiating family and work were challenges for any parent, not just for Muslim women. I asked how she felt about growing up in London at this specific time:

I think personally this country has been the best European country to be a Muslim in really, because I can practice my religion completely freely. In London, I don't know, I've never had any issue because everything has been so accommodating for me [...] like in terms of what I wanted to do.

Sakina's interview ended on this positive note. The feelings and experiences of Sakina and her parents are not representative of the rest of South

⁴Hijab is the headscarf used by Muslim women to cover the hair.

Asian Muslims in Britain and they do not speak on behalf of the rest of their ethnic-religious community in Inner London. Yet, the interviews with Sakina's family highlight some of the important issues that I want to address in this book: what is it like to grow up as a British Muslim today? What is it like to bring up children in Britain as a Muslim parent? This book is about South Asian Muslim teenagers and their parents. It looks at the influence that parents have on the development of their children's identity and on the young people's experiences of growing up today as British, as Muslim, as South Asian, as boys or girls, and in families from working-class or middle-class backgrounds. In order to do so, I have drawn from more than 50 in-depth interviews⁵ that I conducted with South Asian Muslim teenagers (aged 14–19 years) and their parents (aged from 40s to mid-50s) in different regions of England, as well as from more than 500 questionnaires that I distributed in three secondary schools in London and one college in North West England.

This chapter sets out the background to the book; it outlines the main theoretical influences, underlying debates, the aims and questions addressed by the research, and the methods employed for the collection and analysis of the data. The following chapters will report the findings from the research.

1.2 Questions of Our Times

Micro issues of identity, family and upbringing are informed by what happens in society at the macro level. With international migration changing the ethnic and religious composition of contemporary societies, questions about how to deal with increasing diversity are on the rise, with religious diversity increasingly central to the debate. Theories that focus on social change and diversity have pointed to different trends, such as individualisation of religion, secularization or post-secularism (Rosati 2015).

⁵The interview sample includes 52 individual interviews, which account for 15 families (where parents and young persons were separately interviewed) and some extra interviews with young people whose parents could not be reached. The survey sample includes 560 questionnaires. Please see Appendix for more details.

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The events of the last decade, from September 11th (2001), the London bombings (2005), the terrorist attacks in Madrid (2004) to, most recently, Charlie Hebdo and the attacks in Paris (2015), have accentuated a growing international narrative about the end of multiculturalism as a political system that is able to bring together groups from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. During a speech at the Christian Union Democratic Party, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, summed up widespread feelings in many European and Western countries. 'Of course the tendency has been to say, "let's adopt the multicultural concept and live happily side by side, and be happy to be living with each other". But this concept has failed, and failed utterly' (Connolly 2010).

Multiculturalism is a highly complex, multifaceted term that attempts to answer a crucial question about contemporary societies, namely: how can equality be maintained together with a respect for diversity (Modood 2006, 2007; Modood et al. 2006; Parekh 2000)? From a sociological perspective, multiculturalism is a type of society that acknowledges the existence of groups with different senses of identity, cultural references and lifestyles. Religion is central to these debates. If contemporary Western societies are becoming increasingly secular as some have theorised (Norris and Inglehart 2004), the question of multiculturalism becomes not only the one of how multiple religions fit together, but also how they all fit within secularism (Rosati 2015). Multiculturalism is also perceived as the political response to migration and the related increasing diversity of society. In his report about the future of multiethnic Britain for the Runnymede Trust,⁶ Bhikhu Parekh (2000) set out the mission and the vision of multicultural policy in Britain as the political accommodation of group identities, which challenges exclusionary racisms (Modood 2010):

If Britain is to be a successful community of communities it will need to combine the values of equality and diversity (Parekh 2000: 105).

Parekh's answer to the difference/unity dilemma afflicting multicultural societies is the promotion of policy that supports and cultivates a common

⁶The Runnymede Trust is an independent think tank devoted to the cause of promoting racial justice in Britain. The Runnymede Trust established the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, whose chair was Bhikhu Parekh.

sense of belonging, which is willing to respect and value deep cultural differences. Inclusion into a political community is understood not in terms of accepting the rule of the majority, but rather as the opening of an 'ongoing dialogue where the terms of politics are no longer fixed in advance but the result of multiple negotiations' (Wieviorka 2007: 40).

The 2001 riots that broke out in Oldham and Bradford, UK, acted as a warning to the British government. Multiculturalism suddenly became popular; it was pushed to the top of the political agenda and remained there for a few years. In the early 2000s, recommendations were made to central and local government to take the lead in promoting community cohesion (Latour 2007), supported by a renewed interest and the promotion of Citizenship Education (Crick 1998; Goldsmith 2008; Haste and Hogan 2006; Hine 2008).

However, for policy (and theory) to work on the ground, they have to be able to address what actually happens at the society level. When three bombs exploded in London during July 2005, the atmosphere began to change dramatically. The same year, Trevor Philips, the former head of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), warned that 'we are sleepwalking our way to segregation' (Casciani 2011). In other words, the sense that Britain was becoming an increasingly divided country by race, ethnicity and religion began to grow together with the perception that young people were growing up in 'enclaves'. Since the suicide bombers responsible for the attacks in London were British Muslims, the perception of Muslims as being 'culturally alien' (Werbner 2000: 307) increased and articles and reports questioning the ability of Muslims to integrate proliferated (Mirza et al. 2007; Massey and Tatla 2012; Morgan and Poynting 2012).

One reply to these assertions about the negative and inevitable implications of multiculturalism came from Tariq Modood (2010), who sought to re-establish a balance in the concept between equality and diversity. Modood considers the claim that, by promoting differences, multiculturalism encourages social divisions (Davies 2009), to be a biased and reductive conclusion. He argued that multiculturalism searching 'for crosscutting commonalities and a vision of a greater good' (Modood 2010: 7). Finding this balance appears to be the new or renewed challenge for many contemporary societies.

Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families

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The series of terrorist attacks around the world also led to another outcome: according to many, not only did these events mark the end of multiculturalism, but also Muslims were identified as the main responsible for its end, putting into question the possibility of a multicultural society. Many Muslims around the world have been accused of being at war with the West, and Islam has been blamed as the ideology behind the violent acts. Studies of public opinion (Wike and Grim 2010) have confirmed general preoccupations about Islam being considered as a national security threat. Ultimately, the association of Muslims with a security threat has set off a chain of negative reactions that has culminated in heightened Islamophobia (Halliday 2010; Morgan and Poynting 2012; Massey and Tatla 2012).

Morey and Yaqin (2011) investigated how media and public discourse have together fuelled the construction of Islam as a political problem, and Muslims as a social issue. If the role of contemporary media in the construction of Muslims as the 'others' is undeniable, the idea of an inner distinction between the Muslim world and the West actually has a long history. Edward Said (1978) captured the essence of the polarisation between East and West in the idea of 'Orientalism', a way of coming to terms with and constructing the obscure and 'exotic Oriental other' as opposed to the Occidental civilised world:

Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible position of superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient, without ever losing him the relative upper hand. (Said 1978: 7)

Behind the idea of Orientalism, Said argued, there are relationships of power, domination and 'varying degrees of a complex hegemony' (Said 1978: 4). This idea of Orientals as 'different others' goes back to the Ottoman Caliphate and even predates the Crusades (Morey and Yaqin 2011). Nonetheless, it was during the colonial era that Orientalism started to become an increasingly prominent discourse, whilst at the end of the Cold War the construction of a culturally inferior 'other' led to the perception of a more explicit and general 'clash of civilisations'. The political scientist Huntington (1997) speculated that religion had become the primary source of conflict in the post-Cold War era, reinforcing claims and widespread preoccupations about the unavoidability of the 'war' that

is troubling our time: a war between different religions and irreconcilable civilisations. Still, if we are really at the verge of a war between civilisations and religions, between Islam and the West, why are Muslims around the world-from Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, etc.-still the main victims of the most brutal Islamist attacks? Generalisations about Muslims as a monolithic group have become the norm. In this context, even Sakina's family is somehow held responsible for the clash of civilisations that predated the Crusades. When I started working on this project, I wondered how Muslim people dealt with the multiple accusations directed at them, and with being constantly under the spotlight and perceived as 'suspects' (Birdwell and Jamie, 2010). This was even before the upsurge of violence from ISIS (Islamic State) and the war in Syria, which have worsened concerns about Islam and perceptions of Muslims around the world. In their book Framing Muslims, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin explain that they did not deal with Muslims 'as real people with lives, loves and workday concerns'; instead they examined 'the origin and circulation of an epithet and the way the term has come to signify a political problem' (Morey and Yaqin 2011: 2). By contrast, my focus here is on real people and their everyday lives, on the experiences of growing up and being a teenager, but also on the challenges of being a parent and bringing up children today. These experiences are framed by the social context that I have just described.

1.3 South Asian Muslims in Britain: A Snapshot

There are currently 2.7 million Muslims in England and Wales, which account for 4.8 % of the total population, an increase of 1.2 million in the last ten years (ONS 2011a, b). The 2011 British Census also suggests that just over half of all Muslims (53 %) were born outside the UK, a figure that has almost doubled in the last 20 years. Similarly, the number of Muslims born in the UK has increased by a half a million (560,000) from 718,000 to 1.2 million in 2011.⁷ South Asians are still the big-

⁷ONS (2013), Full story: What does the Census tell us about religion in 2011? http://www.ons. gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_310454.pdf

gest Muslim group: 60 % of the overall Muslim population in England and Wales are from Pakistani (38 %), Bangladeshi (15 %) and Indian (7 %) ethnic backgrounds (ONS 2011a, b).⁸ Almost all Pakistanis and all Bangladeshis (91 and 90 %, respectively) are from a Muslim religious background, while most Indians are Hindus (44 %), Sikhs (22 %) and Muslims (14 %).

The demographic trends that characterise South Asian Muslim families are quite different from the most common demographic trends of families from other ethnic religious groups in the UK (Becher and Husain m 2005): South Asian Muslim families are generally larger, with fewer childless couples, more extended families living together, and lower rates of cohabitation and divorce (ONS 2004; Dobbs Green and Zealey 2006).

In general, in Britain the unemployment rates of ethnic minority groups are falling, but recent statistics highlight the persistence of disadvantage within South Asian Muslim groups, particularly in Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities. Analysis for The Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁹ (JRF 2013) shows that the unemployment rate of Bangladeshi and Pakistani men aged 25-49 years was almost double that of White British men, at 11 % for Bangladeshi, 10 % for Pakistani and 6 % for White British (CoDE 2013a). By contrast, Indians have unemployment rates similar to the White British majority at 6 %. Amongst other ethnic groups, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis continue to experience higher rates of unemployment, but the general trend is that they are doing better than in the 1990s and early 2000s. Their falling unemployment rates (for Pakistani men, it has fallen from 25 % to 10 %; for Bangladeshi men, from 26 % to 11 % (CODE 2013b)) during the last 20 years tends to be associated with their increasing participation in self-employment and part-time work, where these two groups are the most represented (CoDE 2013a, b). Statistics cannot fully explain what is behind these trends, but we can speculate that they are an indication of continuous difficulties with accessing full-time employment.

If the evidence suggests that Pakistani and Bangladeshi men continue to experience disadvantages in the labour market, Pakistani and Bangladeshi

⁸As in my own Table from Census 2011.

⁹An independent British charity that conducts social research on the causes of poverty and disadvantage in order to inform policy and practice. http://www.jrf.org.uk/about

women have remained far worse off than their male counterparts. For instance, they have the highest rates of unemployment compared with all other ethnic groups reaching 19 % and 15 %, respectively, compared with 5 % of White British women.

In the last 20 years, the participation of South Asian groups in higher education has increased sharply. In 2011, only 13 % of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis aged 16-24 had no qualifications compared to more than half of those aged 50-64. For Indians, 5 % had no qualifications amongst those aged 16-24 compared with nearly a third of those aged 50-64 (CoDE 2014c). The largest increase in the number of people achieving degree level qualifications between 1991 and 2011 was in the Indian and Pakistani groups, among whom there was a 27 % and 18 % increase, respectively (CoDE 2014c). Although these increases matter, in 2011, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the UK remained the two ethnic groups (together with Gypsies/Travellers) who were least likely to have a degree (CoDE 2014c). The disadvantages experienced by Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in education and in the labour market are also reflected in their pathways of social mobility. Platt's (2005) analysis of ethnic groups' social mobility¹⁰ suggests that only a third of the Pakistanis from workingclass backgrounds managed to reach professional and managerial destinations. This was proportionally less than all the other groups, including Indians, who instead generally have much higher social mobility rates.

Pakistanis and Bangladeshis also experience higher health inequalities, which particularly affect women. Between 1991 and 2011, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women had illness rates that were about 10 % higher than White women (CoDE 2013d). The determinants of these inequalities range from age and hereditary factors to levels of education, social position, income, and local environment as well as experience of discrimination (CoDE 2013d).

Overall, statistics tell a mixed story of both improvement and persistence of inequalities and disadvantage, with young South Asians doing better in education than their parents, but still struggling (particularly Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) to access and progress in racialised labour markets.

¹⁰ Social mobility here is intended as the class transitions from origins to destinations. Please note Platt's analysis (2005) is based on the ONS Longitudinal Study and Bangladeshis were not included in the analysis.

1.3.1 Multiple Diasporas and Generations

In the UK and in other countries, such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands, a consistent part of migration flow has been a consequence of their colonial legacy. The presence of South Asian Muslims in Britain actually predated the post-Second World War period (Scourfield et al. 2013), but the migration flows from South Asian countries intensified greatly between the 1950s and early 1960s because of an open migration policy, with the specific purpose of filling gaps in the labour market. Overall, South Asian Muslims who arrived in the UK during that time were mainly men, originally from rural areas with little or no education. As first settlers, they experienced hardship and difficulties, taking up unskilled positions involving unsociable hours, poor working conditions and low wages (Brah 1996). Some of these shared experiences in the migration histories and settlement could lead one to think of South Asian Muslims as a single diaspora, a term that indicates communities of globally dispersed people emerging as consequence of voluntary or involuntary migration (Berg and Eckstein 2015; Brubaker 2005; Werbner 2004). Nevertheless, the commonalities amongst South Asian Muslims do not make up for internal differences, such as the countries of origin, languages, regional variations, different class backgrounds, migration and pre-migration histories. For instance, the current Bangladeshi community in Britain emerged predominantly from two distinct diasporic generations: one formed during the struggle of Bangladesh for independence, the other after the developments in post-independence Bangladesh (Kibria 2015). The creation in 1947 of the independent state of Pakistan produced large number of refugees, but even more Pakistanis left their country later, during the 1960s, after more than 250 villages in the region of Mirpur were lost to make space for water and electricity dams (Gilliat-Ray 2010). In the 1970s, other South Asian refugeesmostly Indians-arrived to Britain after being expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin (Gilliat-Ray 2010).¹¹ These migration pathways highlight the internal differentiation and the specificity of each ethnic group, such that

¹¹ Uganda was a British protectorate from 1896 to 1962. In 1971, strong nationalist policies following a military coup under the command of Idi Amin led to the expulsion of 80,000 Ugandan Asians. Britain agreed to resettle about 28,600 of the expelled Ugandan Asians (Gilliat-Ray 2010).

South Asian Muslims cannot be assimilated into one diaspora, but rather to multiple *diasporas*.

One commonality amongst the multiple diasporas was the initial belief that the situation was transient and that they would eventually move back to their homelands (Anwar 1979). However, for many of them, this did not turn out to be the case: South Asians who arrived between the 1970s and the 1980s were caught by the oil price shock and rising unemployment, which led to changes in the migration policies in Britain becoming increasingly more restrictive (Modood 2006). These restrictions forced migrants to quickly decide whether to stay or go back to their homelands, therefore shifting from the idea of temporary to a permanent migrant status, which involved family reunion.

Nowadays, most South Asian young people, such as those in this research, are born in the UK as second or even third generation migrants. In this context, the term 'second generation' defines the progeny of foreign-born migrants, who instead are normally described as 'first generation' (Berg and Eckstein 2015). We will see that the issue of generation has been particularly important in this research in order to understand differences in the views, aspirations and lived experiences of parents and young people. Today, second and third generation young people are growing up in a climate of increasing market deregulation, competition, job insecurity and decreasing welfare protection. If experiences of growing up and becoming an adult are changing quickly for most young people, young Muslims seem to face some additional challenges.

1.3.2 Young British Muslims Today

Early in 2015, three British teenage girls from East London went missing. Classmates described them as three hard-working and driven students. They could easily have been some of the girls I spoke to as part of the research. After only a few days, the Metropolitan Police found that they had left the UK and had flown from London to Turkey, where they had crossed the border to Syria and joined ISIS (De Freytas-Tamura 2015). These are not isolated events; other Muslim teenagers and young adults have been following the same path, increasing public concerns about the alienation of young

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Muslims, their deviancy and their potential for terrorism (Dwyer et al. 2008: 117), and accentuating perceptions of them as 'militant and aggressive, intrinsically fundamentalist and the ultimate others' (Archer 2001: 81). Since the London bombings, British Muslims have been catapulted into the spotlight, questioned about their sense of belonging to Britain and associated with extremist and violent groups (Peace Direct, 2006).

Research studies that aim to provide new insights into the lives of young British Muslims have multiplied (e.g. Archer 2001, 2002; Dwyer et al. 2008; Haque and Bell 2001; Shah et al. 2010). Still, the focus has mainly been on specific aspects of their identity, such as the construction of gender identities (Dwyer 1999, 2000; Dwyer et al. 2008; Ramji 2007), educational aspirations (Archer 2001; Basit 1997a, b), or experiences of educational underachievement (Haque and Bell 2001). Lewis (2007) has examined possible paths to the radicalisation of Islam while, with his research, Mondal (2008) has tried to give a voice to young British Muslims reporting their attitudes and opinions. So far, research has provided static descriptions of the identity of young British Muslims by concentrating on what these identities are like and what issues young people face at one point in their life. Becher (2008) and Scourfield et al. (2013) have highlighted the importance of exploring intergenerational dynamics, but with a focus on parenting younger children so they did not touch on identity development and the experiences of growing up during the teenage years which are, instead, the focus of this book. Scourfield et al. were particularly concerned with the intergenerational transmission of Islam, whilst here I explore the contribution of Islam to the more general practices of upbringing aimed at passing on values and beliefs, while attempting to increase the children's life chances.

1.4 Identity and Upbringing

By upbringing, I refer to the practices that mothers, fathers or carers employ to support the social, emotional and identity development of their children. Underlying the idea of upbringing, there is the process of intergenerational transmission such as the passing on of values, beliefs, culture or resources. Morgan (1996) argues that the practices of transmission are often taken for granted as experiences and unintentional activities, rather than conscious projects. Brannen (2006) and Brannen and Nilsen (2006) make the connection between this idea of the unconscious nature of transmission, and Bourdieu's concept of 'family habitus'. This is a very important link in understanding how upbringing is conceptualised in this book.

In this book I draw on several concepts developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002), starting with his idea of habitus. Although Bourdieu never focused directly on the issues that I have addressed here-like the identity of ethnic minority groups-I have found his work very relevant to explain some of the intergenerational dynamics in the families. Bourdieu defines habitus as 'a system of durable and transposable dispositions [...] which generate organized practices and representations [...] without presupposing a conscious aiming of the operations necessary to attain them' (Bourdieu 1990: 53-65). Dispositions are inclinations to act in a certain way and habitus is the process by which these dispositions come together. The American sociologist Annette Lareau explains that habitus is the 'the sense of what we are comfortable with and what it is natural to us' (Lareau 2011: 361). This 'sense' is located inside the individual head (Lahire 2003)-as 'generative classificatory schemes' or cognitive mechanisms-but Bourdieu argues (1984) that it originates externally, starting with socialisation in the family by accumulating background experiences through learning. From childhood, these experiences remain imprinted and encoded in the habitus (Bourdieu 1984) and are affected by the resources (capital) available in the family and by the negotiations taking place in external institutional settings (social fields).

In 'On the Family as Realized Category' (1996) and 'The Family Spirit' (1998), Bourdieu sets out that family has an institutional objective dimension, which determines 'social obligations' amongst family members, as well as an affective dimension, which transforms these social obligations into 'loving dispositions' (Bourdieu 1998). These loving dispositions serve to bond family members by what Bourdieu calls 'family feeling', which involves devotion, generosity and solidarity, as well as 'exchange of services, assistance, visits, attention and kindness' (Ibid: 22). Hence, family exists as the reciprocal obligations and bonding amongst members, as well as part of the social structure, which creates the social expectations and the social understanding of family itself. As such, family is influenced by specific historical and socio-economic conditions and 16

has a decisive role in the maintenance and reproduction of a certain social order through the accumulation and then the intergenerational transmission of different forms of capital.

Critics of Bourdieu have argued that he does not deal well enough with the process by which experiences become encoded in the habitus, or, in other words, he does not draw the link between habitus and upbringing (Mahmood 2001). Lareau's (2002, 2011) ethnographic work with families in Philadelphia investigates this link in depth and provides interesting insights about the micro-family processes behind social reproduction. Lareau (2011) found that practices of upbringing were deeply shaped by family dispositions, and that family dispositions were deeply informed by the families' social class. She identified two main 'types' of upbringing: the middle-class type had an emphasis on cultivating children's talents (concerted cultivation), whilst the workingclass type focused on providing basic needs and support, including food, comfort, shelter, but also emotional support (natural growth). Class-based divisions between practices of upbringing contribute, according to Lareau, to the intergenerational reproduction of class and status. Lareau depicts clearly how practices of upbringing materialise and take place through the family habitus: the interactions amongst family members, the language used at home, the way parents spoke to their children, the aspirations parents projected by also organising their children's spare time either more or less tightly through a number of extracurricular activities, and the manners and skills they passed on are all family dispositions through which the habitus manifested itself. We will see in Chapter 5 that Islam, a strong component of the family habitus, functions as either the process that enhances the (intergenerational) passing on of resources, values and beliefs, or the *content* of this transmission. Hence, parents were employing habitus as a means of transmission, as well as it being part of what was transmitted, by unconsciously passing on their own dispositions to their children. The result of these processes is the children's embodiment of the 'family habitus', as their dispositions-their ways of doing things, views and behaviours, etc.-are highly influenced by what was apprehended in the family (even as a form of reaction at times). However, this is not a mere reproduction of their parents' status, attitudes, motivations or

ideas, but a negotiation of these conditions with other circumstances affecting young people in different institutional settings. In summary, upbringing results from the passing on *of* dispositions and the passing on *through* dispositions of values, beliefs and resources. In this sense, upbringing is not a fully unconscious and habitual set of family practices (Morgan 1999; Becher 2008), but rather, as Lareau's findings suggest, parents use a combination of conscious practices and unconscious dispositions (e.g. their language, the way they speak, act, walk, etc.) when transmitting values and beliefs to their children.

The increasing cultural and racial diversity of British society has made upbringing an object of growing attention regarding the way cultural values and beliefs are passed on. Together with class, ethnicity and religion are other important factors that shape types of upbringing. By conveying the effects of these multiple factors such as class, culture, religion and also gender, upbringing is an important source for the development of an identity. Identity, as a process taking place between the individual and the social world, is a key object of investigation, as well as a background concept of the book:

[...] In the social jungle of human existence there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of identity (Erikson 1968: 130).

In this passage, the developmental psychologist Erik Erikson presents some important features of identity that my young respondents also acknowledged: identity is complex and is somehow needed. Scholars from various disciplinary viewpoints have approached the question of what identity is quite differently. Definitions reflect a divide between different methodological and epistemological perspectives, predominantly coming from psychological and sociological traditions. While there is general agreement that identity results from a complex interplay of inner (individual) and outer (social) factors, the emphasis on either one or the other aspect is the source of the main theoretical divide. Psychologists tend to look at identity within individuals as part of their 'psychological processes' (Erikson 1968: 296). Coté and Levine (2002) opened the definition of identity to multiple dimensions and recognised the relevance of three levels: 'personality' (intrapsychic domain), 'interactions' (patterns 18

of behaviour that characterize day-to-day contacts among people) and the 'social structure' (the political and economic system surrounding the individual). Sociological perspectives suggest that identity is not the exclusive property of the individual, but it is more social (Jenkins 2006; Ysseldyk et al. 2010; Weigert and Teitg 1986) and is 'something that is realized strategically and circumstantially' through reciprocal interactions (Weigert in Coté and Levine 2002: 49). If issues about identity are becoming increasingly popular, it is in the context of ethnic minority groups that these questions are more pressing. Here, the divide is between assimilationists (Platt 2014)-those supporting the thesis of a convergence of minority identities toward the majority-versus those supporting theses of 'reactive ethnicity' (Rumbaut 2008) or 'religious revival' as ways of creating distance from the mainstream. The review by Voas and Fleischmann (2012: 538) of the differences in religiosity-the degree of religious commitment-between first and second generation Muslims in Western countries supported the theory of a religious revival. Voas and Fleischmann (2012) concluded that close-knit ethnic communities reinforce and promote the religious commitment of first generations, while the hostility encountered by second generations as a consequence of Western suspicion of Islam leads to their increasing religious involvement (Voas and Fleischmann 2012). However, research concerned with religiosity and ethnic identities of second generation migrants has not looked at the intersections between the multiple sources of identity and has not explored the meanings and discourses underlying the construction of a religious identity. During the interview, I asked respondents to tell me in their own words what identity meant to them. This is a very difficult question and not everybody was able to elaborate an answer quickly. Only after many probes and prompts some young people were finally able to explain the meaning of identity:

Identity, defining it probably means like knowing yourself, knowing what you want in life and making sure that you have your own beliefs and making sure that you know who you are and you know what you are doing, because if you do that, then that is your identity. You see me today and you know my identity through what I am saying and I know your identity of who you are. (Wajid, 18-year-old British Bangladeshi boy) Yeah I think basically don't be afraid of who you are because as I was saying in the questionnaire being young is being targeted in the media, being a female—we are studying this in sociology—and it is almost like women are seen to be inferior to men; and being a Muslim, again that is a group targeted by the media. Basically you just have to work at them your best and just portray them as best as you can, because you can't be afraid of who you are, you are who you are and just make the best life for yourself. At the end of the day it is your values and your morals and intelligence that shapes you but spokespeople just can't see past that. (Maria, 17-year-old British Pakistani girl)

While asking questions about identity and listening to what parents and young people had to say, I felt that most of them, even those who could not formulate an answer at first, had already thought at length about these issues. We will see in the next chapter that this is likely to be because of the social pressures on Muslims. Having a sense of identity, as Erikson states, is important for most people. However, while for many groups in society, identity remains a mostly personal matter, identity has become, for Muslim people, a political question. The idea that Islam is incompatible with Western values has a long history, and claims that Western societies are becoming increasingly divided along religious lines as a result of Muslims' refusal or incapacity to integrate are growing (Statham et al. 2005). These issues place a new emphasis on the importance of identity as the topic of this book.

The following section describes how I define identity in the book, taking into account the ideas of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.

1.5 The Identity Debate: Negotiating Influences and Questions of Loyalty

While reading the comments left in some of the questionnaires that I distributed in several secondary schools as part of this research, I found this written note from Maria, a 17-year-old British Pakistani girl:

Being a youth, being of British-Pakistani heritage, a woman and a Muslim in the UK today, I have all the negative stereotypes and preju20

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

Here, Maria reflects on the complexity of negotiating multiple influences affecting her identity while growing up. The emphasis on having to prove the goodness of different aspects of her identity was a response to wider public discourses and tendencies to stereotype Muslims, which was a common feature in the discourses of research participants as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. These influences can be perceived by society as antagonistic and as producing numerous challenges that I will also explore in the following chapters.

Since the outset of the research, I have tried to understand the reasons why people come to think of themselves in certain terms and how they construct their identity in their interaction with the social world (Franceschelli et al. 2016). Therefore, rather than looking at the categories that people employ to make sense of who they are such as 'I'm a student', 'I'm unemployed', 'I'm Italian', and so on, I have been concerned with the processes underlying the development of self-definitions or, in other words, why we define our identity in certain ways.

These questions about identity are particularly relevant for the sociology of ethnicity and race. During the 1990s, sociological theory introduced the idea of 'new ethnicities' (Hall 1991; Les Back 1996), marking a shift from the unitary concept of race to a plurality of identifications: 'The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the "other"" (Hall 1991). Stuart Hall (1991) suggested that multiple social identities are constructed through different categories and different antagonisms, which operate in different ways and directions. In line with this, Brah (1996) contrasted the idea of a sole identity with the new forms of belonging that were emerging from multiple diasporic identities operating in different cultural spaces and crossing multiple national boundaries-what Bhabha (1994) refers to as 'hybridity'. Cultural theorists (e.g. Hall 1991; Brah 1996) celebrated this idea of hybridity, which became a way to theorise about the complex identity negotiations of post-colonial diasporic populations.

Ironically, this effort of explaining the functioning and the processes underlying the construction of diasporic identities has had unexpected outcomes within the identity debate. With Muslim identity becoming very much a political issue, ideas of hybridity, fluidity and multiplicity of identities has unexpectedly fomented questions of loyalty: if identities are multiple, to which identity are Muslims more loyal? How can multiple identities be reconciled with one sense of national belonging? The underlying assumptions are that religious and national identities are mutually exclusive and that a national identity represents an overarching consensus about certain values (Nandi and Platt 2015). These questions risk fuelling the view of Muslims as disengaged and disloyal because of their strong attachment to their religious identity, as detailed in Chapter 2.

22 Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families

From a theoretical standpoint, Brubaker and Cooper (2000) raised questions about the value and helpfulness of the concept of identity for social sciences. They argued that identity has been overly used and consequently misused by scholars, so that it has lost its explanatory power. Hence, according to them, identity has turned into a misleading concept seeking to make sense of too many issues at the same time: embodying the selfhood, explaining action, designating sameness within people and producing collective solidarity. Brubaker and Cooper are particularly critical of highly popular constructionist approaches to identity, which have turned this idea into an evanescent product of competing discourses:

If identity is everywhere, it is nowhere. If it is fluid, how can we understand the ways in which self-understandings may harden, congeal, and crystallize? If it is constructed, how can we understand the sometimes coercive force of external identifications? If it is multiple, how do we understand the terrible singularity that is often striven for and sometimes realized by politicians seeking to transform mere categories into unitary and exclusive groups? How can we understand the power and pathos of identity politics? (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 1)

In the attempt to create order out of chaos, Brubaker and Cooper suggested replacing identity with a number of more specific concepts: self-identification and categorisation (how the self is identified by others), self-understanding (situated subjectivity as the sense of one's social location), commonality (sharing common attributes), connectedness (relational ties) and groupness (the sense of belonging to a group) (Ibid:14-19). While Brubaker and Cooper's criticism of identity makes sense, their conclusions, consisting of splitting the term into a differentiated analytical language, could lead to even more confusion within the conceptual 'melting pot' already surrounding these issues. Taking into account all of these considerations, I have attempted to make sense of identity in a way that fits the purpose of the research and that is useful in understanding the complexity of South Asian Muslims' internal and external identifications. Moreover, my concern has also been to find a definition of identity away from the questions of loyalty attached to ideas of multiplicity and hybridity.
1.5.1 A Definition of Identity That Works for the Case: Using Bourdieu's Habitus and Social Fields

Together with providing a framework for understanding how upbringing takes place, Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' is useful in understanding identity and how identity works. Habitus as a 'system of dispositions' reflects 'the manner and style by which actors carry themselves' (Jenkins 2002: 74–75) and it also includes the expectations and tastes of an individual (Sweetman 2009: 493).

The concept of 'social field' is complementary to habitus and defines the contextual spaces where habitus originates and then operates. A social field is a structured and hierarchical system that determines the 'social positions' of the different occupants (Jenkins 2002: 86). This is why Bourdieu speaks of fields as 'fields of struggle', where different resources are exchanged and different interests are at stake:

To think in terms of field is to think relationally [...] in analytic terms a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration of objective relations between positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 96–97).

How do habitus and identity relate to each other and to the social fields? In the research, I explored whether and how identity and habitus overlap in the sense that they both function in similar ways, as the processes by which individuals internalise and reproduce influences coming from the social world (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015). Taking into account these considerations, I regard identity as follows:

The process of negotiating and making sense of different orientations apprehended and assimilated by individuals during their multiple interactions in different social fields. Under the influences of the structural conditions, these orientations are internalised and reflect subjective values, beliefs, tastes and practices. (Franceschelli 2013; Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015)

This definition addresses some of the issues identified by the criticism of Brubaker and Cooper (2000). Considering identity as a process involves

overcoming the limitations attached to specific categories (ethnicity, religion, nationality, etc.) and enhances the flexibility of the concept without dismantling it into multiple hybrid parts. The idea is to maintain identity as overarching and cohesive, while allowing for both self and external/ social identifications to take place.

1.6 Research Methods and an Outline of the Book

In order to explore how identity relates to the processes of upbringing in South Asian Muslim families living in Britain, this book addresses two main questions. The first one focuses on the experiences of growing up in families where young people come into close contact with South Asian cultures and Islam, while being also subjected to the influences of non-Muslim British society: *How do South Asian young British Muslims negotiate the different influences affecting their identity?* The second question is mostly about the processes parents use to pass on their values and beliefs to their children: *How do parents transmit values to their children and what are their main priorities?* I was particularly interested in exploring how these questions were answered within families across different social class backgrounds.

To address these questions, between 2010 and 2012, I distributed questionnaires in three secondary schools in London and one college in North West England to young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds; I then spoke in depth to South Asian Muslim families (mother, father and young person) and I asked South Asian Muslim young people to take photographs of anything they felt was important to describing their identity.

The questionnaire was initially a 'way in' to identify South Asian Muslim young people for the following face-to-face interviews, but it also became useful in providing an initial background to the idea of identity. Moreover, as the questionnaire addressed everybody in the classroom, it gave me the chance to collect comparative information amongst young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (aged 14–19 years old). Nonetheless, the interviews were the main source of data in the research, providing in-depth insights about the experiences of both upbringing and young people's identity development while growing up. All the interviews were fully transcribed with the consent of participants and the text was analysed using a thematic approach (Boyatzis 1998). In order to keep the richness of the different experiences, I took into account multiple perspectives (Mccarthy et al. 2003). The analysis involved a detailed exploration of selected themes and was built up through several levels: the individuals (young person, mother and father separately), the family (young person, mother and father together), all young people all fathers and all mothers.

My search for families to take part in the study began in London, an area I know better; I then moved to North West England, around Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale, and I also spoke to families on the South Coast of England in mostly White British areas. To identify participants, I initially used contacts that I had acquired in schools via the questionnaire. I asked these first contacts to introduce me to other friends who were willing to take part, employing the sampling process known as 'snowballing'. Moreover, I distributed fliers in GP surgeries, local shops, local councils and jobcentres. I got in touch with charities, mosques, local council organisations and youth workers. I also used personal contacts and friends from South Asian Muslim backgrounds who introduced me to their relatives and other friends.

Together with the different geographical locations, the sample of young people and parents reflects some important differences, which are detailed in Appendix I. Most of the parents were first generation migrants born in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India, while the majority of their children (except two) were second generation born in the UK. In the selection of families and analysis, I paid particular attention to differences by social class to explore whether and how the two main research questions yielded different results in working-class and middle-class families. Research on South Asian Muslims, and most often on ethnic minorities, tends to focus on people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. One exception is the work from Rollock et al. (2014) on Black British middle-class parents. As I was interested in differences by class, I sampled families from

different socio-economic backgrounds. To account for these differences, I considered the occupations and level of qualifications of the parents¹² (both in their countries of origin and in the UK). According to this general classification, nine families were defined as being from workingclass backgrounds with parents who were unemployed or in unskilled/ semi-skilled jobs, mostly working in restaurants, as taxi drivers or labourers, and they all had low or, most often, no qualifications at all. One of the working-class mothers Fatiha, was employed by the local council, but all the other mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds did not work. The remaining six families were from a middle-class background with most parents qualified at degree level and working in highly skilled jobs. One mother and one father had a PhD: the father worked in research while the mother had left academia to become a secondary school teacher. Another middle-class mother was a teacher's assistant. All three mothers in the higher-middle-class families were professionals working as a corporate law consultant, IT consultant and business manager, respectively. There were eight young people whose parents could not be reached for different reasons, including: language barriers, lack of time, feeling uncomfortable doing the interview, and young people not acting as effective gatekeepers and not passing on information to the families. I asked these young people background information about their parents and, on the basis of their answers, I categorised them as workingclass (many parents were unemployed, some had never worked and did not have any qualifications).

Most families were from a Sunni Muslim background, as most South Asians are, but the sample also includes families from a Shia minority group. The endeavour placed to achieve this diversity by class, ethnicity, geography, school of thought, and so on was not an attempt to achieve a representative sample in statistical terms so that findings could be generalised to the wider population of British Muslims; 52 cases will never be enough to make such generalisations. Rather, the interviews were ways to explore the mechanisms by which identity and upbringing engaged with other analytical categories important in this research such as class, gender, culture, ethnicity or religion (Putnam 2015).

¹²See Appendix 1 for details on the backgrounds of the families.

During the interviews with parents, I asked questions about their own experiences of growing up back in Bangladesh, Pakistan or India; their experiences of moving and settling in the UK; their priorities as fathers and mothers as well as the different ways parents used to pass on values and beliefs to their children. I did not always ask direct questions about identity and Islam—these themes often emerged quite naturally during the conversations.¹³

When I initially spoke to young people, I realised I needed a better way into their life-world than just 'words'. As an outsider, not only to the South Asian Muslim communities but also to their age group (as I have not been a teenager for a lot longer than a decade), I felt I could not fully involve teenagers, who in the initial pilot interviews sounded rehearsed and a little disengaged. I then introduced photography: I asked them to take some photographs (I did not specify any number) of anything they felt was relevant to their identity: objects, places, people, and so on. At the start of the interviews, we looked at the images they emailed me. I printed some of them, and I asked young people to explain what they meant to them. The conversation revolved around their everyday lives at school, at home, their parents, social relationships, and their aspirations and current priorities.

Hence, as detailed so far, this book focuses on the interconnected experiences of South Asian young Muslims growing up in Britain today and the practices employed by their parents in bringing them up. Underlying these experiences and practices there is identity as the process of constructing a sense of self while navigating amongst multiple social fields and therefore multiple senses of belongings. In order to make sense of what identity is and how it is understood in South Asian Muslim families, I begin Chapter 2 by introducing the idea of identity as emerging from young people's discussion about the photographs they took as part of this project. Photographs of their best friends, families, private spaces such as their bedrooms, schools, colleges, favourite rappers, preferred hair products or clothing, came together with images of prayer mats, prayer beads, of the Qur'an or Mecca, which, young

¹³See Appendix 1 for the outline of the topic guides.

people explained, symbolise Islam. The diversity of the photographed objects mirrored their multiple priorities and belongings and acted as a proxy of the complex identity negotiations that are explored in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 addresses more directly one of the main questions of the research: how are influences on identity negotiated? The chapter identifies three main 'strategies'. Generally, young people tended to 'combine' the multiple influences affecting their identity and their process of growing up. Within 'combining influences', there were two underlying strategies of negotiation: some young people combined influences by converging towards their parents' values, whilst others diverged and moved closely to the lifestyles of their non-Muslim peers. In Chapter 4, I present young people's accounts about their experiences of love relationships, their private intimate lives and their views on marriage, in comparison with those of their parents. Some of the insights about the struggles they described are common to teenagers from any ethnic or religious group. However, Chapter 4 also highlights more specific challenges where culture and religion both play a specific role. Young people's love lives were kept secret and fugitive. Their views of the future emphasised striving between the need for maintaining a sense of control, and the awareness of their family's involvement and power over their emotional and personal lives. Chapters 5 and 6 more directly address the other key question of the book: how do parents pass on values to their children? In exploring the specific role of Islam in the intergenerational transmission of values, I develop the idea of Islamic *capital* regarding the role of religion in upbringing (Franceschelli 2013; Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014). In Chapter 6, I explore the importance of education for parents and young people and their aspirations. As most parents had high aspirations for their children, whom they saw going to university and becoming high-achieving professionals, I reflect on what lies behind these aspirations and what the potential challenges are behind the achievement of these goals. Also, what happens to those who do not meet these expectations? Chapter 7 details the conclusions of the book. This last chapter goes back to the questions about identity and upbringing and relates them to the findings while considering the wider debate about identity construction in multicultural societies.

1.7 The Researcher in the Research: The Outsider

Since I started working on the research a few years ago, I have often been asked why I was interested in South Asian Muslim communities; how I was coping with being an outsider and what implications for the research there were in me being so.

Firstly, as a White, non-Muslim, non-South Asian and not even British researcher, the implications of being an outsider were actually many. Language barriers have been the first challenge and sometimes I was not able to interview some of the parents on my own.¹⁴ Because I cannot speak Urdu, Hindi or Bengali, I was compelled to focus on parents who had some level of English and who could at least understand my questions. I had no funding for an interpreter and I had to rely on participants' friends, neighbours or other family members, which was not always ideal. The level of English of some of the parents also affected the depth and length of some of the interviews and had implications for the analysis. Secondly, it is possible that being perceived as an outsider put off some potential participants from taking part in the study, particularly a few parents: Hania's mother, similar to Mariam's parents, did not feel comfortable talking to me for a full interview. Together with some of these practical limitations, there were other more compelling challenges at the level of interaction and the power relationships taking place during the interviews. Criticism about White researchers working with ethnic minority groups has suggested that data collection, analysis and interpretation are affected by power differences between respondents and researcher (Haw 1996). This idea reflects some truth, as reciprocal understanding may draw on different assumptions based on different cultural norms. It also highlights the importance of reflexivity in this type of research, as a way to account for the relationship and interactions between the researcher and the research participants (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Ewick and Silbey 2003). The conversation with Hania,

¹⁴Only three parents were interviewed with the help of an interpreter. These were Davar's mother, Sakina's father and Tahir's mother (only at the beginning of the interview). A few parents refused to take part because they did not feel comfortable with their English language skills.

a young and confident woman, provides examples of these interactions. While asking her about whether Islam affected her social life, I used the word 'restrictions'. She challenged me, saying that the term 'restrictions' was my own personal way of looking at certain Islamic teachings:

I suppose if I say it has some restrictions it has some sort of negative connotation, which it's not what I'm saying—it's rather your words (Hania).

For these reasons, at the start of fieldwork, I acted as an extremely cautious, over-apologetic and insecure researcher. When I started the interviews, I was concerned about questions being insensitive, inappropriate or offensive. I really thought twice before speaking and missed out on some important prompts because of this. Still, this initial feeling did not last and while conducting the fieldwork I became increasingly more comfortable with asking for details and follow-up questions.

From the beginning of the fieldwork, I noticed how families sought to identify similarities and points of convergence between their cultural norms and what they perceived as mine. Interestingly, having a non-British/foreign accent created a bond with parents with poorer English language skills, who felt more comfortable with speaking 'to someone like me', who is not a native English speaker. Respondents also drew connections between Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Italy-where I am originally from-which they perceived as similar in many respects: the importance of religion and family, strong emphasis on and a passion for food, and a chaotic and corrupted political environment. I also felt that being external to their community was sometimes associated with a sense of neutrality, as I was not considered involved with possible cultural distinctions between the South Asian groups and Muslim schools of thought (such as Sunni or Shia). Finally, being an outsider for the studied communities did not mean feeling uneasy or uncomfortable with the families. Family members might not have been used to a stranger sitting in the living room asking them questions, but they always made me feel very welcome. They prepared food and offered me tea; they drove me back to train stations and waited with me for the bus if it was dark. At times, I ate with them and stayed long after the end of the interviews discussing multiple issues often beyond the research. They also showed a genuine interest in me, asking questions about my family, Italy, my research, and

my life in London. I felt they trusted me and they opened up about their thoughts and feelings.

In the interviews, I touched on some very sensitive topics: from religion to marriage, from personal biographies to views of Britain. Still, most of the families I contacted agreed to take part despite my outsider status. When asked why they agreed to be involved, I really felt that some of the respondents, both parents and young people, saw the research as a chance to challenge bad stereotypes about Islam and their communities and to get their messages across to others. This was the case for Saleem who wanted to tell me about the difference between what the Qur'an says and the cultural norms rooted in South Asian cultural milieus; for Hania and Sakina who emphasised Muslim women's choices; or Hania's father, who at many points during his interview asked me to report to an unspecified audience of others the real truth about Islam. Qualitative research is often perceived as giving voice to the disadvantaged. Although this can be true, I have never looked at respondents as passive victims unable to speak for themselves, but I felt grateful that they trusted me and considered the research an opportunity to express their points of view and feelings. Still, I was nervous at times about not meeting their expectations, struggling with the sense of responsibility and constantly questioning my own reasons for doing the research. As an outsider, I felt my best option was to embrace the role of a listener. Hence, I tried to put my views to one side, but I did not lie to my respondents. I explained that the reporting was necessarily going to be filtered by my own subjectivity, my theoretical standing, my personal background and my own biography.

Please note, all the names of research participants were changed and details that could lead to identifying research participants were omitted. The full list of participants' pseudonyms and a summary of the families' circumstances are in Appendix 1, Tables A.1 and A.2.

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Constructing a British Muslim Identity

2.1 Introduction

They're very balanced girls. They know where to draw the line, where West ends and East begins culturally. (Sameer, Pakistani father)

In this extract, Zahida's father, Sameer, makes an important point about boundaries of identity. The construction of an identity involves reflections on how different aspects of the self come together and adjust to each other while crossing multiple boundaries in the social world. In this chapter, I explore the construction and meanings of two aspects of identity that are particularly relevant for this research: being British and being Muslim. The focus is on how young people and parents make sense of their identities as well as how identities are influenced by external social conditions. The idea is to provide context to the concept of identity beyond the notions of faith, religion, nationality, citizenship or country of birth, as driven by parents' and young people's own interpretations. Hence, here I focused on how young people and parents perceive their identity, while in the next chapter I will detail the mechanisms and processes of adjustment and negotiations between different aspects of identity.

© The Author(s) 2016 M. Franceschelli, *Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53170-4_2

Chapter 1 provided a definition of identity that goes beyond certain categories (nationality, ethnicity, class, etc.) used either for self-description or to describe others. Rather, identity is the process underlying the construction of these categories. In more practical terms, a number of factors are at play when we make sense of who we are, or when others define us from the outside. To understand identity as a process of coming to terms with the multiple influences of social fields, it is useful to explore some of the aspects by which identity manifests itself externally. In this sense, identity is also about practices (as *doing things*) that are reflected by clothing style, the outlook of an individual, the way of speaking or moving and external appearance. We will see that these practices are particularly relevant to the identity of young people. Bourdieu (1998) speaks about how habitus is 'embodied', meaning that it unravels how the social world influences individual dispositions to form a 'socialised body' that incorporates elements of the social structure (Bourdieu 1998: 81 in Reav 2004). Therefore, habitus is not only configured by the inner values, beliefs and attitudes of individuals but it also reflects their physical ways of being and doing things, bridging together inner and outer worlds. Keeping in mind these characteristics of habitus, I have explored whether they may also apply to identity.

Here, I draw on different sources: interviews with parents and young people, discussions about the photographs taken by young people prior to their interviews, and findings from the in-class survey. The chapter begins with an analysis of what respondents associated with religious identity, including the importance of religious practice, the hijab and niqab,¹ and the distinction between culture and religion. It then looks at different aspects of being British and it ends with a section about the influence of discourses about terrorism and radicalization on the construction of a South Asian British Muslim identity.

¹The hijab is the veil wore around the head that covers the hair of Muslim women. The niqab is the veil used by Muslim women to cover the whole face (Tarlo 2010).

2.2 Images of Islam and Religious Practice

The survey in schools also explored if the nature of young people's religious orientations was 'extrinsic or rather intrinsic'. (Maltby and Lewis 1996). Individuals with extrinsic orientations have an instrumental approach to religion, which is used as a means to fulfil self-serving needs (Ji and Ibrahim 2007). By contrast, individuals with intrinsic orientations consider religion itself as a driving force in their life and thus accommodate other needs around religion (Ji and Ibrahim 2007). The results suggest that young Muslims had more of an intrinsic approach to their religion: they were more likely than other religious groups in the survey to agree with the statement that their approach to life was strongly shaped by their religious beliefs (61 % compared with 24 % of Christians) and that 'religion was important because it offered meaning to their lives' (91 % of them compared with 50 % of Christians). Young Muslim were also more likely to feel that it was important to spend time in private thought and prayer (61 % compared with 23 % of Christians) or to read about their religion (85 % of them compared with 41 % of Christians).²

In the interviews, it was initially difficult for young people and parents to elaborate directly on religious meanings, hence most of them focused on the practical aspects of being Muslim with references to the 'Five Pillars of Islam'.³ The distinction between religious practice and beliefs is not a neat one: Winchester's study of Muslim converts in the US (2008) concludes that ritual prayers, fasting and covering formed moral dispositions that embody religious beliefs, providing the fundamental mechanisms for the construction of a moral self. In this

²The differences in the responses of different religious groups were significant: religion was important because it offered meaning to their lives (Chi Square = 159.279; P < 0.01; N = 442), the all approach to life was somehow shaped by their religious beliefs (Chi Square = 126.188; P < 0.01; N = 438), spending time in private thought and prayer (Chi Square = 98.129; P < 0.01; N = 431), reading about religion (Chi Square = 144.574; P < 0.01; N = 444).

³ The Five Pillars of Islam are: the shahada (the Muslim declaration of belief or creed), the five daily prayers (salat), fasting during the Ramadan, almsgiving or giving to the poor (zakat) and the pil-grimage to Mecca (haji) at least once in the lifetime (Schimmel 1992).

sense, Winchester argues that religious practice is the form by which a 'Muslim moral habitus' is constructed and maintained. Therefore the idea of practice as an embodied belief suggests the importance of praying, fasting or covering for defining a cohesive Muslim identity. In this study, the idea of complementarity of practices and beliefs was reinforced by respondents' definitions of Islam 'as more than a religion, but a way of life'. As such, Islam forged parents' and young people's everyday lives, social relationships, views of the world and moral selves through embodied beliefs and practice. Amina, a 15-year-old British Bangladeshi girl, explains in her own words some of the moral norms attached to Islam:

[Islam says] it's not good to lie or be bad or steal or you'll go to hell. You have to be nice, pray, do good things so you could go to heaven, you have to help others.

The photographs taken by young people reflect on the importance of religious practice for the construction of a moral self, and provide an insight into their perceptions of Islam and religious identity. When asked to take photographs of objects and situations that were important to their identity, young people included images of what, they explained, represented Islam such as the prayer mat, the prayer beads, scenes of family members praying, pictures of Mecca and the hijab (Figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3).



Fig. 2.1 Prayer mat



Fig. 2.2 Mecca



Fig. 2.3 Prayer beads

Evidently, a mobile phone camera is able to capture practices more easily than something spiritual like a belief. If the dualism between 'practices and beliefs' as markers of a Muslim identity was important to many respondents, as detailed in the next chapter, young people initially found it easier to speak about religious identity in terms of 'things to do'. Asif, a 14-year-old British Bangladeshi boy, highlighted the importance of religious practice for a Muslim identity:

You have to practice, you can't really call yourself a Muslim without practising the religion and like if you do particular things and be at peace, then you can feel peaceful. Like if you pray five times a day, fast in the month of Ramadan and say that you believe in God, and that the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, is his Messenger and, like you may get peace in this world or in the afterlife.

He shows how his idea of 'being Muslim' involved the highest commitment to fully practising Islam. Although he studied and read about Islam, and he believed in God and prayed, he was not comfortable with defining himself as 'religious' because he felt he did not fully comply with the Five Pillars. In this way, Asif introduced the complexity and ambivalence attached to the meaning of 'being religious', which tended to shift between practising fully, 'being a strict Muslim' and even, for some, being morally conservative.

In the survey, young people were asked if they were practising their religion through a question about participation in religious services. The results suggest that young Muslim people, for whom religion was more important than for any other group, were the most likely to attend religious services, whilst Christians were the least likely amongst the religious groups to do so (Fig. 2.4).



Fig. 2.4 Attendance to religious services by religious affiliation (%). N = 493

The particular ethnic and religious composition of the sample, with a high proportion of South Asian Muslims, led to substantial differences between the results of this survey and other national representative samples of young people of the same age group. For instance the Young People Social Attitude Survey (YPSAS, Park et al. 2003), found weakening religiosity amongst the young respondents. However, participation in religious services is not an ideal proxy to explore religious practice in Islam, which requires only men to pray in the mosque weekly, but not women (Schimmel 1992), as respondents also explained in the interviews. In line with this, the survey highlights differences in the frequencies of attendance by gender (70 % of the boys attending between once a week and once a month compared with 37 % of girls). The interviews reveal the importance of praying as a defining dimension of religious practice. As Amina suggests, there was a sense that religious practice, praying and the overall religious identity somehow overlapped. When asked about whether she was religious and whether she considered her family religious, she referred to praying five times a day as the 'measure' of religious identity:

Yes [my family] is religious. My mum and my dad they are religious, they pray five times a day.

The interviews also shed light on the construction of a moral self on the basis of religious practice (Winchester 2008)—in this case, praying. There were multiple meanings attached to praying, including fulfilling a moral need, providing comfort or bringing people closer to God:

[I] pray because need to pray. Because there is somebody I can talk to, that somebody when I'm upset I can ask and cry and have a communication with. (Noor, Omar's mum)

When I don't pray I feel empty. If I know people that never used to pray, now they pray and they are always happy. (Saleem)

[Praying] gives escape and comfort [...] it's the closer you'll going to be with your Lord [...] it's just literally you and him. (Hania)

The father of Hamid saw another function of praying and spoke about how the daily prayers were a way to bring the family together. In his family, parents and children prayed together every Sunday.

Religious identity also resulted from the process of negotiating Islamic teachings with everyday life commitments at work or at school. These negotiations were at times challenging for young people and their parents and some of them told me they were 'practising' frequently but that they did not manage to fully comply with the Five Pillars. Reconciling work, school or college with religious practice involved, for some, reducing the number of prayers during the day to only morning and evening:

The praying they say you should do it five times a day, but as a family we don't do it five times. We don't have time. I go to school so I only do it in the morning and evening. (Haroon)

Lareau (2002, 2011) found that children's time was structured around a number of activities; such activities were more academic and skill-focused in the case of middle-class families. Becher (2008) suggested something more specific about South Asian Muslim families, and showed how Islam played a role in defining the children's everyday routines. As teenagers, the struggle to comply with multiple religious commitments—as Haroon pointed out—appeared to be more difficult than Becher (2008) had anticipated based on her sample of younger children.

2.2.1 Hania's Father, Kabir: Religious Practice and Everyday Commitments

Even though a context such as the UK may amplify difficulties in practising Islam because of busy daily schedules between work and family life, Kabir felt this was not always the case. Since the start of the interview, he spoke about the importance of fully practising Islam even when other commitments may get in the way. Kabir was originally from Bangladesh and moved to the UK in his early teens with both of his parents. His memories of Bangladesh were mixed: he remembered of childhood, family, good weather, caring people, but also of poverty and corruption. He still had a desire to eventually go back, but he explained that he was aware his desire might remain just a dream:

I always wanted to go back, still today if somebody tells me "Okay don't worry about the family here you go". I would pack my suitcase and go! But you can't anymore, because you have got family here, your children are going to school, you have got to think of their education and plus my lifestyle, living standards and everything has changed now and it would be a big change for me now going over there and adjust everything.

Children were very much central to most aspects of his life, including the passing on of religious values and a religious identity. He had three children in total: Hania, the 18-year-old daughter I spoke to, was the middle child; she had a 12-year-old younger brother and another older brother in his 20s. Kabir's wife, Rehana, did not speak English very well and although I met her briefly a few times, she did not feel comfortable to go ahead with the full interview. Because Kabir could speak English better than his wife,

he took over several childrearing responsibilities, particularly all the interactions with schools and teachers and a lot of the discussion about education and qualifications. I wondered how he managed to fit in praying with his family commitments and his busy working life. He explained that although he had no formal qualifications, he finally managed to set up his own business selling products for printers and copiers. The job was quite demanding and he was often away from home travelling in the UK. Even as a busy self-employed father, Kabir was determined to fulfill his religious obligations by adjusting praying to his everyday circumstances:

I was going to London last week and there was a time for my prayer and I thought to myself "If I don't pray now by the time I get to London this praying time will pass" [...]. I was in the car driving and I thought I will miss it by the time I am there, and so I stopped the car in a service station and I read it in the car. Because our religion does say if you are travelling you can just do it in your mind, you know, or just through your body actions you can do it in your mind.

His view was that living in the UK did not make praying more difficult for Muslims, but rather he believed that facilities are in place in workplaces or schools to help and comply with the requirement of the five daily prayers:

Looking at this country now, in a European country now these days nobody is stopping you to pray, no work places are stopping your from following your religion. Even schools these days are saying that if a student comes up to the teacher and says "right it's my praying time" the teacher will say "go on and do whatever you have to do".

Overall, Kabir appeared optimistic about Britain's future as a multifaith society and was positive about the support already in place for practising Islam. Hence, in the context of the debate about multiculturalism described in the previous chapter, and the challenges posed by the simultaneous promotion of equality and diversity, Kabir considered Britain a success:

Yeah I respect that because that's what they [British people] do "I respect that, you follow your religion". They [British people] could have said to us and said to you "that's it if you want to live here follow our religion" and

they are not doing that they are just saying "carry on doing your own stuff." Which is nice, I mean you have got the same rights as they have when you go to a different country, go to another country and especially in my country if they see White people they will "let's sort this White out and all this" which is wrong.

He was very grateful to Britain for letting him practice Islam freely. However, this gratitude reflected distinctive power relations and boundaries between him, an outsider and a receiver of rights, and the native people who 'kindly' grant these rights to him. His gratitude suggested a lack of a sense of entitlement, and mirrored how he had positioned himself as the lucky receiver of a privilege that is not naturally due to him as a British citizen, but rather a concession from above.

While comparing Britain and Bangladesh, he suggested that praying can be even more challenging in Bangladesh than it is in Britain. He explained that the hot weather could make praying more exhausting and the chaos and hectic lifestyle of Bangladesh can make it difficult to concentrate on the prayers. Although Kabir's view of the right to religious practice almost recollects colonial relations of power, his accounts about Britain remained positive and he showed a belief in British multiculturalism as a story of success. This point of view reflects the feelings of quite a few parents and young people in this research who look to Britain as a country where diversity is enhanced and valued. Indeed, together with concerns about Islamophobia and misleading representations of Islam described later in this chapter, research participants also shared the feeling that being Muslim in Britain is possible and not necessarily that challenging:

So religion wise I would say that is one thing that is very good in this country, they leave you alone. [...]

Still, Kabir points out that diversity is enhanced by 'leaving you alone' and letting you 'carrying on doing your own stuff', which is a bit far from the valuing of diversity, respect, acceptance and tolerance that are foundations of a pluralistic society (Dobbernack and Modood 2013). In his attempt to uphold Britain as a country that is respectful of multiple faiths, Kabir shifted the focus away from the barriers derived by living

in a non-Muslim country, and moved toward individual responsibilities. He argued that the negotiation of everyday commitments and religious practice is ultimately a matter of individual willingness:

So the religion is very, very easy it is how you take it [...]. It is up to that individual how much they believe in it and how strongly they believe in it. I myself find it very easy here.

Kabir as well as other parents and young people perceived practising Islam as a personal matter. This 'personalisation of religion' acted as a way of making sense of the adaptations and the negotiations of religious practice with other priorities such as work or education.

2.3 Choosing the Hijab: Agency and the Personal Journey of Islam

The hijab was a marker of how the girls embodied their religious identity and it was a highly popular subject in their photographs (Fig. 2.5).

Some female participants, including mothers, were wearing the hijab; others did not wear it, but told me they wanted to do so one day; and others thought they would never wear it, but they still felt it influenced the construction of their gender and religious identity. The Qur'an contains a number of references to women's clothing and appearance (e.g. Tarlo 2010) but it does not detail to what extent women should cover the face or just the head and provides only general guidance:

Tell believing women to avert their eyes, and safeguard their private parts, and not to expose their attractions except what is visible. And let them wrap their shawls around their breast lines, and reveal their attractions only before their husbands or fathers, or fathers-in-law, or sons, or sons of their husbands, or brothers, or sons of brothers, or sons of sisters, or their womenfolk, or slaves, or male attendants with no sexual desire, or children with no intimate knowledge of the private parts of women. (24: 30–31)



Fig. 2.5 (a–b) The hijab



Fig.2.5 (c–d) The hijab

The requirement to cover up is presented in the Qur'an as a way to protect women:

O Prophet, tell your wives, your daughters and women believers to wrap their outer garments closely around them, for this makes it more likely that they will be recognized and not be harassed. God is All-Forgiving, Compassionate to each. (33:59)

Because the Quranic verses do not disclose how exactly women should cover themselves and if they should wear the hijab at all, these issues are subject to interpretation (and misinterpretation). The mothers and daughters with the hijab described the different journeys that had led them to wearing the hijab. The mothers who grew up in South Asian countries used to wear it as children and considered it as part of their upbringing; they hardly took it off and their stories about the hijab were not characterised by particular turning points. The teenage daughters wearing the hijab, instead, had more irregular journeys marked by putting it on and taking it off until they either consciously chose to wear it or became used to it and unable to take it off.

Mariam, a British Bangladeshi girl from the North West, explained how she started wearing the hijab as a child 'to please her mother' and because she was 'much more religious when she was younger'. Since she started secondary school, she felt she had changed and become more critical about certain aspects of Islam. As we will see later, she was in fact quite political and particularly concerned with the disadvantages experienced by women in Muslim countries. Still, as she said, the hijab had become an important marker of her identity and she did not feel comfortable without it:

Well, to be honest when people see me with a hijab they think I am religious, but the reason I am wearing it now it's like I can't go outside the house. I was going to my next door neighbours' house and I had to put a cap on, I have to have something on my head. Identity, I feel like this is a part of me now. Like Mariam, most mothers and daughters had an inner-oriented approach to wearing the hijab as a part of a personal journey and an individual identity, but they felt it was also a statement about their visibility as Muslims. Sakina was 18 years old at the time of the interview and she had been wearing the hijab for eight years already. As for the other girls with the hijab, Sakina spoke about how she started wearing it because of the influence of her mother as part of her 'Muslim upbringing'. However, unlike Mariam, for her the hijab was a choice based on understanding the reasons for covering:

It's very difficult when you're growing up, you want to look good, you want to be appreciated, but then again, you don't want to be taken advantage of and you want to be taken seriously. So I had to find that balance myself. I just felt as though it was time for me to cover, because I was a child before and I suppose I didn't have, my mind wasn't fully formed, my reasoning wasn't fully formed. But now because I understood the reasons why I thought [...] there's no reason for me to hold back. If I understood the reasons why and I believed in my faith and I believed that God told me to do this, then "Why shouldn't I do what he told me to do?" And so, that I felt for me was the starting point of me becoming more of a practising Muslim and that's like when I was 11 years old and I started at secondary school.

Here the idea of choice builds on the emphasis on life transitions: from childhood, when 'the mind is not fully formed', to a growing awareness while growing up, which led to consciously choosing the hijab.

In this research, none of the women wearing the hijab described having been forced to cover, constrained or oppressed. By contrast, these women referred to the hijab as a matter of agency and personal choice:

It was my choice to wear it. If I don't want to wear it now I can take it off. I still do want to wear it. It's beneficial to wear it. That's what Muslims believe. If you wear it you're respecting God. (Yamina, Nasreen's mother)

Hamid's mother, Thara, presents well this idea of a consciously driven choice to wear the hijab as part of her personal journey:

So why did you decide to wear the hijab?

I just decided it was time that I followed what I was supposed to do and I went for hijab and I decided. [...] I didn't change my dressing, I dress like this but I just put on a headscarf but if you followed the Qur'an and try and be a good Muslim, then you are supposed to dress modestly and cover your hair, that's all. And in all these years I denied that, I used to say no, "No I'm not going to do that" and then one day I don't know what came over me and I thought: "it is about time". I did that and my husband and I decided we will go for a pilgrimage and I said to him that if I do that then when I come back I am going to wear it. It was entirely my decision.

Thara's words 'it was entirely my decision' summarise the shared emphasis on choice of women with the hijab. Nonetheless, the stories of Hania and Zahra invite reflection on the nature of these choices and their relation with the social contexts where individual lives unfold.

2.3.1 Hania: Identity Process and the Hijab

The case of Hania choosing the hijab and emphasising her agency is relevant for understanding identity as a process, rather than a mere category of description. Hania was an 18-year-old British Bangladeshi young woman from North West England. At the time I spoke to her, she was busy preparing for her A Levels, she had already applied to different universities to study midwifery, and appeared confident about her chances of achieving the required grades. When I met her in a coffee shop just outside college, I was impressed by her striking 'visibility', which had little to do with the actual hijab-almost marginal within her overall outfit. Hania spoke very openly about clothing, the importance of appearance as an integral part of embodying an identity. Every detail of her outfit seemed to be consciously chosen and well looked after: the manicure with colourful bright blue nail polish matched with her blue eye shadow and with the flowery dress that she was wearing on the top of skinny bright blue jeans and UGG boots. The intense colours of both outfit and make-up, including bright pinkish and shining lipstick reduced the hijab to a less substantial part of her external outlook: a pale blue scarf that she wrapped around the face and then back behind the neck to form

a huge bun, which was filled with fabric material, rather than hair as I had initially thought. When looking at the photographs that Hania had taken for the interview (mostly 'selfies' of her with the hijab), she started telling me about the ups and downs of the journey that brought her back to wearing the hijab.

Similar to other girls, Hania started wearing the hijab as a child, following in the footsteps of her mother who was crucial to her religious socialisation. When the parents decided to send her to a Muslim school, the hijab became an imposition from the outside since it was part of the school uniform. Hania did not like that and so she stopped wearing it outside of school, and then took it off completely when she moved to college. After she turned 17, she finally decided to start wearing it again, but this time as her own 'personal choice':

Well obviously I was growing up and I felt as though obviously my family is quite religious and my mum obviously introduced the hijab and told us "look you should wear it it's for such and such reason" and my friend wears it as well, [...] I kind of fell in love with the idea of wearing it. It's not because I want to be different or stand out from the crowd, it's because it just felt right at 17 to wear a hijab and I thought about it. It took me months to decide to actually wear it and, because I went to a Muslim girls school in my high school I had to wear it, that was compulsory and I didn't like that idea, that I had to wear it as part of the uniform. And that is why I didn't wear it throughout my high school years. I would wear it in school but I wouldn't wear it outside the house and, once I left, I told myself I will never wear it because I was forced to wear it. [...] But then I decided that actually I might wear it because I am going to college and it is going to be mixed as well.

Here, Hania is negotiating two contradictory motivations: 'Not to stand out in the crowd, but because it felt right' is why Hania initially chose the hijab. She then reflected on social influences and how the mixed environment of college made her visibility as Muslim become more important. For Hania, the hijab became a marker of the identity process defining her two natures as 'two people' (with and without hijab) shifting between the private and public fields: Mainly it's because of the hijab that I took that picture because obviously it's a part of my identity and I value that the hijab is a part of my identity because I can't imagine myself without it, I am a different person without my hijab on.

Why?

Because you have got Hania with the hijab and you have Hania without the hijab and there is only certain people in my life that have seen me without the hijab on. So I see myself as two different people. I don't mean to sound crazy or anything. Obviously the girl with the hijab on is the person who everyone sees in college or at work or anything like that, and the people that don't see [me with it] are the people who are really close to me who will be my family and obviously my friends who I see as my family anyway.

Hania's journey with the hijab suggests her constant effort of negotiating agency and external influences, private and public spheres, visibility and modesty. For her, the hijab marked a journey of constructing a religious identity in relation to the social world and to her life circumstances, a journey that she saw as developing toward a more conscious and chosen religious commitment.

2.3.2 Zahra: The Journey to Islam and the Niqab

Islam as a moral journey of self-improvement was a very important theme for both boys and girls. However, the turning points of this journey were more visible for the girls, whose clothing became the marker and symbolizer of the different steps. As with the hijab, the need for women to cover their face with the niqab, or full-face veil, is not specified explicitly by the Qur'an. None of the female respondents covered their face at the time of the interview, but a few of them considered the niqab as an option for the future, as part of a progressive journey of increasing religiosity.

The story of Zahra, a 16-year-old British Pakistani girl, particularly captured the idea of the hijab and niqab being steps in the journey to developing a religious identity. Zahra's photographs are a good reflection of her mixed priorities (Figs. 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10 and 2.11).

Zahra spoke extensively about her love of fashion: she took photos of her favourite movie *The Life of Coco Chanel* and told me about clothing



Fig. 2.6 (a, b) The niqab



Fig. 2.7 South Asian clothes

and her passion for shopping. As her photos suggest, her interest in fashion was not the only marker of identity; she was really keen on speaking about the hijab and niqab as part of an individual journey. As with Hania, my first impression of Zahra was of a young attractive woman who really looked after her appearance. In my attempt at looking casual to make young people feel comfortable and the interview less formal, I had not taken into account the young woman's attention to style and details. Wrapped in an oversized jumper and in my Doctor Martins, I vividly remember feeling 'dressed down' for the meeting. Zahra must have noticed my worry and she pointed out, when trying to define modesty, how she felt I 'sort of embraced modesty in a Western way'. Similarly to Hania, Zahra also had manicured nails and wore make up, including bright eye shadow; she was smartly dressed with black trousers and heeled ankle boots. Very early at the start of the interview, she told me she loved going shopping with her sister and friends and admitted her shopping was 'an addiction'. In her visits to relatives in London, her favourite

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Fig. 2.8 Clothes

activity was to 'sneak out' with her cousins and to go for a walk in New Bond Street, with all the designer shops and boutiques. She did not go there to buy anything, just to look and get inspired, she said, and then explained that wearing the hijab was a 'new thing' for her:

As for the scarf, I never used to wear it and I have never really been wanting to wear it or thought about it. I only put it on about two months ago, so yeah.


Fig. 2.9 Jewellery



Fig. 2.10 Favourite books

Both Hania and Zahra placed effort in negotiating 'visibility and modesty', which is an important theme also discussed in the next chapter. Zahra explained that the hijab was her coping strategy to avoid becoming



Fig. 2.11 Fashion

someone she did not want to be: a shallow woman who is too concerned with her appearance. Here, Zahra is re-claiming her agency and working toward a precise identity choice:

Yeah because that's what crippled me from wearing the hijab first because I was too into my hair, make up and earrings and necklaces and things. So, that is what stopped me first, but I just came to that age where I realised that it is not really that important, like it's something I enjoy but it is not really that important.

The decision to wear the hijab was only a stage in her journey, which she explained would continue with her wearing the jilbab⁴ and the niqab that she was already trying on to prepare herself as shown in the photographs (Fig. 2.6 (a;b)). Like Hania or Sakina, Zahra also spoke about growing up and becoming more aware of other life priorities. In the passage above, she referred to overcoming superficial behaviours—'I was too into my hair'— to become more focused on important things that were symbolised by covering. Hence, for Zahra the hijab, jilbab and the niqab were markers of important transitions to adulthood which still remained dominated by

⁴ The jilbab is a long dress that Muslim women wear over other clothes. It is often worn all the way down to their feet to cover the figure fully.

ambivalence. The emphasis on agency and choice was expressed together with a sense of constriction in 'I feel it I'm going to have to do it':

I just felt that a woman's body is sacred and in a sense it is not for anyone else to see, so I just felt that it was a progressive thing like I am hoping to hopefully wear the long thing [jilbab] in the next few weeks as well. It's just that sense of just covering up really. Finally, not sure when but I should wear the niqab at the end. I have to think how it works when I'll go to uni. There is a lot of anger attached to it. *But I feel it I'm going to have to do it.*

Zahra's choices appeared to be informed by some external pressures that she only partly recognised or showed awareness of while recounting her story.

2.3.3 Questions of Choices and Contexts

We saw that the hijab, or, more generally, covering, was a way for the women in the research to reclaim their agency and speak about choices. Through her work on the women's piety movement in Cairo, the anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2001) drew important conclusions about religious women's perceptions of freedom and choice. Mahmood argued that the idea of freedom cannot be essentialised or assumed as the simple absence of social control and a manifestation of the 'subject's true desires'. Rather, freedom for the women in Cairo resulted from employing controlled behaviours (such as those shaped by rituals) to construct their own selves and achieve moral 'realization' (Mahmood 2001: 845). In other words, Mahmood argued that labelling Muslim women as oppressed because of their compliance with rituals lacks adequate recognition of the women as agentic subjects who actually use rituals to construct their identities and achieve 'self-realization'. As Mahmood has suggested, 'the desire for freedom from social conventions is not an innate desire, but it assumes a particular anthropology of the subject' (Mahmood 2001: 845). Mahmood's effort to re-empower women is relevant to challenging stereotypical discourses about all Muslim women being oppressed, but her emphasis on agency also leads to an understating of the role of social conditions where individuals' lives unfold. Brannen and Nielsen (2005: 412)

pointed out how agency, choice and freedom are concepts that have a 'decontextualising nature'. In this sense, the view of the hijab as being a choice of Thara, Sakina, Hania and also Zahra, reflects the inclination toward decontextualisation, by shifting attention toward the self. I am not saying that these women did not choose to wear the hijab or were forced to do so, but rather that choices do not take place in a void. Evans's (2002) idea of a 'bounded agency' is fit for purpose here: if individuals manifest a sense of agency, their agency is ultimately 'interfused' with structural influences. Therefore, these women's discourses about choices sought to challenge widespread societal perceptions of them as victims. In this sense, these discourses are a response to the social contexts where the perceptions of them as oppressed originate. As Beckford (2003: 210) suggests, 'individual choices do not occur in a social or political vacuum', rather, they are always contextual.

2.4 'That Is Not Islam': The Confusion Between South Asian Cultures and Islam

Together with telling me what Islam meant to them, young people felt they had to explain also what Islam 'was not about'. In this regard, many of them spoke about the distinction between culture and religion. This is a highly complex topic. The Qur'an is the main source of the Islamic doctrine and it is assumed to be the same for all Muslims, but the way Muslim identities are manifested may vary according to multiple circumstances, including countries, cultures and upbringing (Mondal 2008). Tania, an 18-year-old British Indian girl, made sense of this complex issue and explained how culture intersects with Islam:

It's [Islam] a big religion, Islam, and not everyone can do the same thing and be brought up the same way. Although we're all Muslims, if say you didn't know much about Muslims and you went to Saudi Arabia, which is like Muslim central, and you went there to find out about Muslims, it would be a completely different experience. It would be completely different to what someone in America or India or here would say. [...] [Islam] is so big that there are so many different ways to go. [...] I guess that's all to do with culture, but it's very different to what being a Muslim is, but it does influence where you live and where you're brought up.

While Tania was able to contextualise Islam within many different national cultures, many other respondents struggled with formulating an actual definition of culture. Some parents found it difficult to articulate what culture meant to them, and so they attempted to give examples that mostly referred to history, language and values embodied by the social practices that characterised the three South Asian groups:

Culture and religion is different. Religion and culture is completely different. Bangladeshi culture is completely different.

What is Bangladeshi culture?

Bangladeshi culture is, you know, you can dance, you can sing, you can, you know, Bangladeshi culture basically is mixed Indian culture and Pakistani culture all are mixed right, this is not religious. They're completely different [...] this is our culture this is Bangladeshi culture, you know, so religious and culture is completely different. [...] That's why I'm saying that this is different, you know, culture in Islam is completely different. (Sakib, Sakina's Father)

Dancing and singing at weddings, food and clothing style were amongst the quoted examples of cultural practices. Both similarities and differences were highlighted in regard to the cultures of the three countries. Bangladeshi and British Bangladeshi respondents spoke about how Bangladeshi culture contained elements of both Indian and Pakistani heritage because of the history of the country. Wearing the sari,⁵ for instance, was considered to be an influence from Indian culture, whilst the shalwar kameez⁶ was considered to be more of a Pakistani Muslim outfit. Pakistani culture was depicted as more rigorous, stricter and 'traditional' by some of the non-Pakistani parents. Hamid's mother, from an Indian ethnic background, spoke about the gendered nature of Pakistani culture:

⁵The sari is an outer garment worn mostly by women of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, which consists of a length of lightweight cloth with one end wrapped about the waist to form a skirt and the other draped over the shoulder or covering the head (Becher 2003).

⁶The shalwar kameez is a traditional outfit—worn by both men or women—consisting of a long shirt, generally down the knees or longer, with some trousers worn underneath.

Like the role of women, you often hear about, I have a Pakistani neighbour and her role in the house is very different from my role in my house. In her house her husband sits and demands bring me this, bring me that, dinner on the table and then I will come and sit down at the table, in my house I'm afraid that doesn't work. We both together in the kitchen, we both cook together, if he is at home he will cook with me and help in the kitchen. It is not expected that I will do something and he will do, there is a division of labour and it is cultural, it is nothing to do with religion, just cultural. In most of our family, especially my husband's family, all the men help cook, clean, anything else they do it. [...] Because in Islam it actually says that the man is supposed to help the woman, it doesn't say that just the woman is going to do all this and they like to misinterpret it I suppose.

If the distinctions between the three South Asian cultures were not so relevant to young people, they were a lot more concerned with the difference between culture and religion that Hamid's mother Thara refers to in the passage above. In their recent study about religious nurture in British Muslim families, Scourfield et al. (2013: 2) also found that culture tended to be 'second best', perceived as 'backward-looking and non-Islamic', whilst a stronger attachment was applied to Islam. For young people, ethnicity and culture overlapped with 'parental culture' and therefore with South Asian cultures. According to them, the moral panic that is increasingly associated with Islam is the consequence of mistaking culture (typically parental culture) with religion, as Hania highlights:

Yeah because that is another frustrating thing because they [the parents] confuse their culture with their religion whereas with me it is completely separate and that is how it should be. There is different people who are Muslims: you have got your Arabs, your Pakistanis, your Bangladeshis, Africans, even Whites and converts, and you notice that's different culture, isn't it? However, your religion is just the same. Whereas what mum and dad tend to do and I try and narrow it down and tell them that isn't right is confuse your culture with religion. I will give you an example, there is a picture in there with a shalwar kameez and my dad will confuse that as it being Islamic dressing, but in actual fact it is Asian Bangladeshi or Pakistani dressing. Islamic dressing would be absolutely anything, anything goes for

Islamic dress, like from this because although it's Western, it's still can be carried off in an Islamic way because it's loose and its covering and modest. Because as long as it's modest, it is Islamic and that is one thing that my parents have found difficult to come around.

Here Hania makes a crucial point: Islam sets out the prominence of modesty, but the way modesty is embodied through clothing has become rather a cultural practice. Similar to what Roy argues in *Globalised Islam* (2004), the distinction between culture and religion is sometimes used by Muslim people to purify Islam from negative stereotypes (for instance about the position of women), which are perceived as rather cultural. Young people in the research also embraced this distinction between culture and religion, and they used it to challenge misconceptions about Islam. Questioning the preconception that Islam supports unequal gender roles, leading to the subordination of women was a main preoccupation in this context—as Thara pointed out, 'there is a division of labour and it is cultural, it is nothing to do with religion, just cultural'. Omar's reference to 'religious culture' sums up this important theme in the context of Muslim women's subordination:

I think it's more because it is the *religious culture* in those countries [Pakistan] and because they [parents] are the first generation to be leaving that country some of that will stick behind with them. Whereas say now since I am growing up here it's much more sort of cosmopolitan city where everything is going on and so women have as much right in the workplace as men do. And I think that it's not just say Islamic or religious that causes this sort of women not having an equal place it's true. I think if you look back in even in British sort of like history that women don't get an equal place in society as men do, so I think it's something more to do with worldwide society rather than in just religious.

Omar takes distance from 'religious cultural' views about the subordination of women, but also puts things into perspective: gender equality cannot be taken for granted as something that Western societies naturally own, but rather it is the result of historical processes of struggles for emancipation.

2.4.1 Saleem: Understanding Islam

People who call themselves Muslim don't know what Islam is. They like it. They want to be in Islam but they don't study so they don't know it [...]

Saleem was an 18-year-old British Pakistani from North West England. He was studying chemistry, biology and sociology and hoping to go to university to study a science-related degree, possibly medicine, or chemistry as 'plan b'. He added that sociology was a matter of personal interest rather than a career-related option. From the start of the interview, he appeared very preoccupied with explaining the difference between Islam and South Asian cultures, while pointing to the ignorance of many who mix them up in a way that is misleading, particularly around the issues of gender relations:

The main problem attacking Islam now is people's tradition. They don't know Islam, and the traditional cultures was wrong and against women. So they're using patriarchal ideas they think that's Islamic and that's not Islamic. Everyone who is not a Muslim thinks that's an Islamic idea so they keep attacking Islam, but it's not. It's tradition and culture, nothing to do with Islam. That's probably the biggest thing that attacks Islam.

Knowledge of Islam was very important to Saleem who was volunteering as an outreach youth worker in the local Muslim community, and so he felt even more the responsibility of learning about religion to be able to address the many questions other young people asked him. Hence, Saleem was committed to learning the Islamic doctrine in depth; he was reading a lot about it and he was getting help from scholars in his local mosque:

So how do you learn about Islam?

Books. I want to learn. I go to the youth group, so if I need help with Islam they have scholars. Most extremists and fundamentalists get people who are not educated, but we know we've got educated people from high class universities.

Yet Saleem's attention to religious knowledge was not just about spiritual exploration; rather, he appeared to have a clear agenda behind becoming

knowledgeable and informed. His point was to be prepared to argue back and defend Islam:

[...] When the media attacks you and you don't know the answers you always say something wrong and they could jump on you. If you don't know the answer it's best not to speak. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire it all went wrong, Islam. As soon as the empire fell most people forgot what Islam was. If they don't study it, that's the main reason they're getting attacked.

Although he accused the media of supporting bad stereotyping of Islam, he believed the Muslim communities had the main responsibility and should take action to improve their knowledge:

The media, yes. They take things out of context. [But] If every Muslim knew their religion properly ... one of the companions of the Prophet said if you give me 500,000 blind believers, people that believe in the religion but don't follow it, I can never win the hearts of the people of the world. Give me 500 true believers and the people of the world will listen to us. [...] If you want to change society Muslims will have to change themselves. They're going to have to learn their religion properly.

According to Saleem, misconceptions about Islam originate because of people, like his parents, who learnt about Islam in an 'old-fashioned way' many years ago in Pakistan (or India and Bangladesh) and who are unable to discern cultural practices from religious norms:

Yes. I learned from a proper scholar what some of the misconceptions are from normal people. When my parents say something and it's wrong I say this is not right. This is how it is. They say we've been doing it wrong all the time.

As he pointed out, most parents read the Qur'an in Arabic back in their country of origin, without being able to speak and understand the Arabic language. Instead, he had read it both in Arabic and English:

What about the Qur'an? In which language did you read it?

Arabic. Now I started studying it in English. I need to know what it says. [...]

For Saleem, like other young people, the distinction between culture and religion relied on the Qur'an as the main source of legitimisation of Islam. Therefore Islam was associated with the doctrine and teachings of the Qur'an that oversee and regulate the lives of all Muslim peoples in different countries. In this sense, the Qur'an was perceived as tightening together different Muslim identities, which developed in a variety of cultural and social milieus and sets out the essence of what being Muslim ultimately involves (Mondal 2008). Saleem also highlighted the importance of intergenerational differences in the knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an. In line with him, other young people expressed their desire to understand the meanings of Quranic verses.

While Saleem was committed to books and was integrated into the life of the local mosque, for others like Asif, Google was a good enough tool to understand better the Qur'an:

Can you read Arabic? Yeah. Can you understand it?

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Not all of it, but that's why I use the Internet so I go on Google and I can search for the bits I don't understand and translate it.

In this context, the Internet provides both opportunities and threats: it is easily accessible but it lacks guidance and supervision. Use of the Internet is part of young people's attempt to research meanings and understand Islam better. It also shows their willingness and determination to move away from what they perceive as the poor knowledge and misunderstandings of previous generations.

2.5 Being British

We have seen that for parents and young people, religious identity was a primary source of moral values and norms of behaviour. The understanding of what constituted a British identity was more ambivalent overall, reflecting intergenerational differences between parents and young people, as well as some overarching commonalities. Looking at the wider picture, the survey shows that about half of the young people in the survey (49 %, N = 483) described their national identity as British; 21 % of the participants described themselves as English (5 % as European, 3 % as African, 2 % as Pakistani or Asian, and 17 % reported other national identities). Minority ethnic groups were more likely to associate themselves with a British rather than an English national identity. As shown in Table 2.1 below, the majority of White British described their identity as English, which is different from all the other ethnic groups, who tend to identify with a British identity.⁷ These results mirror findings by Platt (2014: 53), who—based on a large representative sample—concluded 'the minority second generation do almost universally perceive themselves as British'. Similarly, using the longitudinal dataset *Understanding Society*,⁸ Nandi and Platt (2015) found that second generation migrants had 'strong British identities'.

Analysis by religious groups mirrors this trend and results show that the majority of Muslim young people also described their national identity as British, which is the highest proportion amongst all the religious groups, as the table below suggests (Table 2.2).

	British	English	Other	N total
Asian Indian	62	14	24	63
Asian Pakistani	70	5	25	77
Asian Bangladeshi	60	12	28	67
Other Asian	42	16	42	31
Black Caribbean	50	22	28	18
Black African	44	4	51	47
White British	38	57	6	104
White Other	9	9	83	23
Other	42	~	58	26
Mixed Background	33	24	43	21
N Total	235	98	144	477

Table 2.1 National identity by ethnicity (%)

⁷Chi Square= 1.740E2; *P* < 0.01; *N* = 477.

⁸ 'Understanding Society' is a large British longitudinal study that follows the lives of people in 40,000 households and provides evidence on 21st century life in the UK. See https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/

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

Table 2.2 National identity by religious affiliation (%)

This finding is particularly relevant in the context of moral panic and current preoccupations about Muslims' lack of attachment to Britain, reflecting concerns that the primacy of religion as a source of identification may lower other senses of belonging (e.g. Choudhury 2007; ETHNOS 2005; Mirza et al. 2007: 37). The self-perception of being British rather than English for many young Muslims in the survey mirrors more general trends. Rather than an English national identity, minority groups tend to prefer a British one, which they associate with being more diverse and with bringing together different people (ETHNOS 2005: 38). The idea of 'assimilation' is another way of explaining minority young people's preference for a British identity, particularly in the case of second generation migrants (Platt 2014). However, the word 'assimilation' seems to imply a passive adaptation to the identity and norms of the majority, which does not reflect findings from this research.

If the survey can only capture descriptive labels and categories, the interviews can provide deeper insights into the construction of a *British Muslim identity*. This is to say that the way respondents thought about themselves as being British cannot be disentangled from other aspects of their identity. Bearing in mind some of the difficulties experienced by their peers growing up in South Asia, or what they had heard from their parents, some young people associated freedom and diversity with the idea of being British, as Mariam points out:

[Meaning of] being British? I think freedom, you know. We might think we are really restricted with all these new laws coming in, but if you are going to compare to Bangladesh I mean this is freedom this is what being British is, you know democracy.

For Zahra, tolerance and diversity were important components of being British:

I think [the meaning of being British] it would probably be that sense of freedom that you get because it's like everyone can be their own person. For example you get people in college that for example are male, but dress female and people have frowned upon perhaps, but it doesn't stop that person from being who they want to be, and I think it allows you to be yourself more. I think it has made me more tolerant of other people as well.

Still, being British had an ambivalent meaning for young people. For some it was about opportunities, whilst others were more concerned with the criticism of certain aspects of the British lifestyle, such as binge drinking or drug taking, as Sakina sums up:

The thing I would like to criticise Britain as a whole, is perhaps its lifestyle. The whole, you know, hedonistic culture and wanting things, like wanting things now just for the pleasure, not paying for it and not having that long-lasting meaning of something [...].

Here, Sakina's criticism went beyond the lifestyle to address more existential issues and value differences:

What I find really strange is people complain so much about things that they can't have and when they have it they complain about it even more. So people say "oh I want a stress-free life", so when they have a stress-free life they think "oh it's too boring". And I'm thinking "you can't have everything in life" surely, and I think that's the criticism I would have, perhaps it's pub culture, treatment of women.

To Sakina, the British way of life appears to be shaped by dissatisfaction and unhappiness, like an endless rush to reach something that immediately becomes of no value once it is achieved.

2.5.1 Zahida's Parents: The Good and Bad of Being British

Zahida parents' were both from a middle-class background and only moved to the UK quite recently when the two daughters were already in their early teens. Because of this, their views about British society and Pakistan were 'fresh', as they phrased it. Leaving was the decision of Sameer—the father—after being the victim of a gun assault on his way home from work. At that point he decided that Pakistan was no longer a safe place in which to bring up his daughters:

Pakistan is always like this. There is bribery, corruption is always there.

By contrast, Sameer believed in the British rule of law:

[In the UK] I know if they make a mistake on my tax I will get it back. This man [pointing to the TV, which was showing a Pakistani channel] is from Benazir's party, they're talking about corruption and tax evasion. [...] All three are political parties and they're trying to defend their parties' leaders on corruption and tax evasion. This would not happen here. If it happened it will come out one day.

However, his reasons to leave went beyond security. Migration was, for Sameer, the way to enhance his daughters' life chances through education and eventually work. As he said, people migrate to guarantee a better future for their children.

Access to education was in fact the main aspect of being British that both Sameer and his wife, Umara, valued highly—the same as all parents in the study, as detailed in Chapter 6. Sameer explained that public education is not good in Pakistan, not even at the primary level, and the only choice is private schooling:

For years and years, Umara and I had always wanted our daughters to have a proper British education. We used to think they will be foreign students so they won't be able to get the same benefits at university so that was also part of the reasons we decided to move. When I visited Zahida's family, I met the parents in their flat. It was in a quiet and wealthy Inner London area, but it was relatively small, as many London flats are. Zahida's mother, Umara, was particularly keen to speak about the small size of their flat: in comparison, their house in Pakistan was a proper 'villa' with three floors, two living rooms, study rooms and 'several rooms for guests', en-suite bathrooms and a huge garden. Umara spoke about Pakistan with great nostalgia, pointing out all she missed since they had moved: her friends and an active social life, but also having more time for herself as her cleaners and cooks dealt with the housekeeping:

I feel I'm not a second-class citizen over there [Pakistan] [...] [In Pakistan] for lunch and dinnertime we eat together. Breakfast you eat in your own apartment. You continue having your own parties, teas but the unity is there. You're not alone. If I have a problem I can just call my brother in law or friend and they will come. Here life is very busy. No one has time for you. I didn't have time for you because it's like a machine: you cook, clean. Over there you have domestic help.

Her class advantage appeared immensely reduced in the UK as she complained about working 'too many hours' and not having any time for family and friends. She felt she was constantly behind with the cleaning, and kept on apologising about 'the mess'. She had started using takeaways and pre-cooked meals. She was also concerned about the change that the move had involved for her two daughters, as she was not sure that they had fitted in fully at school.

This sense of nostalgia was linked with criticism of British culture. Both Umara and Sameer spoke about 'social isolation', which took the form of lacking cohesiveness and solidarity and having a more individualistic outlook on life:

I feel the society is still quite individualistic. There's a focus on individual success, which is a good and bad thing. Individual success comes from the concept of a capitalistic society. (Sameer)

Yes. English people are not very good with old people. They don't care a lot and if you are sick. In Pakistan for old people it is natural, it is the culture to look after your elders. There is no elderly's homes over there. All

parents live with their children or grandchildren and it is their duty to look after them. [...] My father is 82 and he's still living downstairs [in their house in Pakistan]. (Umara)

Generally in constructing their British identity, young people and parents tended to pick and choose only certain specific aspects of British culture and rejected some others. 'Pub culture' and drinking, but also a certain vision of femininity, such as wearing clothes that are too revealing, were highly criticised. Fortunately, Sameer told me, he was confident that his two daughters were 'balanced girls' and understood their boundaries so that they knew 'where West ends and East begins, culturally'.

2.6 Islam Has Been Hijacked: Identity During time of Terrorism and Radicalisation

British and Muslim aspects of identity were also constructed in relation to the events of 9/11, the terrorist attacks in London in 2005, and the consequent debate about the loyalty of Muslims to the West (Hussain 2004). In relation to these events, parents and young people converge toward a very similar argument: there was the need to reinforce the inner message of Islam while strongly condemning any violence carried out in its name (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015):

I'm a Muslim and sometimes when I hear people [...] how they stereotype us and they think we're all terrorists. I do feel it's wrong and I do get hurt by it. There are particular people, particular Muslims that call themselves Muslims but ain't doing what is the way of life in Islam. What they're doing is wrong. In our religion Allah said that taking the life of an innocent person is not right [...] They're the wrong Muslims. They think if they do this stuff they are promised heaven, but they're doing the wrong thing. (Ali, 16-year-old, British Bangladeshi)

Here, explanations about the distinction between Islam as a spiritual religion and Islam as political ideology came to the fore, converging toward what Ed Husain, the writer of The Islamist (2007), had to say. Ali was the one who spoke about The Islamist and recommended reading it, saying that it 'explains well what's going on'. So I read it. The book is the autobiographical journey of a young man in and out of the political ideology of Islamism. In a crucial passage of his book, while making his way toward the ideology of radical Islam, Ed Husain describes the plea his father made in the attempt to challenge his dangerous political views that emerged during his teenage years. So, the father explains that the 'Prophet is not a political leader,' but rather the source of 'spiritual nourishment' inspired by God via the Qur'an (Husain 2007: 52). He continues that the Qur'an is not a political document but rather 'guidance and serenity for the believing heart' and the Jihad is 'a war against tyranny and oppression, fought by the Prophet after persecution, not "the way" [to Islam]' (Husain 2007: 52). The words of Husain's father fully capture the sentiments emerging from this research, since parents and young people spoke very similar words, but for different reasons. Husain's father was trying to stop his son from joining an Islamist group recruiting youth in East London. In my case, respondents were concerned about spelling out the difference between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political ideology so that I could report to others: 'But it angers you because these people are taking the name of Islam and they have changed it', as Mariam told me. Raj, Davar's father from Bangladesh, explained:

These people [terrorist groups] don't know anything about Islam. There is no violence like they say, no murder, no killings.

He called Islamists 'thieves' because they steal the name of Islam for their own violent purposes. The price of this, he said, is paid by the 'regular people, who want to get on with their lives', and then he got emotional. I asked him if he wanted a break but he said he was ok. He was concerned about how Islamist groups were recruiting young people and convincing them to do things in the name of Islam. Again, his words reminded me of Ed Husain's description of how he got involved with the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. The novel brings together multiple reasons—both individual and social—behind becoming radicalised.

Research has also showed how pathways to radicalisation involve complex trajectories with multiple intersecting factors too difficult to disentangle (e.g. Bouhana and Wikström *Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families* 2011; Pels and Doret 2012). Moreover, radicalisation is known to take place in different spaces (such as the family, direct contact with terrorist militants, or social media and the Internet). Hence, identifying 'a type' of potential Islamist is virtually impossible. Davar's father was aware of Islamist groups recruiting young people in East London and told me about his fears for the teenage son 'I prefer to know that he drinks [rather] than he hangs [around] with those people [Islamist groups]', he told me. There was an underlying need to unveil the difference between Islam and Islamism, between a spiritual religion and a political ideology, so that I could report this to others: 'You see you need to say all this in the book', Raj said.

2.6.1 Mariam: Identity Under Attack

I am sure there are going to be times where I am going to be discriminated against. I don't like [it] but I'll just get on with things. It won't stop me.

The words of Mariam, a 17-year-old British Bangladeshi girl, reflected the direct effect of the complex geo-political context on her growing up. Mariam was, amongst the girls, probably the most political; her views were interesting, as she shifted between supporting Western interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and trying to be balanced about the Palestinian question, while trying to make sense of her religious identity and what being Muslim meant to her. At times she was unsure about the exact order of events: 'Yeah but I think it is wrong to obviously kill innocent people and obviously Iraq is, is the American army in Afghanistan or Iraq?' Shifting between self-assuredness and cynicism, she spoke about how she challenged her Muslim friends when they made uninformed statements about the Jews:

I was sitting down and she was talking about how she hates Jews and I turned around and go "How can you say that as a Muslim?" and she goes

"Look they are killing every Gazan" and I go "How can you say every Jew is doing that?" I don't want to choose sides between Gaza because obviously I don't know the true story.

Mariam tried to research the truth about the Palestinian question on the Internet, but only found biased versions and partial information. She debated at school as to whether Americans should withdraw their troops from Afghanistan. She felt for the children and the civilians in danger but wanted the job to be finished: 'I think that they have got to finish the job, you cannot leave the job half done'.

She spoke about how the events of 9/11 had changed things for Muslims and affected her own identity:

Was that 2001? I was about eight and I still remember it because it did change things I think for any Muslim especially because I wear the scarf, I think it did change because you would obviously think that I am believing in a religion where someone would take the name of my religion and go and blow themselves up [...]

The attacks in London triggered things for the worse. As Mariam explained, her older sister, who was wearing the hijab and jilbab, started experiencing 'racism': a group of men shouted at her in the middle of the street, 'Have you got a bomb there?' meaning under the jilbab. New emerging global fears, or 'paranoias' as Mariam called them, were triggering defensive mechanisms such as her need to explain and constantly justify herself to outsiders like myself:

It's complicated. People think that Muslims that we all agree with this or that, but I don't agree with it and "why should I support a terrorist, someone who kills themselves?" Someone who is not only a coward for killing themselves, but they are such a coward for killing hundreds of people with them.

Unlike others such as Saleem, Mariam's defence of Islam was more hesitant. While she strongly challenged the link between religion and violence, she felt Islam was responsible for promoting certain gendered roles and

divisions. There was a very specific way in which girls tended to be political and Mariam reflected this very well. Like other girls in the study, she expressed concerns not only about geopolitics and the war on terror, but also about gender inequality. In telling me about women's disadvantages, she made references to the male-dominated 'patriarchal' culture in her Bangladeshi community:

Obviously but like I think most religions are patriarchal. I think I mean they are. I think Islam is patriarchal. It is because men have found their way within it. If you see like the priest that we call Imams are all men and I find that wrong. And I like the mosque. I got kicked out of all four mosques I went to because I was obviously rebelling a little. But once a girl hits thirteen or whatever she can't go to mosque and why is that? When Prophet Mohammed was alive any woman was allowed to go and pray at the same mosque he was in. [...] That's the thing why should they sit separately? In the Prophet Mohammed's days we didn't sit separately. I don't know what their problems are I think it's just sexism, I think it's culture.

Blaming culture was her last word on this topic, but her distinction between culture and religion remained a fine line and Islam was not fully absolved. I kept in touch with Mariam for a while by email and, more than a year after the interview, she wrote to me recommending that I read *Radical* by Masjid Nawaz (2012). She explained: 'it has many of the answers you are looking for about Islam in Britain and it gives Muslims some responsibility, which is good as we all have some'. From listening to anti-establishment hip hop in the 1990s to becoming a committed young Muslim member of Hizbut-Tahrir, and then experiencing years in jail in Egypt, Nawaz's story is a story of redemption, but with a more critical view of Muslims and their responsibilities to make change in their communities.

2.6.2 Ali: Talking Politics

Ali was a 16-year-old British Bangladeshi boy living in a deprived area of Inner London with his mother and younger sister. As detailed in the next chapter, Ali had a complex identity and was undergoing pressure from his peers who were smoking and drinking, and he even had friends involved in gang crime. However, there was another side to him. He told me he was very interested in politics while none of his friends really 'cared about this stuff'. He spoke extensively about the Palestinian question and the condition of Muslim people in the world, explaining how he gained knowledge of these issues at school and then developed an interest:

Yes. I've studied it and it's part of one of my GCSE subjects, humanities. There was a unit on conflict and co-operation. [...] It's a controversial issue because they both see Jerusalem as their promised land and there's different religious arguments and there's moral arguments as well.

So what's your view about Muslims in Palestine?

I'm a Muslim myself. I think that not one group should be given priority over the city and that both groups should have it, but it's something for them to sort out between themselves. It's something for them to be grown up about and sort out.

Many Muslims are dying around the world, now even more than when I interviewed Ali in 2010, but, as he said, this does not make the news, because 'terrorism' is what makes Islam more appealing to the media:

So many media is [...] newspapers, that's what influences people to think they're [Muslims] horrible people. That's only the half side of the story. When they show US and British troops in Afghanistan, in Iraq, they only show what's happening to them, they only record the deaths that are of the British troops. A few British and US troops die but they don't record how many Muslims have died in the war. Innocent lives, not extremists, innocent lives are taken in small villages that the extremists take their camp in. So many innocent people lose their lives, families and that's what people need to start seeing.

Ali also reflected on how things could be changed and what sort of effort was required:

There are so many things between important people and the local community, between ordinary people. There is meeting about people talking about these affairs and mostly it's that people think that it's going to happen again because of what happened in 9/11 and 7/7 [...] If there is a problem between Muslims and British people it should be sorted out between political ways or petitions. There are so many ways to sort out things that are not using violence because violence is never the solution.

Finally, being political also meant being involved on the ground and some of the young people, like Saleem, were volunteering for their community. The classroom survey, which asked young people about volunteering and civic engagement, also found that about half of the participants were involved in some form of voluntary work for different groups, organization or clubs. The interviews provided examples of civic engagement: Asif ran for the Young Mayor local election in a disadvantaged London borough where he identified priorities relevant to the youth such as reducing crime, tackling the drugs problem and providing cleaner and safer places to meet and socialise. Tania had planned to take a gap year after completing her A Levels, to go and volunteer in an orphanage in India, where her family was originally from.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored young people's and parents' perceptions of Muslim and British aspects of identity, which are central to this research. It has examined the processes of identity construction from the point of view of respondents drawing on their own meanings and definitions, while also taking into account the role of external/social influences in shaping these processes. I discussed how identity was embodied and visible for some of the young people and how boundaries between religion, British and South Asian cultures affected this embodiment.

Young people's and their parents' most common definition of Islam as 'a way of life' suggests that Islam forges behaviours and social norms, but it was also, at times, mistakenly associated with South Asian cultural practices. Islam as an identity had multiple meanings: it represented the commitment to practice (and praying); as well as being a source of moral guidance and a way to escape suffering. For the girls, Islam was an embodied identity, with the hijab an important marker and the niqab or jilbab other possible further steps. Religious identity was, for the girls, a journey with steps and turning points, at times involving an increased visibility as Muslims. The emphasis on the hijab as a personal choice can be seen in the light of wider structural trends defined as 'individualisation of religion' (Beckford 2003). However, as Beckford also argued, individualisation can potentially explain certain religious changes and approaches to faith, but it does not come in a political and social vacuum. Rather, the importance of context for understanding individuals' choices is reiterated and remains central to explaining change in late modern and post-industrial societies. As Scourfield et al. (2013: 4) have pointed out, placing too much emphasis on individualisation in the context of Islam means failing 'to see the wood in the tree'. In other words, the idea of an individualised Islam fails to recognise the importance of conformity to collective traditions, which characterise most religions.

British identity was shown to have ambivalent meanings: it meant freedom, change and opportunities marked by access to education. But it was also associated with binge drinking and pub culture, individualism and loose social relations. The space between culture and religion enabled young people to move more easily between the British and Muslim aspects their of identities. In order to reduce the perceived distance between the two systems of values, they directed criticism toward South Asian cultures accused of perpetuating old-fashioned concepts of gendered roles and women's subordination.

In the context of the debate about Muslims' loyalty to the countries in which they have settled, we saw how findings from the research suggest the primacy of religion as a source of self-definition along with identification with a British national identity. The next chapter explores the boundaries and negotiations between different social fields in greater depth, to understand how identity is constructed and co-constructed in the interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim social fields.

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'Being Modern and Modest': Identity and Negotiations

3.1 Introduction

Well I think you can be modern and wear the hijab still as long as you are modest and dress modestly [...] I mean I think being eighteen years old, late teens it is important to still be fashionable but still religious at the same time. (Hania, 18-year-old British Bangladeshi girl)

By negotiating and re-negotiating different influences on their identity, Muslim young people identified with their parents' religious and cultural values, while they also adjusted to those of the wider society where they were growing up. Hania's attempt to be at the same time modern and modest reflects the negotiations of influences emerging from different social fields: 'modern' is associated with the non-Muslim British society and 'modest' is one of the crucial Muslim values that young people apprehended in the family and in their ethnic-religious communities. This chapter addresses one of the main questions of the research: How do young people negotiate different influences affecting their identity? To answer this question, this chapter presents three different types or 'typologies of negotiations', namely 'combining, converging and

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diverging' (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015). The typologies describe how young people reconciled different identity orientations while they also reflect the role of upbringing on identity formation.

As detailed in Chapter 1, I consider identity as the process by which we come to describe and make sense of who we are, rather than a selfdescribed fixed category, or a multitude of categories. Identity operates in numerous social fields, such as the family, the extended family, school, friends, non-Muslim peers, the local community, the mosque, the wider society, the influence of the media, and so on. Here, the focus is on two key aspects of identity in particular: the religious affiliation and the national self-identification.

The chapter begins by presenting the ways in which young people were 'combining' the influences of multiple social fields. The other two types of negotiation, 'converging and diverging', refer to the interactions with the parents and will follow subsequently. In this chapter, I will sometimes refer to these negotiations as 'strategies'¹ intended, in Bourdieu's (1990) terms, as practices that result from adjusting subjective (i.e. individual) aspirations to objective (i.e. social) possibilities and that are therefore partly unintentional (Franceschelli 2013).

3.2 Combining

'Combining' different influences reflects young people's attempts to bring together and reconcile dispositions emerging in different social fields where religion, South Asian and British cultures, as well as gender and class intersect.

¹In sociology, the concept of strategy is widely used in the analysis of different types of situations from power relations to economic, work and family life (Crow 1989; Knights and Morgan 1990). Crow (1989) started a debate in the sociological community about the use of the term often employed 'to imply the presence of conscious and rational decisions involving a long term perspective' (Crow 1989: 19). Importantly, since the term 'strategy' implies choice (Crow 1989: 3), it is a particular object of discussion in the context of structural constraints limiting individual action such as those imposed by limited resources or conflicting demands (Ibid: 15).

3.2.1 Being Modern and Modest

When I asked Hania, who was studying for her A Levels and who had plans to become a midwife, about what sort of things were important to her at that point in time, she spoke about the pressures of growing up. It was clear that her everyday life, social relationships and overall sense of self reflected complex negotiations influenced by the need to be 'modern and modest', as she worded it. The idea of 'being modern and modest' reoccurred in several of the girls' interviews and was used to explain different dispositions reflecting the influences of both Islam and non-Muslim British society. 'Modern' was associated with the British lifestyle that young people apprehended while growing up in the UK. The South Asian cultural milieu was instead described as 'modest and traditional', which is similar to what Becher (2008) found in her study of Bangladeshi families in London. Clothing style was the particular indicator that the girls used to illustrate what 'modern and modest' meant to them. In this context, it emerged that 'being modern' signified having a contemporary outlook and wearing Western clothes such as jeans, dresses, leggings, t-shirts and tops. 'Being modest', instead, was described as the justification behind the practice of covering up to reduce women's perceived sexual allure (Tarlo 2010). By wearing the hijab with Western clothes (jeans, dresses, jumpers, etc.) the girls combined 'modern and modest' dispositions. Hence, 'being modern and modest' involved wearing dresses with long-sleeved t-shirts and skinny jeans underneath, or dresses with leggings making sure that arms and legs were kept fully covered. In doing so, the girls showed how clothing dispositions, emerging from different fields, could coexist as part of a unitary identity (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015).

Although there was a general agreement amongst the girls about the importance of modesty, their individual interpretations were different, as reflected by their outfits and clothing. Shifting between modest and modern clothing styles was considered a matter of freedom and choice:

No I don't always wear them [Asian clothes]. Majority of the time I wear them at home, [...] but I also wear like jeans and stuff because that is a part of my identity as well. [...] I just like wearing what I want I know it is

important to cover yourself and so I wear everything that covers and I just follow my own trend. (Maria, 17-year-old, British Pakistani)

As we saw in Chapter 2, the emphasis on 'choice' was recurrent amongst female respondents, who used it to challenge generalisations about Muslim women being oppressed. However, the emphasis on challenging these generalisations is by itself a mark of the influence of the social context: women's claims about choices were not happening in isolation, but rather they were a response to perceptions of Muslim women as victims (Archer 2002). Hence, Maria perceived that the freedom to shift between 'modern and modest', symbolised by her clothing choices, reflects the negotiation of dispositions, which each have implications for the construction of gender identities.

In Islam, modesty transcends the issue of what to wear and encompasses attitudes, behaviours and relationships with others. For the young women making the transition to adulthood, modesty was an aspiration and a goal rather than something they felt they had already achieved, as Sakina suggests:

But I've seen some girls wearing like scarves and skinny jeans and yes they are covered up, but it still shows your figure and I used to do that, but then I thought "What's the point of me wearing the scarf then?" But it's just a development I think when teenagers go through that phase of adjusting between two different cultures and making that transition into becoming more modest as you grow older, so yeah.

As for the hijab, the 'journey into modesty' was perceived as a route to self-improvement, giving an insight into the transitions and identity negotiations of these young women.

3.2.2 'All Together They Are Me'

Several young people used to combine different identity orientations by singling out the contribution that each dimension—for instance, national, ethnic or religious—could give to their individual sense of self. In some cases, these three dimensions were balanced and considered equally

important dispositions. The reconciliation of these different aspects created a unifying sense of self, as Hamid summarised, with the idea that 'all together these identities are me'. Similarly, Omar, a British Pakistani boy, specified that national, ethnic, and religious identifications have different, but equally relevant functions, which were affecting his value system and sense of belonging:

For me Muslim relates to sort of religion so it is Islam so it's following the beliefs and as I've said it's the moral beliefs of what makes you a good individual and the religion crafts you to be the best individual that you can be. [...] Then being Pakistani is a sense of identity as you say it's my origin it's my it's where my family comes from: I wasn't born there but by going back there I've found my roots and where my family have got all their views from our history. [...] Being British I was born and raised here, it's given me all the opportunities I had, which I never would have in Pakistan. It's tough like being able to go on the universities, the ability to think freely, which is I guess given me sort of much more wisdom than I might have had otherwise in Pakistan.

This passage from Omar is very important as it catches the interplay between the meanings of different dispositions and a unitary sense of identity. For him, ethnicity, religion and nationality fulfilled different purposes and provided different sources of identifications, but converged toward an overarching identity and sense of self. As detailed in Chapter 2, national identity tended to be associated with freedom and opportunities such as access to good education. Ethnic identity, as Omar also sums up, embodied the cultural legacy and the family upbringing, while religion shaped the value system, beliefs and the guiding moral principles.

Still, combining these dimensions did not come without challenges and there were difficulties associated with bringing different priorities and identity orientations together. Speaking about his everyday life and things that were going on at that moment, Haroon, a 15-year-old boy from a British Indian ethnic background, pointed at the multiple negotiations:

[Life] it's complicated because there is many things going on at the same time, so sometimes in Ramadan after being at school all day I would come home and do my homework, so that was in some way like my British bit. But then I would have to go to mosque for a couple of hours and pray and so that was like the Muslim bit and Indian bit. It all just merges into one like at school all of my friends know I go to mosque, I do this and that and I have loads of things going on at the same time.

I also felt that fasting while being at school, or praying five times a day while busy preparing for their GCSEs or A Levels was likely to be hard. Although there were some hectic moments as Haroon exemplified, young people, like Sakina, Hania or Saleem, managed to adjust religious practice to their busy daily lives, and vice versa.

3.2.3 Combining by Ranking: The Primacy of Islam, Religious Revival and Intergenerational Differences in Religiosity

Another way of combining national, ethnic or religious dispositions was by 'ranking', that is to say by prioritising one dimension over the others. Most often, Islam was considered the central and unifying term, as Saleem illustrates here:

Yes. I'm Muslim first, that's my religion. That's who I want to be. I want to be a Muslim. Before being British I'm a Muslim all the time. If I'm living in this country I'm going to support Britain. If you're doing something unjust I'm not going to support it. I'm Muslim then the nationality comes afterwards. First there is you, then nationality. Religion always comes first for me.

Ali also echoed this point:

I identify myself as ... I would say I am Muslim. That's the main thing. Not necessarily where I come from or where I've been born but that I'm a Muslim.

Why?

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Religion is the most important thing in my life and I think Muslim is what makes a person. It's part of [my] culture, part of how [I have been] brought up, part of moral beliefs. The primacy of Islam described by Saleem and Ali was not a unique stand, but it reflected the views of most of the Muslim young people in the research. Results from the classroom survey pointed to the centrality of religion for Muslim young people: the survey shows that Muslims were much more likely than any other religious group to consider religion as important in their lives, as illustrated by Fig. 3.1. Conversely, Christians were more likely than the other religious groups to describe religion as not so important.²



Fig. 3.1 Importance of religion by religious group (%)

Findings from national representative studies provide more grounding to these results about the primacy of religion for South Asian Muslims in Britain. The Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (1994) also found that religion was the most important source of identification for South Asian Muslims (Modood et al. 1997), which was also acknowledged by the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey (O'Beirne 2004).

²The differences in the importance of religion across different religious groups were statistically significant: (Chi-Square = 2.212E2; P < 0.01; N = 498).

By contrast, when looking at national representative studies of British young people, such as the Young People Social Attitude Survey (YPSAS; Park et al. 2003: 37), we see that the majority of them did not report having a religion (64 %) or reported never attending religious services. These differences in the views that young people have of religion between my classroom survey (and also the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities and the Citizenship Survey) and the YPSAS are a consequence of the differences in the ethnic and religious composition of the samples. The national YPSA sample was predominantly White, with over a quarter of the respondents from a Christian religious background³ to reflect national demographics in the UK. In this case, the results about the weakening religiosity amongst youth converge toward the much wider trend described as 'secularization' of Christian Western countries (Gilbert 1980; Norman 2002; Brown 2000). In Sacred and Secular, Norris and Inglehart (2004) claimed that religions mainly exist to provide a sense of confidence and predictability against present insecurity and future uncertainty. According to them, the secularization of contemporary industrial society is related to the decreasing need of religions for existential security, which is now provided by economic development and welfare (Norris and Inglehart 2004).

Even when taking into account the implications of drawing on a small and not representative sample, findings from the research invite reflection about the variety of trends and forms that religion and religiosity take in contemporary Western societies. On the one hand, there are assumptions about the declining importance of religion; on the other hand, there is well-established evidence about the renewed strength of faith and religiosity within certain minority groups living in these societies (Fleischmann and Phalet 2012; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Nonetheless, if some argue that Muslims are becoming more religious, this is not the same for all minority groups and research has found that some other minority groups are instead becoming increasingly more

³ The YPSAS is based on a sample of 663 young people aged 12–19 years old. In the YPSAS, nine in ten respondents described themselves as White, while 5 % were Asian, 2 % Black, and 3 % of mixed origin (Park et al. 2003: 10). Conversely, in the current survey, amongst the 543 who answered the question about their religious affiliation, 44 % described themselves as Muslim, 30 % Christian, 10 % Hindu, 5 % from other religious backgrounds and 11 % described themselves as not having any religious background (Appendix 2 provides detailed description of the sample).

secular (McAndrew and Voas, 2014). Drawing on ethnographical work in Turkey, Rosati (2015) re-elaborated the idea of 'post-secular' to make sense of the encounters between dominant secular values and different religious creeds on an everyday basis.

The school survey mapped some general trends about the primacy of Islam and provided comparative information across different religious groups. However, the interviews offered deeper insights into how religion was important to Muslim young people and the implications for an overarching identity. Importantly, the interplay between religious and ethnic identities was central to understanding the special place that Islam took in the identity of young people in the research. While Asif emphasised the guiding role Islam played in his life, he also suggested a declining sense of attachment to his Bangladeshi ethnic identity:

Yeah. I feel that my religion shapes the person who I am and I don't think my ethnicity where I'm from doesn't really matter to me, like as long as I'm equal in the place where I am in school then that's OK with me. [...] [Being Muslim is] the values like they shape me who I am, so I can have like compassion and mercy, so like I say if I do become rich I won't be like some of the rich people that are greedy and selfish and being a Muslim makes me compassionate to people that are lower than me and does not allow me to be superior.

This feeling toward ethnic identity, which was assimilated to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian cultures, was shared by several young people and was related to both class and gender distinctions. We saw in Chapter 2 that there are two main theoretical positions that explain the identification of second generation young people over time: assimilation, and reactive ethnicity, religiosity or religious revival (Cainkar 2004). Assimilation involves the gradual convergence of minority identities toward the majority (Alba 2005). Instead, a closer move towards ethnic and religious identity—as in reactive ethnicity (Rumbaut 2008) and a religious revival (Minganti 2010; Voas and Fleischmann 2012)—are perceived as consequences of reduced life chances and hostile environments where racism and discrimination are likely to take place.

Using quantitative evidence from the Ethnic Minority British Election Survey, Platt (2014: 66) found 'overwhelmingly supportive

evidence of assimilation across generations' but no substantial significant evidence of 'reactive ethnicity' or 'reactive religiosity'. This research suggests a more nuanced picture where assimilation comes together with a decline in the feeling of belonging to an ethnicity in favour of a 'religious revival', but where gender and class both play key roles. This is to say that when Islam, rather than culture and ethnicity, acquired a special place in the identities of young people in the study, it did so for different reasons.

When young people spoke about ethnicity and culture, they did so in terms of 'parental culture' and therefore South Asian cultures. Their perceptions of South Asian cultures differed according to the social class of their parents. A pattern emerged: those from middle-class backgrounds had more positive representations of South Asian cultures than others from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Omar and Tania, both from higher-middle-class backgrounds, described their perceptions of Pakistan and India, respectively. Omar highlighted some differences but also many commonalities between his life in London and the lifestyles of his friends and peers in Pakistan:

Yeah I'd say that like you know they use the Internet, they go to see movies, they talk with their friends, they go for dinner in that way it's exactly the same. Yeah I guess it's sort of like maybe because it is an Islamic country the sort of religious pressure might well mean that they wouldn't do so much openly it would more be behind closed doors or something.

Tania was also very positive and found her trips to India very exciting and as a way to reconnect with her wider family and roots:

I probably wouldn't like to live there, I don't know because I never have lived there before, but whenever I got there I really enjoy my time and whenever I leave I always feel like I'm leaving my home where everyone is. I like that all my family is there and it's really nice being with family because they all have fun, we tease each other, it's just really nice being with everyone [...] We don't do much we just hang out at home, we go see films, we do loads of shopping now whenever we go stock up on DVDs and all that. It's not just them all of our other family are there too so we also visit loads of people when we're there, and we just hang out at home, go to some restaurants.

By contrast, some other young people from working-class backgrounds recounted different experiences, travelling mostly to rural areas and finding it, at times, uneasy. Based on her experience of visiting their relatives, Mariam refers to the challenges of being a girl in Bangladesh:

You see the girls being treated like that and it is so disrespectful. When I was there, there was this girl working there and they treat her like she is crap and I am a British girl and because I am a British girl they treat me with such respect and I find that so wrong. And I don't like the weather. It's like you are roasting, it is terrible weather there. [...] I said bye to all my relatives there because I warned them that I am not going to come back again. I am old enough now because when I was younger obviously I was like three or four my parents can just take me but this time it was like "no!".

Similarly, Amina, also from a lower socio-economic background, appeared concerned about the conditions of girls in Bangladeshi society:

There's a lot of difference [between Britain and Bangladesh], [here in Britain] most of the parents here want their children to study, have a good future, [in Bangladesh] they want their child to get married, live with a husband, have children, so it's different, they don't let them work.

It is not a coincidence that the most critical accounts about ethnicity and South Asian cultures came from girls, who considered the patriarchy and male-dominated models of society as ethnic-cultural notions rather than religious ones. These girls, mostly from working-class families, expressed their concerns and sometimes anger about the persistent disadvantage of women in South Asia. Attached to their criticism, there were implications for identity with ethnicity/culture being at the 'bottom', as Hania suggests:

I see myself as a female Muslim girl and then a Bengali. [Bengali], it's right at the bottom of the page, [...] *at the bottom of my identity really.*
In line with Platt (2014), the survey findings reported in Chapter 2 suggested that Muslim young people were converging toward a British national identity. However, qualitative findings tell us more about the complexity behind these ethnic, religious and national identifications, and the shifting boundaries between them. Ultimately, combining dispositions was the result of negotiations required to make sense of these different priorities. So, identity was never straightforward or uncomplicated. As Tania explains, she felt neither fully Indian nor fully British, but rather positioned somewhere between the two:

Like living in England I don't think I could ever completely 100% fit in because I look Indian. But then being in India I don't think I could completely fit in because I was born somewhere else and I can't speak that language and it's just not the same, so I don't really fit in anywhere. [...] I say I'm a British Indian because when I was younger it didn't seem like I noticed I'm not a racist, but I noticed where other people are from. I notice these things, so before it didn't really matter I just didn't see it. I think I saw myself as White because I didn't differentiate between, but as I've grown up I've noticed different things and how I'm more comfortable in some people's company. You just notice, things that I do and where I fit in completely.

In this extract from her interview, Tania also makes references to race and the development of race awareness shifting from the feeling of being 'White' to becoming more 'comfortable with the company of certain people rather than others'. Tania's experience of growing up in a quite wealthy and predominantly White area in the South Coast of England seemed to influence her identity as well as her social relationships. Tania had fewer interactions with other South Asians compared with other young people in the study, and this sense of ethnic and cultural isolation reflected on the way she spent her spare time—mostly at home, having a quiet and contained social life. However, as she said, she did not mind this at all.

The idea of 'intersectionality' (Brah and Phoenix 2013) is useful to understand the processes of young people 'combining' influences on their identity. The intersections of ethnic, cultural and religious dispositions with gender and class suggest a quite fragmented picture that young people were committed to reconcile together. If combining is a marker of the willingness to assimilate, it also suggests the complications of this process at the identity level, which involves making sense of different orientations and navigating different sources of identifications. However, intersectionality does not account for the different weights—such as the prominence of Islam—that each intersecting factor has in the construction of an identity.

The prominence and emergence of a 'religious revival' also entails substantial intergenerational differences: were the young people in this study more religious than their parents? And, if they were, what are the implications? These questions reflect concerns associated with increasingly 'more religious' second generations, which have led to heightened anxiety about lack of assimilation and fears of radicalisation. Chapter 2 described how Saleem, from a working-class family, was committed to improving his knowledge of Islam. Ali, Hania and Sakina, like Asif, were knowledgeable about their religion, and had an explorative approach to their faith asking questions, investigating and looking for meanings and answers. By contrast, some of the parents, even those from middle-class backgrounds, like Tania's father, Shahid, struggled with the articulation of religious meanings and came across as apologetic about their inability to provide proper explanations:

You mustn't literally quote me on these things because I'm not a learned person, I haven't studied the Qur'an. I know very little about what is in the Qu'ran so I could not quote things from the Qur'an to explain something. I could not argue with someone if they say your Qur'an says this and our bible says that, neither of which I would be able to argue against or for or whatever. Because I have knowledge of neither of them, what I'm trying to explain with this is: I consider myself a good Muslim because I believe.

Believing was, as we will also see later, a way to affirm a religious identity when practising was not fulfilled and proper knowledge was lacking. Like Shahid, many parents learnt Islam in their homelands and read the Qur'an only in Arabic. Therefore, their accounts about Islam often sounded like repetitions of memorised lines from the Qur'an. Some of them struggled to articulate their thoughts and explain meanings, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Nevertheless, in the research, the higher religiosity of the second generation was not the only pattern and there were also young people—like Mariam (and Asif, Wajid, Tahir, Pervez and Davar)—who considered themselves less religious than their parents:

Yes definitely we were taught in sociology about society and how secular it is becoming [...]. If you compare our parents' values towards religion towards ours, the amount it is different is immense. So yeah, I think I am less religious than my parents. (Mariam)

Others like Omar, Tania, Haroon and Zahida from middle-class families were probably as religious as their parents, sharing with them similar views and discourses about Islam.

The emerging diversity, even in this small sample, suggests different pathways of religiosity where socio-economic circumstances, but also gender, played a role (Van Tubergen and Sindradóttir 2011). The young people who were committed to improving their knowledge of Islam were mostly concerned with addressing misinterpretations and tackling stereotypes about their religion. The important question here seems to be not about 'quantity'—who is more or less religious between parents and young people—but about *how* young people and parents are differently religious.

3.2.4 Being 'Muslim But Not Religious'

I believe in Allah, which is my god. That makes me a Muslim. (Tahir)

If religious practice was important enough for many young people and some of the parents to speak about their religious identity and Islam, religious beliefs were more central amongst those who made claims about 'being Muslim but not religious'. 'Being Muslim but not religious' was another way of making sense of and combining different dispositions. This idea involves an important dualism in the perception of religious identity: believing is associated with 'being Muslim' whilst practising overlaps with 'being religious'. By shifting the attention toward believing, some young people were able to come to terms with their contradictory lifestyles and their ambivalent religious identities (Davies 1994). So, in order to separate being Muslim from being religious, we see that a more elaborated and individualised understanding of being Muslim emerged. Being Muslim but not religious reflects a specific aspect of 'combining' where the centrality of Islam was perceived in terms of guiding principles, rather than predefined religious acts. In this case, the salat or haji⁴ were not seen as an essential part of a Muslim identity, whilst the spiritual and moral dimensions were highly valued. Under this line of argument, believing in God was the overarching condition and main foundation defining the meaning of 'being Muslim', while 'being religious' was associated with practising fully and 'being a strict Muslim'. Hence, 'being Muslim but not religious' meant believing in God but being 'liberal', whilst not fully complying with the Five Pillars of Islam as Omar suggests:

I do [pray] but I don't do it as much as like you know. I don't do five times a day like I would pray but occasionally but I guess that is just me. I'm less religious than they are, but I think I respect religion more in terms of what it makes how it crafts you as an individual and the beliefs and morals behind it. I think those are much more important than the practice. I mean of course I think ideally I would like to do it more. But I think that as long as I believe in God and I do pray, but maybe not all the time, but I still always think of God or like before I go to sleep you know I give a little prayer or something or you know thank him for whatever I've been given or you know before an exam just pray to God that whatever. I think stuff like that I think it is the morals, which are more important that it crafts you into being a good individual or someone who's respectful honorable you know all the sort of good qualities. I think those are much more important than say being very religious but just not holding up the moral aspects of it.

⁴ Salat are the Muslim prayers and *Haji* is the pilgrimage to Mecca. They are amongst the Five Pillars of Islam.

Interestingly, Omar adjusts the extent and depth of religious practice to his needs, which he justifies by prioritising the moral sphere and the values entailed by Islam.

As we will see later in this chapter, Tahir was one Bangladeshi boy who dropped out of school and spoke extensively about rap music. He was the one who told me about his 'un-Islamic' social life involving smoking, drinking and being out until late most days. In many respects, he was 'diverging' from South Asian cultures and Islam and his way of life was contradicting his beliefs. Nevertheless, he had remained strongly attached to his Muslim identity, which he was attempting to combine with his lifestyle and social life. While speaking about Islam, I could see how he was strongly resilient and highly committed to making sense of some of the internal contradictions of his identity. His starting point in coming to terms with these contradictions was the story about his upbringing, which suggests how religious practice became secondary and neglected:

When you're about 6 you start going to mosque and they teach you about religion two hours a day. Monday to Friday. I used to be up and down with my mum and dad when they had their little problems. I never had the time. I got older and got used to not praying. (Tahir)

His preferences for the 'believing' rather than the 'practising' aspect of his religious identity were relevant to explaining how he attempted to maintain a Muslim identity, while living an un-Islamic way of life. For some young people, like Tahir, being Muslim was a legacy, an inherited condition that fulfilled a need for belonging, which started with being born as a Muslim and by being brought up in a Muslim family. In the last section of this chapter about 'diverging', we will see how Tahir made sense of this legacy.

Yasmeen, from a middle-class background, lived a very different life compared with her peer Tahir. Yet she shared with him the desire to maintain a Muslim identity while justifying her lack of religious practice:

It's hard because for me I won't pray five times a day but then when I go to mosque I will, so I pray there and so let's put it this way: "I am not religious". I believe in God and I believe the things that I am supposed to believe and I do believe them genuinely, but I won't practice if that makes sense.

The analysis of intergenerational transmission in Yasmeen's family suggests the influence of her mother, Lubaba, who was comfortable about her Muslim identity, but was wary about calling herself 'religious':

Would you say you are religious then?

No. Not at all. I do pray once in the day and I read a bit of Qur'an in the morning and that's all.

And this is not enough to define yourself as religious?

No. Because I don't do it for religion. I do it for peace of mind. I don't do it in the name of Islam, I do it for my own peace of mind. [...]

[...] I see and would you define yourself as Muslim then?

A Muslim yes. But not a practising Muslim. I do my own version of Islam for my own peace of mind. My husband doesn't fast. We don't go to mosque all the time. We go whenever work permits or if we can be bothered. But other than that, no.

This particular approach to combining dispositions, 'being Muslim but not religious', involved a *personalised* approach to Islam based on reassessing how a religious identity could be maintained without fully practising. In this case, 'being Muslim' encompassed practising and religious creed and became a legacy and an identity. According to this perspective, a non-practising Muslim adopted a more personal and individual approach to Islam, as Omar's father, Hassan, points out:

Yes there are, you know, religion is something where it is a very personal thing. Like I have the fear of God all the time, the fear of God is there and I have never been away from the religion itself. Yet, I do not feel that it should start to come into your life where it starts to take over other things which you can do and not [do]. [...] With some people that they have to stop everything and they have to say their prayers and it could be in the middle of a meeting. I feel that they could finish it and then do it, that sort of thing, but it all is a very personal thing.

So, for those with this perspective, being Muslim did not require an externalised outlook such as traditional clothing or the hijab, and did not entail participation in rituals or the full implementation of the religious acts as detailed by the Pillars. This perspective may also be relevant in

the context of other religions; for instance, non-practising Christians or Jews may still define themselves as Christians or Jews. However, justifying the lack of religious practice was even more difficult to reconcile with a Muslim identity; as I was told many times: 'Islam is a way of life'. For non-(fully) practising Muslim parents and young people, 'being Muslim' remained a key disposition of identity, the first thing they would refer to when answering the question, 'who am I?' Hassan, Tahir, Lubaba and Tania believed without practising, which meant that the declining importance of religious practice did not naturally turn into the declining importance of religion.

3.3 Converging

There were two main sub-trends within the general process of *combining* different dispositions: *'converging'* and *'diverging'*. In particular, these two sub-strategies reflect the ways in which young people's identity interacts with the family field and, in doing so, they unveil the role of upbringing in identity development.

Some young people tended to combine influences on their identity by 'converging' toward their parents' system of values. Young people who were converging were deeply critical of going out, drinking alcohol or smoking, which became recurring topics of their interviews. They took photographs of their family and home and discussed how they aligned themselves strongly with parental moral standards.

3.3.1 'I Walk Past Pubs and They Stink!': A Strategy About Understanding, Accepting and Sharing Parental Culture and Islam

The attitude in favour of a contained social life involved criticism and condemnation of the 'going out' that was associated with drinking and taking drugs. This way of thinking was evident across different social classes and was shared by several young boys and girls in the study. Omar suggests how '*converging*' involved manifesting his agency by making sense and finding justifications for the religious prohibition of drinking:

The reason of drinking it's not said specifically. Drinking it is said, is about intoxication so then, that's I think the reason. Such rules are made because there's no way to control your inhibitions [...]. All intoxications were banned because [...] you don't know what you're doing and you do something you'd regret and that's the reason it's banned in religion.

Another reason for these young people to dislike drinking, smoking or taking drugs was the idea that these activities undermined their health, as Zahra explained:

Well, I think that the restrictions that are placed upon you are for yourself. Meaning: I wouldn't want to get drunk anyway, because of the lack of control, the outcomes of it, what you are doing to your body, the harms. I think the fact that there are restrictions it's for your own benefit. Like drugs are intoxicating and just the effects that it has on you and like a lot of things happen whilst you are being in that state. So it is for your own safety and own benefit yeah.

Sakina, from a lower socio-economic background, demonstrated her sense of sharing as well as her continuity with parental values in her specific criticism of the 'British pub culture':

Never, no. I have never been interested in 'pub culture'. I mean... Because you've never done it, you don't really like it. I mean to be honest I walk past pubs and they stink! I don't mean to be offensive, but they really do. I don't really like the smell and then you see pictures and you see videos of people throwing up and acting so obscenely after a night out. And even though it's really funny and you have a great laugh, but then you think what does it say when the only way you can have fun is to forget about what you're doing and just to make a fool out of yourself really? I mean my friends we go out. I mean yesterday we had a party and we were dancing and everything. But we were sober and we were just high on happy and happiness and life really in general. Intergenerational analysis involved comparing emerging themes within members of the same family. In this case, Sakina's condemnation of the 'British pub culture' reveals how she conformed to her father, Sakib. In his interview, Sakib described different strategies that he employed to exercise and maintain a sense of control over his children, including references to the role of religion as detailed later in Chapter 5:

[...] So that's another thing we tell our children: "Whatever you do it's going to reflect on this life and the next life". But also being aware that even when we're not around you, someone else, God can see you so instilling that in children we try to do that.

For Sakina, converging was the result of understanding that parents controlled their children primarily to protect them. Hence, she ultimately accepted and respected the boundaries placed on her social and personal life:

My dad was the one who started talking about values and systems and your morals, and so he not only instilled Muslim morals in me, but his own morals as well. He instilled his own boundaries and his beliefs within us as well. So there's so many things like we question too like, "Oh why can't we do this?" like this is not something specific to Islam, but this is to my family as in, you know, "Why can't I go out with my friends?" And so basically what he was telling me was about protection. He told me that, "This time of your life is where you're going to change as a person, with people you make friends with are going to have a huge impact on you, so you've got to be really really careful who you make friends with". So he was trying to make sure that I choose right who my friends are and also never forgetting who I am and where I come from.

The link between protection and control involves a specific view of young people as being under the threat of negative influences of society. Parental control and protection were exercised with both boys and girls, but appeared to affect them differently. Parental gendered expectations were associated with the perception of young women as the 'guardians' of the family's religious and cultural integrity (Dwyer 2000). Boys were instead seen as the future providers and therefore they were often granted more freedom and independence.

3.3.2 Tania: A Story About Converging

Tania lived in an affluent seaside town. Her mother, Nazima, was the main earner and Nazima's husband, Shahid, worked as an administrator. Tania was in her last year of secondary school and after her A Levels she was going to take a year off to volunteer in India before studying physiotherapy. For such a young age, Tania appeared very mature and did not appear interested in what generally appeals to many girls of her age:

To most of the UK teenager population yes, [this town] it is boring, but I don't like going clubbing I'm not really into that. I've been a few times and I don't really like it that much so in that respect is not party town or any-thing, but I like it here.

Nazima and Shahid successfully negotiated permissive and strict practices of upbringing (Chapter 5). As also detailed in Chapter 6, they were exerting pressure and influence on their daughter's future career choices and also had a sense of 'strong directions' for her personal life: in particular, Shahid expressed strong preferences for her to get married within the same ethnic religious group, and within the same minority Muslim group. Shahid and Nazima placed great emphasis on passing on their family habitus, characterised by values including 'modesty, moderation, respect for the authority of the elderly and a strong sense of their roots and tradition'. Nevertheless, unlike other parents, they also allowed their daughter to go out clubbing, 'but not without worries'. They felt confident that they had instilled the right set of moral values and boundaries, which would then prevent Tania from going 'off the rails' or from 'cross[ing] the line':

She wanted to go to a nightclub, [...] in London and this was her first thing, my baby going to a nightclub, and I would have preferred her to go to a nightclub in [town where they lived], where I could be there for her if something happens, or be out there if she wants to come home, but this nightclub is in London. So I was concerned also because it was around the exam time and whatever, you know, and I didn't want her to be disturbed, but some friends were going, some weren't going. But we let her go, yes she went. (Nazima, Tania's mother) This specific family field involved simultaneously allowing freedom to try things out and setting out clear boundaries to control behaviour. Finally, like the other young people who were converging, Tania did not conform passively, but rather she reflected and then assessed the benefits of following certain norms:

Maybe it's because I've been brought up like that, but I don't feel like I'm missing out on anything. I don't know how I'd think if I was brought up thinking drinking and smoking is fine. But at the moment even if Islam said you could smoke it ruins your health, so I don't want to do it. Drinking you lose your mind, you're not in your right senses. [...] I guess it's a lot about not doing things but if I did smoke and drink, I don't think that would make my life better.

Being socialised in her family field, with both control and freedom, influenced Tania's converging identity, which was aligned with her parents, while also attempting to maintain her sense agency.

3.3.3 Ali: Willpower and the Right Path as a Converging Strategy

I met Ali, a 16-year-old Bangladeshi boy from London, together with his friends, all of whom were Bengali from the same neighbourhood in Inner London. However, Ali was different from the others in the group. As I will detail later, the Bengali boys' lifestyles were very much un-Islamic and they were involved in petty crime, drinking, smoking and gangs. Ali was from a lone parent family and lived in this central but deprived London borough together with his mother, Sadia, and his younger sister. His mother had moved to the UK as a young woman to get married; she had no qualifications and she had never worked. After the divorce from her husband, which was a very difficult time for the family, she was left on her own bringing up two kids. The ex-husband moved outside London, soon after he remarried and Sadia, Ali and his sister were no longer in contact with him. There was a sense of isolation that emerged from Sadia's story and, as a consequence, all her life seemed to revolve around the children.

Ali's upbringing explains the strong sense of responsibility he felt toward Sadia and his sister, which led to the construction of his gender identity as the 'man of the house':

Yes. I'm the man of the house. I do the shopping with my mum. Help her out at home as well and help my sister study as well. Yes it is hard. It's fast paced and to get along you need someone to support you as well financially and emotionally. I haven't had no contact with my dad since then. That's it.

Ali was also negotiating complex gendered expectations. While embodying a traditional idea of masculinity, he had also adopted his mother as his main role model 'even though'—he said—'she is a woman':

Most of these values have come from my mother. I don't live with my dad. It's 13 years they've been divorced. My mother's taught me. She's brought me and my little sister up for 13 years of our life and she's guided me in the right way and I love my mum and I see her as a role model *even though she's a woman*. I still see her as a role model in my life, because she has given me a lot and where I am today with education, my life, whoever I am, all my success and achievements so far all the credit goes to my mother.

Here, Ali says a lot about the son-mother relationship. Although he was trying to make sense of having a female role model, while self-defining himself as the 'man in the house' he acknowledged the importance of his mother for his upbringing and expressed a mixture of gratitude, admiration, respect and the perceived duty of giving something back. Ali was spending a lot of time with his friends, sharing with them an interest in rap music, cool haircuts and a similar outlook but, he told me, he had different aspirations. While his friends dropped out of school, he was still studying and determined to make his mother proud and he said he wanted to go to university and become a teacher. His grades were pretty low, some 'Cs and Ds' making entering university an uncertain option, 'But I will do better next year' he told me. To combine contrasting dispositions while converging toward his mother's moral standards, Ali emphasised his agency and referred to the idea of *'willpower'*. He recalled where he first heard that word and how the idea stayed with him:

Willpower is something that's human behaviour. It's not made up. When I was in primary school and we were doing this campaigning on stop smoking and we had to create a leaflet and the book was called "Willpower" and that's where I got it from.

Amongst other young people, Ali demonstrated a higher level of complexity because he had to negotiate his values and family responsibilities with his controversial social life. Therefore, he explained he relied on his personal 'willpower', as a way of moving away from situations that went against his beliefs. So, his willpower enabled him to not smoke or drink when other friends did so:

It's not difficult [not to drink or smoke when others do]. It's all to do with willpower. You can do it. Anyone can do it. It's possible. Anything is possible. [...] It's all on your willpower and what you think is right. If you focus on one thing and steer on the right path, you don't have to think about other things.

In this passage, he reflected in his own terms on a very crucial topic of Islam, The Surah Al Fatihah, the opening verses of The Qur'an. This passage of The Qur'an introduces the daily Muslim prayers and makes a reference to the idea of the 'right path':

'Lord of the Day of Judgement. It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help. Guide us to the straight path, The path of those upon whom Your grace abounds, Nor those upon whom anger falls, Nor those who are lost'. (Al Fatiha, The Qur'an)

Ali admitted that in the past, while experiencing peer pressure, he had left the right path. So he had smoked and drunk alcohol with his friends, but ultimately he decided to stop and had succeeded in this: Yes. I've managed to do that [stop drinking]. I drank once. I drank a few times in the past but... I just done it. It was peer pressure. My friends done it, it looked cool so I thought let me try it, what a heck? But then I realised I don't need to do it, so I just drifted away from it. No I don't find it hard to avoid it.

Willpower and the *right path* are Ali's ways of negotiating the divergent public and domestic fields and his justification for conforming to aspects of Bengali culture as well as Islam. For instance, he asserted that it was up to him and his mum to give consent and make sure his younger sister would marry the 'right person'. His words also indicate how he prioritised Islam:

Religion is the most important thing in my life and I think Muslim is what makes a person. It's part of their culture, part of how they're brought up, part of their moral beliefs [...].

It's not necessarily hard to follow your own religion. You're brought up when you're little you should be doing this or that at this stage. I don't think nothing should be able to change your view or way of thinking about your religion.

When I spoke to Sadia she stressed the sense of social isolation connected to being a lone parent within the Bangladeshi community, where divorce is still perceived as a stigma, particularly for women:

It's hard for me because is just me. I cannot call anyone here. If something happened, it's only me, if I'm scared, we have a problem I have to do it. On my own, always. I cried sometimes but I have to do it, for my children. Be strong [...] on my own.

Like she said, she had 'no job, no husband'; her children were her only focus and her priority was to pass on to them a sense of duty and responsibility. To do so, she was talking directly to them about values, beliefs and behaviour and she was confident that her children understood the messages and behaved accordingly:

And I am confident about my children, they are not doing anything wrong.

The particular characteristics of Ali's family field—lone parenthood, lack of contact with the father, isolation from the Bengali community in their local area, Sadia's unemployment—and the public field of his social relationships deeply influenced Ali's identity. The interaction between domestic and public fields determined his emphasis on staying on the right path as well as his search for a justification—willpower—to reconcile the influences coming from the divergent social fields.

In summary, young people who combined influences from the social fields by converging toward their parents' values reproduced their family field, but not in a neutral and unchanged manner. Rather, their experiences were filtered by their everyday interactions and by growing up in a non-Muslim British society.

3.4 Diverging

In order to combine the influences affecting their identity, some other young people were diverging from their parents and distancing themselves from the family's values. By 'diverging', young people challenged parental control on their social lives and social relationships, and got involved with 'un-Islamic practices'.

3.4.1 Going Out, Drinking and Believing

Yes. I do consider myself a Muslim but again the area that I'm living in has changed me. Obviously I still have faith in my religion, but in my religion we're prohibited to drink and have drugs. Smoking is allowed but drinking, having zoots [a joint], that's not right. Obviously living in an area like this you see someone doing it, you think that looks quite nice, let's try that. You have it once and you think "I'm not going to have it again". But then again you see someone else have it and you think "let me take it again". (Davar)

Living under peer pressure from the local area was common for young people in the research, particularly for some of the boys, who told me they were keen on going out, drinking alcohol, smoking or taking drugs. Still, they remained attached to their Muslim identity. To justify the contradictions that derived from conducting a social life that challenged the moral standards set out by both South Asian cultures and Islam, these young people developed a range of discourses and justifications, which fed into 'diverging strategies'.

These strategies were more relevant amongst some young boys rather than girls, who did not appear to challenge their parents as much. Gendered expectations on women, as the guardians of the family's reputation, had probably affected some of the girls' socialisation in the family field and possibly kept them away from an interest in clubbing or drinking. Overall, girls tended to be more controlled by parents: they went out less often and mostly during the daytime, and they had to come home earlier than the boys. However, as with young people who were converging, the girls emphasised their understanding of parental concerns rather than just passive acceptance.

Going out was one of the most common arenas for confrontation between young people and their parents. Wajid, an 18-year-old British Pakistani boy from a working-class background, described how wanting to go out led to a conflictual relationship with his parents:

It's mostly about timings and like what I do when I go out because I go out with friends but my parents see it as a bad thing, like that I shouldn't stay out that late. [...]

It's always confronting them to be honest, it's always like that confrontation thing. It's always like mainly arguments but we have like come to an agreement. We sometimes do agree on things like let's say I come home late and I say "I am 18 now" and then I ask for the independence. I say: "Can I have that extra hour or two?". It is not going to be like an everyday thing, but I ask for a bit more and if they say yeah, then that's fine, but if they say no then I try asking again and we argue.

Wajid spoke about his desire for more independence of the kind he saw in the lives of his non-Muslim friends. So, 'diverging' often took the form of negotiating choice and constraint, freedom and restrictions. In order to resolve this conflict, some young people created a divide between private/family and public/social fields:

To be honest there is obviously a contrast, so my parents it's more a different background to outside and so what I try to do is keep them separate. If I go out I don't have that Pakistani culture. I have the whole do what I want. But at home it is more that thing of because I speak Pakistani to my parents. It is always that culture mix I reckon. (Wajid)

Drinking and taking drugs were attached to the ways some young people who were 'diverging' socialised and spent time with their friends. These practices and lifestyles are very general parental concerns. However, they were even more difficult to reconcile with Islam and South Asian cultures. which both set very strict moral standards and emphasise the importance of self-control. In this scenario, 'diverging' involved a number of coping strategies comprising justifications to reconcile Muslim identity with non-Muslim practices. These young people were saying that 'no one is perfect', 'this life is a test', 'everybody makes mistakes', and 'God will forgive'. In order to justify his drinking and smoking, Pervez, a friend of Ali, told me that 'being part of 21st century' culture makes certain practices amongst young people unavoidable. To some extent, the ways young people sought to justify and make sense of their struggles to comply with religious norms, reflected their attempts to individualise their rapport with Islam. However, if we assume that the individualisation of religion (Beckford 2003), and individualisation more generally (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001) are actually taking place, we also have to account for them as contextual processes embedded-rather than disconnected—in the social structure. We saw that the girls' emphasis on choice and freedom were also responses to widespread ideas of them as oppressed victims. Similarly, the boys' choice of a rebellious lifestyle and personalised religiosity reflected their life circumstances as teenagers growing up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

Diverging was not easy. Davar expressed a sense of guilt for behaving against what his parents expected and he felt these feelings would lead him to eventually take distance from Islam:

You say to yourself "I'm not going to do it, my religion does not allow me to do that". But when you see someone doing it, it just goes out your head and you go do it. It's quite hard. Yes I feel guilty then I pray sometimes and ask for forgiveness.

So, how do you see your future in terms of your religion? Probably going on the other side. So being less religious you know. A sense of guilt and an uncertainty about a future identity were recurring themes in the interviews of diverging young people, with emotional consequences shifting between the fear of parental disappointment and their inability to reduce the distance between the family's expectations and their lived lives.

3.4.2 Islam, Rap and Class: The Bengali Boys in Inner London

Another aspect of diverging was visible through some of the boys' views on rap music. Young people explained that photographs of iPods and of pop and R&B singers or rappers represented music, which was described as relevant to their identity. For some of them, music was just leisure, but for others it was more of a source of aspiration. This was the case for four 'Bengali boys',⁵ Tahir, Davar, Pervez and Mohamed, from working-class backgrounds: their parents were not educated, their mothers were out of work and the fathers were mostly in low-skilled jobs (or unemployed). These four boys were also living in social housing in a deprived area of Inner London. Ali was also their friend, but a bit of an outlier in the group at the same time. These boys were diverging from their parents' system of values and expectations in many respects: they drank alcohol, smoked weed, dropped out of school and were 'hanging around' with a gang, even though, they explained, they never had troubles with the police. One related but more symbolic aspect of their diverging was their fascination with the Black American rapper Lil Wayne, who they had adopted as their role model:

Yes he's [Lil Wayne] my role model. I like the way he dresses. Everything about him is perfect. The way he sees life, the way he talks, his personality. If he doesn't like you, he'll go straight to you and say, "I don't like you, can you go?" He's who I want to be, he's where I want to be. (Davar)

I conducted separate interviews with each of the four boys, but their passion for Lil Wayne was a striking common repetition. They all showed

⁵The Bangladeshi boys defined themselves Bengali rather than Bangladeshi.



Fig. 3.2 (a) Lil Wayne

me similar images of the rapper downloaded from the Internet, asked me to listen to his music and we watched his videos on their mobile phones (Fig. 3.2).

Lil Wayne is known for his rebellious lifestyle: his videos contain sexual scenes, he raps about money and power and he has been in and out of jail because of drug-related crimes. Other research has highlighted the important contribution of rap music and hip-hop for the construction of youth masculinities in the context of disadvantaged minority groups,



Fig. 3.2 (b) Lil Wayne

particularly Black boys (Clay 2003). Nonetheless, the Bengali boys reflected a different level of complexity, as they were attempting to reconcile Lil Wayne with their Muslim identity. Here Ali, who was friend with the four, sought to justify the troubled life of the rapper by separating his celebrity lifestyle and his intimate personal self:

No. He has two lives. One of his lifestyles is his celebrity lifestyle, his other lifestyle is his personal things. I think everyone is their own person and everyone knows at this age that everyone is mature enough to understand what's right and what's wrong.

How did these young boys combine their passion for Lil Wayne with their self-identification as Muslims? Their interviews suggest a metaphoric value that was attributed to the rapper and to his achievements, which were surrounded by symbolism. For the boys, Lil Wayne embodied a parable of success: someone from a disadvantaged background who had broken down barriers and become famous worldwide, as Tahir explains:

If you see what's good about him you can tell. He came from a little place, New Orleans, it's not that good. He had been in the gutter. This area [where Tahir lives] is not that rich, and he came from a similar place and now he has no trouble with money or nothing. His future is singing, rapping, that's what he's good at. That's what he's going to do. That gives encouragement. *If he can do it, why can't I do it?* I like his music, I like the way he talks. He smokes, does a lot of stuff with girls, but that's his business. Towards music I like the way.

Combining diverging dispositions, such as those that derive from rap and Islam, was not just about negotiating Islam with non-Muslim peer culture. Rather, this diverging aspect of 'combining' reflects the influences of class and disadvantage on opportunities and young people's views of the future, as detailed later in Chapter 6.

Rap music also influenced the appearance and clothing style of these Bengali boys. For them, clothes were a means of bonding and indicated shared tastes and interests within the group. Davar, Tahir, Pervez, Mohamed but also Ali were inspired by the outlook of their idol Lil Wayne, which involved wearing oversized skinny jeans (tight down the calf but loose on the crotch), big trainers (often unlaced), sweat tops and hoodies, chain necklaces and bracelets, designer sun glasses, and baseball caps:

Clothing-wise we just want to look good. You don't want to look scruffy. Before I used to wear tracksuits and tops. What happened I was born here, these are my childhood mates. In year five, you know my mum and dad's just split up and I moved to my dad to Leyton so I broke up with them and then I came back to my mum. That's how I met them again. I used to hate jeans I used to wear tracksuits. Now it's more like to look smart. (Tahir)

The four boys' haircuts were also particularly elaborate, with an asymmetric Mohican cut and razor drawings on one side. Davar explained that his parents—in particular, his dad—were highly critical of his style, which was the object of conflict and discussion: I could say stuff like my hair for instance, it's mainly to do with culture in Bengali people. Culture like they could say to my dad "I saw your son the other day in the road, what's going on with his hair?" Obviously my dad will feel ashamed of that and would have a go at me for that.

Intergenerational analysis also suggests that Davar's style and clothing were sources of preoccupation for his father, Raj:

The way his haircut is my son you have seen it Mohican okay I said "This is wrong!" and explain it to him. In Islam it's not right at all right and as a normal person it's not right as a normal person if you're like say you wanna go to university, you can't put your haircut like that. You know proper universities like Oxford. Oxford people don't have these Mohicans they can't do that. This is the right way and okay you got a Mohican you can go to these small universities they don't bother you about what you wear what you do, right, but a proper school a proper way you can't do that.

Ah I don't know I don't know where this [haircut] comes from. I know about the trousers you know they put on like that I know the trousers where it come from, it's from the prison [...] Sick this is sick'.

Raj's opposition to Davar's clothing and style involved different levels of criticism. Firstly, he felt that Davar was going against the Islamic principle of modesty. Although the honour of the family is usually attributed to girls, the Qur'an sets out that men, as well as women, should behave modestly and also should appear modest:

Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty. That will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. (24: 30–31)

Indeed, Raj's main concern was his son's reputation in the community and not so much about honour. Secondly, Raj was also worried about how his son's appearance would undermine his inclusion in 'normality', as exemplified by accessing prestigious universities. Ultimately, Davar's strategy for reconciling the differences between public and domestic fields involved contesting his father's restrictions on what to wear and accepting the resulting tensions. Davar said he would continue wearing the clothes he liked and added that he had no intention of changing his haircut. However, when I visited the family to interview the father, I noticed that Davar looked and behaved differently in front of his family, and I initially struggled to recognise him. His Mohican hair was worn down to one side and he was not wearing the usual loose skinny jeans, but rather some black trousers of a plain regular cut and an open shirt with a t-shirt underneath. I felt, once again, that identity was adapting to the life circumstances of these young people, shifting between the private and public fields.

3.4.3 Converging and Diverging: Looking Closer into the Two Typologies

Other research suggests that identity is reconfigured by gender, class, ethnicity or religion. In a study of British Pakistani boys, Dwyer et al. (2008) found that class affected the extent and motivations of their religious identity and masculinities. Ramji (2007) showed that there were gendered differences in the way Islam was mobilised by young people: boys were adopting Islam to legitimise their role as providers, whilst girls used Islam to challenge the conventional understanding of their roles. A study of Muslim girls' post-16 educational choices (Archer 2002) found that female respondents rejected the notions of gender-restricted choices and argued that families supported and valued their education. Religion was also adopted to reconcile multiple identities. Research in Canada (Zine 2001) has suggested that young Muslims were negotiating identities by adopting their religious identification as the anchor of their sense of self and as a form of resistance to the social pressures affecting their distinct lifestyles.

A closer look inside these two last typologies—converging and diverging—also reveals underlying characteristics, particularly around their gender and class composition.⁶ As we saw, diverging was mostly common amongst a group of boys from a quite disadvantaged background whose lifestyles were challenging their parents' values and moral standards. Indeed,

⁶ Exploring difference in the sample is a useful exercise, but because of the small numbers we always have to keep in mind that these patterns are indicative of certain trends in the data but cannot be extended to cases outside the context of this research.

their religious identity remained highly significant. By contrast, girls from different socio-economic backgrounds and all the boys from middle-class backgrounds were more naturally converging. Most girls were socialised as needing to be more controlled, which was perceived as embodying the family's honour. In this sense, their closeness to their parental values was a reflection of gendered assumptions underlying parenting. These two subtypologies—converging and diverging—are not specific to Muslim young people, but rather part of more general trends of youth identity transitions and inter-generational relations in terms of conflict or solidarity (Bengston et al. 2002; Szydlik 2008), reflecting general experiences of growing up (Wyn and White 1997). However, there were some more specific elements that characterise identity in the context of South Asian Muslim families.

The effects of gender and class were also evident in the migration histories of mothers and fathers, which provided context to whether young people were converging or diverging. Most of the young people who were diverging had parents with different migration and pre-migration histories-like Davar, Pervez and Mohammed whose fathers arrived a lot earlier in England than their mothers. These differences involved different levels of understanding of British values, the British lifestyle and different levels of English language skills. Although most parents were first generation migrants (22 out of 27), the migration histories of fathers and mothers were often different. The practice of marrying back in the country of origin involved the parents not coming to the UK together; generally mothers arrived a lot later than the fathers and often did not work, which affected their English language skills and integration into British society. The family of Davar, who was amongst those who were diverging, mirrors this pattern: his mother did not speak English and never worked whilst the father, who grew up in the UK, was fluent in English and appeared more knowledgeable about British culture and lifestyle. The cultural differences between parents were particularly strong in the case of Mariam who, amongst the girls, was possibly the most cynical, critical and, in her own way, rebellious:

Well I bet you can imagine what the norms and values of an Asian girl is like: don't go out with boys or stay in at home, but to be honest I don't follow them. Zahra, who mostly conformed with her parents, represented a very specific case in which her parents had very different migration histories, but very similar degrees of integration and understanding of British society. Her father considered himself second generation because he grew up in the UK, whilst her mother moved from Pakistan to the UK later to get married in her early twenties. However, unlike other mothers in the study, Zahra's mother, Ifrah, spoke very good English and, she claimed, she had a very good understanding of British society and values. Therefore, there was quite a strong continuity between her and her husband's parenting. Ifrah explained how she adapted to living in the UK:

I had some education in Pakistan, but when I actually came to this country I felt that it was really important because unless you can speak English you can't actually do anything. I just picked it up really, I didn't go anywhere to learn or anything I just wrote my knowledge and I used to watch TV carefully and my husband helped me. If I said something wrong he would say "You are not supposed to say it like this you are supposed to say it like that". [...]

I left all my family back there and just before I came, five months before that my mum passed away, we were totally shattered I would say. My mum died on 13 November 85 and then my dad passed in April 86. I came to UK on 15 September in 87. So I found it very very hard. My husband was there to support me, but still I found it hard. I couldn't speak the language that was a kind of barrier for me and then yeh [...]. I did find it very hard at the beginning [...]

How long did it take you to get used to life in here?

Well actually it took me about 2 years. [...] slowly slowly I made friends where I lived it was alright there. Those were the hard years of my life I think.

Finally, the relations between parents and their children described in this chapter reflect a double level of complexity, which is temporal—as it involves generations born in different historical moments—and it is also spatial—as parents and children were born and grew up in different geographical and cultural spaces. Spatial and temporal distances became ingrained in the family lives of these diasporic communities: while intergenerational differences characterise the relationships of parents and children across any ethnic and religious group, the cultural distance between generations in the same family is more specific to the studied communities.

3.5 Conclusion

The emerging typologies 'combining, converging and diverging' illustrate complex transitions to adulthood detailing how young people negotiated individual agency with the influence of the social world. Therefore, in Bourdieu's terms, they exemplify how their individual habitus endured the influences coming from multiple and, at times, contrasting social fields. The typologies also provide insights into how young people adopted lifestyles and outlooks that developed between different fields, as the idea of combining 'being modern and modest' suggests. The influences of gender and class were visible within each typology: 'combining'-the overarching typology-included boys and girls from different socio-economic backgrounds; 'converging' involved boys from higher economic backgrounds and girls from both middle-class and workingclass backgrounds; and 'diverging' entailed a group of young boys from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The resilience of young people to combine identity dispositions may also inform a new idea of 'assimilation' (Platt 2014) where majority and minority identifications co-exist complementarily rather than giving space to one another.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field underlie the construction of the typologies and the definition of identity. In this way, the chapter has provided a new application of Bourdieu's theory, extended to the field of identity. The idea of intersectionality (Brah and Phoenix 2013) is useful to explain the attempts to combine different identity dispositions emerging in different social fields. This quest for a unitary identity that incorporates and reconciles differences also discredits the criticism that multiple identity-orientations (such as the identification with ethnicity or religion) may call into question the loyalty to a unique sense of national belonging. Young people's negotiations were attempts to find their space in British society as Muslims. Therefore, the typologies were not exclusive or polarised identifications, but rather the processes of combining different orientations within a unitary sense of identity. By negotiating influences and dispositions, young people seek to try and maintain their identity (and habitus) together, mapping the wider process of constructing the self across different social fields. Therefore, 'being British, Muslim and Pakistani' (or Indian or Bangladeshi) are different dispositions within the same unitary but complex and multifaceted identity (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2015).

Criticism attached to the concept of habitus revolves around its inadequacy to explain mobility and change leading to claims of social determinism (Jenkins 2002). This limitation has also been applied to identity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Noble 2013). The different typologies of identity negotiations continue to express a sense of agency, even if 'bounded' to multiple social conditions (Evans 2002). They suggest that young people were not passively reproducing their family field through conforming to their parents' values and moral standards, but rather they attempted to manifest their bounded agency by making sense of and then actively accepting and embracing the boundaries placed on their social and personal lives.

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4

Love Relationships and Marriage: Agency, Islam and Culture

4.1 Introduction

Look I don't mind you choosing somebody to get married, but I don't want you going out as boyfriend and girlfriend, it is not allowed in Islam. (Fatiha, Sakina's mother)

Romantic relationships are defining features of the teenage years (Connolly and McIsaac 2011). They involve mutual voluntary interactions with expression of affection and, at times, but not always, sexual intercourse (Collins 2003). These early experiences are often volatile and short-lived (Furman and Shaffer 2003) and focus on present companionships and sexual experimentation rather than on the stronger levels of commitment that are more typical of the years ahead (Arnett 2000). Psychologists have argued that teenagers' love relationships have important developmental value with implications for future attachment and identity (Furman and Shaffer 2003). However, the meaning of love and the way love affects the lived intimacy of individuals is contextual. Research (mostly from the USA) suggests that ideas of love and experiences of romantic relationships vary according to culture and ethnicity. In the USA, youth from certain

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ethnic groups, such as Asian Americans,¹ are less likely to report having a partner during adolescence. In these groups, cultural preferences support later-in-life romantic experiences leading to marriage (Connolly and McIsaac 2011). Nowadays, the idea of 'love' is often associated with the prevalence of emotions over the rational, feelings of 'natural attraction' but also choice and individuality (Twamley, 2013; Giddens 1992). Twamley's (2013, 2014) study of Gujarati Indians in the UK and India suggests that, if these ideas of love have become a 'global ideology', they also remain subject to reinterpretations and are influenced by local understandings. Similarly to love, ideas of romantic relationships are also subjected to this interplay between global perceptions and cultural specific experiences.

I wondered whether being Muslim made romantic relationships more difficult for these teenagers because pre-marital relationships are not allowed in Islam, and premarital chastity is expected. However, in my list of topics for discussion I did not add any direct questions about love and relationships. I felt that the timeframe of an interview—even when I met participants several times—was not long enough to create the strong bond of trust required in order to ask about these intimate and private issues. I was wrong. Some young people quite spontaneously wanted to tell me about the difficulties, the challenges, but also the joys of being in love.

This chapter begins with an overview of how young people experienced their love relationships. The subsequent sections explore young people's and parents' views on marriage and how these views are influenced by Islam, South Asian cultures, class and gender and it concludes with an analysis of the role of marriage for continuity and belonging to parental culture and religion.

4.2 Love Relationships

Ideas of love, as the key emotion behind practices of intimacy and marriage, have become increasingly more like 'globalised ideologies' (Padilla et al. 2007). However, these 'ideologies' remain subject to cultural and also intergenerational differences (Twanley 2013).

¹'Asian Americans' is intended to include not just Indian but Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese.

In this research, perceptions of love—as attraction and individuality (Twamley 2013) and as the basis of marriage—were less popular amongst the parents, but they were more common amongst young people. Nonetheless, unlike other research findings (Twamley, 2014), in this study even young people did not fully embrace these ideas, as a result of their upbringing, religious beliefs, parental control and internalised norms of behaviour.

Love relationships were matters of young people negotiating their individual agency and their compliance with their parents' cultural norms. It was common for young people to know what was allowed or not allowed in the matter of love relationships, without necessarily being told this explicitly by their parents. Sakina's mother, Fatiha, and her husband were different in this regard and they openly addressed the issue of love and even sex with the children, while drawing on Islam to justify their claims:

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

The references to the Prophet exemplify how Islam informed parents' views about love relationships and how religion provided a justification to the prohibitions set out in these matters. Fatiha contrasted her openness with the ways other Bangladeshi parents generally addressed, or lacked addressing, these issues with their children:

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

Fatiha's criticism of other Bangladeshi parents was also a way to present her and her husband as more 'modern' and 'open-minded', as she said. Young people appeared well aware of what the Islamic norms were about love relationships, either because they were directly told or because they apprehended these norms through informal practices of upbringing. They also knew about their parents' strong negative views on the matter and the rather strict norms about marriage. Still, they did not seem always able or willing to comply.

4.2.1 Pervez: Love and Diverging from the Right Path

Pervez was one of the Bengali boys, who were 'diverging' from their parents. Unlike his best friends Davar, Tahir and Mohammed (and also Ali), he was not so interested in rap, style or appearance and acted as though he was more mature regarding what he considered their 'childish' behaviour. Like the others, he was also 16 years old and from a working-class background. He lived in a three-bedroom council flat in Inner London with six brothers, a three-year-old sister, his parents and his grandmother. All his brothers (apart from one, who was in prison) were still living at home and shared the bigger room in the flat. Apparently, their room used to be the living room, but they changed it to be the main bedroom in order to make space for the six brothers. I actually struggled to figure out how they would all fit, despite never visiting his home. 'Bunk beds—we have three of them', Pervez explained, perhaps guessing what I was thinking.

At only 16, Pervez had left school with no qualifications and was working in retail full time. Working full time was an important aspect of his narrative as he made many references to being self-reliant contributing to the family finances and being a 'grown up man'. He had no regrets about having left school because there were different routes to success, and he was sure that by working hard and doing well in his job 'something good will come up'. Money and lifestyle were very important to Pervez, as shown by his emphasis on cars, jewellery and clothes. Studying also appeared in his list of things that young people are supposed to do, but he then shifted attention toward work:

No one [of his brothers] is married yet. Everyone is too young still. In our culture [...] you see the Bengali culture these days, they think you should study first, make money. After you make money you got money to hire cars, for your wedding, jewellery, clothes.

During the interview, he made references to marriage and appointed 'family' as the ultimate recipient of all the efforts and hard work he was willing to make in life. He told me how you need money to get married, you need to work hard to provide for your family and look after your wife, you need a good job so your wife and children can have a good life and you can buy the best car to drive them around, and so on. I wondered what was going on in the life of this 16-year-old boy that he was so concerned with 'providing'—definitely more concerned than any other boy in the research. Then he explained:

My girlfriend is from [a] rich family. They live in a big house and she has one room for her. The father, I know him he is the stepfather, has a business and he's proper businessman he is rich and he has done very well for himself and the family. She goes to the best school.

I understood he was seeing a Bengali British girl and she was also 16 years old, but she was from a higher social class background. Pervez could not explain clearly what her father's business was, but she lived in a wealthy area of London and she was going to a Catholic private school. I wondered how they had met:

She's got a stepfather and he's kind of related to us. They went to my uncle's house. I saw her in her stepdad's car. I just looked at her and thought "I've got to get the girl's number" and that's where it started.

Pervez and his girlfriend, Samira, had been together for ten months but he explained that her family did not support the relationship for several reasons. He initially spoke about age: they were too young for anything serious leading to marriage yet, and anything else was simply not allowed. Later on during the interview, he came back to this point and told me that the problem was not their age, but something else. He felt that the fact that he had quit studying and that he was from a lower-class background were major issues for Samira's parents:

[We have been together] for over 10 months. Everyone knows. The problem is her family do have a problem but I wouldn't really be bothered. It's just long. It's too long to talk about her family, why they don't like it. It's the age thing and that she has to study. But I think there is more you know. That I don't study. They don't like this for sure. But I think I can show them work is good too. And my family is not so rich now [...] not like her dad. I think they care about all this too.

I wondered what the two were doing together and where they were meeting:

I take the day off sometimes and she bunks off. I know it's not good but we are forced to. They don't let us there is no other way for us. We lie but it's for the good. [...] Cinema, beach in Brighton or Southend-on-Sea. When we have free time we hire cars. We love hiring cars. It's straight roads. We hire a car, sit in the car, listen to music, have a laugh, a bit of fun in the car.

Caught between family's concerns, religious prohibitions and the willingness to be with his girlfriend, Pervez suggests how his agency was 'bounded' (Evans, 2002) in multiple ways: Samira 'being forced' to miss school and both of them being forced to lie were necessary conditions for Pervez to show a sense of control, which was otherwise squeezed by multiple pressures. I had an idea of what Pervez meant with 'a bit of fun in the car' but I did not follow up with questions, as I did not expect he would have wanted to speak about his intimate life with his girlfriend. Again, I was wrong. He did not mind explaining, and he did it without me asking anything at all:

The common thing is there's a moment when you've got to make love and when that moment comes you take it forward, but I don't go to my house, it's respect. I either book a hotel, not disrespect my girlfriend, I've got a lot of love and respect to her. Or I have a friend who has his own place. There [are] moments when you want to do something but you've got to wait for it. When you're patient you get it and that's just me. I have to respect that girl's feelings.

I wondered how Samira, the girlfriend, felt about this:

If we did want to do anything in particular, like sleeping together and stuff, we could, it's not a problem if only she agrees. She agrees but she know it's serious with me. Sometimes she says that when I ask for something she will either say she's not ready or she would like to take it forward. It's not a problem. I ain't got a problem with it. I've got her for the future as far as I know 100%. So hopefully everything works out in the future.

The emphasis on his serious commitment was how Pervez made sense of their 'sleeping together'. He acknowledged that the intimate relationship was complicated and it could not always be the way he wanted:

Patience is a virtue. Everyone says. *Do you have any?* I do. That's me. I'm a young adult. I've got a lot of common sense. I'm mature.

A number of other factors provide important context to both the account of the relationship and Pervez's identity. Together with family complications, another major barrier for Pervez and Samira's relationship was Islam, which does not allow either pre-marital relationships or pre-marital sex. Clearly, renting cars and booking hotels on older friends' credit cards and sneaking out from a friend's flat-share every other Saturday afternoon for 'intimate encounters' are also not Islamic behaviours. However, Pervez did not give up on his Muslim identity, and all his narrative about love and relationships was entangled with feelings of guilt, needing justifications and making him fall into many contradictions:

My religion is Islam [...] Out of everything we come to this world and this life for us, all the Muslim people this life is a test for us. There's a hereafter life as well. This is just the test. Allah sees everything we do. After that there's a second life as all Muslim people agree and believe. Religion is quite important. It comes first. If you're going to get married religion comes, if
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you've got to respect your family religion comes. Everything top to bottom has to do with religion. Obviously you've got your personal life but religion comes and tests you on everything.

In the attempt to maintain his Muslim identity, Pervez relied on a specific discourse that claims that life is a passage and a test, where making mistakes is allowed in view of a later-in-life 'redemption'. This was the way Pervez justified his diverging from the 'right path', which was an important idea in his definition of Islam:

Islam is more about what you've got to do, [it's] to be in that right path.

I tried to understand what the 'right path' meant to Pervez. To explain, he mostly spoke about loving and respecting the family:

I've got to my Five Pillars. I've got to practice, respect my family, my mum, dad. And love people. You must love the people you know family, friends, girlfriends it's for Islam.

Interestingly, he made references to the spiritual benefits of following the right path, which will make the passage to a new life after the ultimate judgement smoother:

When the Day of Judgment comes everyone passes away. It will come to a point where the world's going to end and then that's when you go to the real life, when you face messengers, prophets, Allah himself. That's where the real life is.

The rest of the interview was spent with Pervez trying to reconcile his contradictions and explaining his double standards about what boys and girls are required to do. He considered the hijab and avoiding sexual contact as virtues and markers of modesty highly valued by Islam:

The way it can be, if you want to see each other, it's got to be in the right way. She's got to wear, it's called a hijab, your face is completely covered. Your body is completely covered, it's all blacked out. You can't see your body figure. That's the way it should be. Soon after telling me about the importance of the hijab and covering, he fell into another contradiction: his girlfriend Samira was not wearing it and he explained he did not mind. I was surprised and asked why: he explained that because she was in a Catholic school, she had to fit in with the other girls and so it was not appropriate to wear the headscarf. Pervez was constantly attempting to make sense of his contradictions and reach compromises. In so doing, he was struggling to remain on the 'right path' while being pulled toward shortcuts and deviations by uncontrollable forces and unforeseeable circumstances. There were emotional consequences to this shifting away from the right path, which led Pervez to deal with an underlying sense of guilt.

This departure from the right path also had implications for his actual relationship with Samira. He was well aware that Islam does not allow pre-marital love relationships and sex, which are considered 'haram' or forbidden:

In Islam *haram* means you're doing a big sin and halal means it's right, you're going for the right path.

In Islam you're bound to not have a relationship. That's a sin. If you love the person you tell your mother, in the future I love this girl, I want her in my life and you're not allowed to see the girl, you're not allowed to chat behind your parent's back. You can't see her, kiss her. When the right time comes then you can get married. The proposal works out engagement, the marriage.

The right path and Pervez's path evidently diverged. No matter the effort he put into making sense of his conduct, he knew he could not fully reconcile his relationship with his faith and religious identity. Being in a love relationship was, for him, a quite stressful deviation away from the right path; it was 'wrong and haram' but it was happening and he was trying to deal with it. Out of the right path, he said, there was temptation:

My way it's temptation. There's exceptions. You got into a relationship, it's hard, you fell in love. I know it's wrong but Allah forgives you if you understand your mistake.

So Pervez appeared torn between wanting to do the right thing and not being able to comply with this willingness, as reflected by the way he was telling me his story: he made a general statement about what it is right to do, showed awareness of the rules and then he acted in the exact opposite way. The hope he had for himself, he told me, was 'God's forgiveness'. So, he did not give up aspiring for a better future, although he was not able to say how he thought things would progress with his girlfriend and her family:

It's all a bit up in the air but you know: inshallah. Inshallah means 'in the name of Allah'—hopefully it works out.

Shifting between self-reliance and compelling external circumstances, which affected his relationship with Samira, Pervez provides evidence of how 'bounded agency' works (Evans 2002) in the context of love relationships.

4.2.2 Maria: Secret Life and an Uncertain Future

Maria was a 17-year-old British Pakistani girl. She was a very hardworking student with big ambitions. She had already secured herself a place to study law in a very good university in London, which would have involved leaving home. She was excited about it, but concerned about fitting in with other students. Like Zahra, she liked clothes and fashion, but she had been wearing the hijab for longer than Zahra—almost a year. I was not able to meet her parents who, she said, did not speak English very well and they did not have time to take part in the research, but I understood her family was from a working-class background: both parents were first generation Pakistani, and they were both out of work and had no qualifications. The father had lost his job due to an illness, while the mother, Azra, had never had a proper job, but she was doing occasional work as a sewer to contribute to the family finances. Maria told me that her mother also wore the hijab, but this was not Maria's main reason for wearing it. As I did not have questions about boyfriends and relationships, it was by asking about the hijab and the related photographs that

she started telling me about her 'secret life'. In explaining who the person that influenced her religious identity was, she mentioned her boyfriend, Faouzi, for the first time:

It's been through my mum [that I started wearing the hijab] but mainly through my boyfriend because he is actually quite religious and he is more knowledgeable than my mother, so yeah.

Faouzi was a practising Muslim from an Arab background, who—as Maria explained—knew a lot about Islam. She spoke of him as a very loyal and mature young man:

He is very accepting and he gets along with everybody, so I think just him being himself it is like very easy to get along with him and that is not crippling at all but at the same time like he would like me to move on.

As Chapter 2 suggests, the idea of 'being religious' was ambiguous. While she first said Faouzi was 'quite religious', when I asked her to explain, she changed her mind about the specific term:

I wouldn't really call him religious, but he knows his Islam like very well and he knows the Qur'an by heart. So he is very tune[d] with that and he spends several hours a day teaching other people the Qur'an and teaching them to learn it.

In this second instance, 'being religious' has a negative connotation associated with being highly strict or even radical and extreme.

Chapter 2 highlighted how important the idea of choice was for women who were wearing the hijab. Maria was no exception. She also pointed out that Faouzi did not impose anything on her, but rather provided her with the knowledge to make her own decisions:

For example it was my idea to start wearing the hijab and he is supportive but he won't tell me to do things. He will give me the knowledge and let me do what I want with it basically. Maria explained that things were difficult for her and Faouzi for different reasons:

Well my boyfriend is Arab and so my mother would prefer me to get married to someone who is Pakistani, so that is going to be an issue and yeah hopefully I will be getting married to him, so yeah it is going to be quite an issue.

Although they were still teenagers and they had been together only for about six months, thinking about marriage was unavoidable. Together with preferences for a future husband from the same ethnic and religious backgrounds, another concern of her parents, particularly of her mother, was her young age and education. Maria explained that her mother was putting a lot of pressure on her to do well in her studies and was concerned as she did not want anything to get in the way of Maria's education. So Maria was torn between complying with her mother's wishes, her religious beliefs and her feelings for Faouzi:

Yeah it's very difficult. I think it [Faouzi not being Pakistani] will also cause quite a few more problems yeah.

Have you got a plan? Not quite sure yet yeah.

Inside her heart she thought things could work out for everybody: she was going to go to university and would make her mum proud, but she was confident that she could continue with her relationship until the end of her degree. However, moving to London was another problem: Faouzi was supportive of her studying, but he was not keen on her moving so far away. Rather, he would have preferred somewhere closer to where they both lived:

It's crazy isn't it? Whatever I do there is something wrong.

I asked how the relationship with Faouzi was, what sort of things they had in common and what they were doing together. She never stopped saying, 'he is great', praising him for his goodness, intellect, honesty and

rigorous moral standards. Maria explained that they met 'secretly' after college; sometimes they would just have a coffee or a tea, but in those cases it would be with other friends. To see him on her own, she had to lie to her parents saying she was attending some after-school class or activity. Some other times he would walk her home but, if so, they would not take the main road or, to get some privacy, they would meet at a big car park:

There is a side that is sort of indoor so even if it rains you do not get wet. And it's quiet hardly ever seen anyone there.

Most of their time together was spent talking about their complicated lives, their future and their families. She said that Faouzi was keen on marrying her soon, which was the right thing to do for Islam. 'Families', Faouzi told her, 'will eventually understand'. However, she appeared unconvinced that marriage was the right thing to do at that point in her life. I asked what her fear was and she said she really wanted to go to university and read law, but she was concerned about compromising her future with Faouzi as law is a very long degree: "will he wait?" she wondered. I asked her what she was planning to do and she finally said:

Ask me about something else please, this stuff is depressing isn't it? I'll make your research boring.

Unlike Pervez, Maria appeared more concerned about not crossing that line or deviating from the right path. Her dilemma was how to combine her multiple priorities: love, education, family and religion.

4.2.3 Omar: Girlfriend and Family

Sex and love relationships were potential arenas for intergenerational conflict and we have seen how some young people had to hide from their parents their secret love lives. These secrets came with emotional implications and young people expressed a sense of guilt, and felt the need to develop justifications to make sense of their lives. If, for young people, speaking about love relationships with their parents was unusual, it was not completely out of the question. Omar's relationship with his mother was characterised by high reciprocal openness. Omar was actually very comfortable with speaking to his mother about many different issues, including romantic relationships:

Whatever's going on in my life. [...] Well that's the thing it's just the ability to feel free to speak about any of that stuff like whether it's school, friends, family anything that's on my head anything I'm worried about she's always there.

His mother, Noor, also believed that by enhancing reciprocal trust she was helping her son to become a good future husband, but only 'when the time will come':

[He, Omar] doesn't forget how much love he has been given, so he can give the same to his wife and his family and to treat his wife with love.

Omar had been going out with his girlfriend, Asma, for nine months. She was the same age as him and also studying in a private school. Like Omar, she was about to complete her A Levels and she was also of Pakistani origin. They had both been accepted to universities outside of London, and I asked him if he thought this would involve new challenges for their relationship. Omar was confident that this was not the case and that the relationship would last long beyond their degrees. He said he felt ready for some time apart and that he was not worried. He started talking about Asma after showing me some photographs that he he had taken of her, while they were out celebrating his eighteenth birthday. Omar was from an upper-middle-class and a 'less traditional' family, as he specified, so he had already introduced Asma to his parents, which was an unusual thing as marriage was still far from the picture. However, this did not happen without his parents expressing concerns, which were not simply general parental concerns, but also cultural and religious specific:

Yeah they [his parents] know her [his girlfriend], they've met her and stuff so it's interesting that's the first sort of like girlfriend they have like known. Well, whatever! But yeah it's cool like they've been a lot more relaxed about it than I thought but it's still quite a weird situation with my parents you know you can't really talk about everything and stuff.

Omar explained than his family was 'very modern and liberal', but it was not the same as if they were 'White British':

But I would expect that with any parents of course. But I mean it would be less so if it was a White British parent they'd be much more relaxed and stuff, like there are sort of still, well I'm still Muslim and it's still certain things and you don't want it I don't want to be seen.

If, before, he claimed he could open up about everything with his mother, here Omar changed his mind and brought up limitations arising from being Muslim. I asked him to explain: Islam and South Asian cultures involve specific constraints on the matter of love relationships, which add to other 'more general' concerns that any parent may have about their teenage children's early experiences of romantic love. The hiding and the secrets were required even in his laid-back and open-minded middle-class family. Nonetheless, the family's concerns affected Omar only partially; thanks to his self-belief and positive outlook on life, he was able to manifest agency:

So it's just gonna be part of me that I'm gonna have girlfriends and stuff.

Omar's mother, Noor, did not deal with the news that Omar had a girlfriend on her own, but it became a wider family issue. She, in fact, initially consulted her own mother asking for advice, and then the discussion spread within the extended family:

The whole family gets involved. Omar had a girlfriend and when he told me, "Oh Mamma I like this girl". Immediately I called up my mother and told her "Oh My God he has a girlfriend what do we do?" She said: "Well we'll deal with it." I said, "Good, how serious is it?" And then my brother was called and then my sister was called and we all had a talk and we analysed the situation and we said we'd leave it and let him handle it as long as he's not too involved. We don't mind. Noor described meeting Asma and 'accepting her' 'as long as it was not going to become anything really serious' because marriage was still 'out of question'. Like Maria's mother, Noor was mostly focused on her son's education and future career, as also evident in Chapter 6:

She is came and seen me. I don't have a problem she is a lovely girl and I have left him [seeing her]. I have not asked him how serious it is, "How long is it going to go on for?" Marriage is not even in the issue, I don't even discuss it. He is quite easy with her and I am quite easy and my husband also we don't give it much importance.

Not giving too much importance to the relationship was Noor's strategy for dealing with it, while trusting that Omar will not cross the boundaries that they have passed on to him as parents:

If you give it a lot of importance he'll be into it. But because he says, 'I'm going out with Asma for coffee or going to have dinner or the movies,' we say, 'alright then, fine, no problem.'

Noor believed that the more importance was given to the relationship, the more Omar was likely to take it seriously. By contrast, by being compliant, she felt she could exercise a hidden control on her son's personal life. Once again, love relationships were matters of agency and control.

4.3 Marriage: The 'Criteria' for Selecting a Suitable Partner

Family is a very important social institution for Muslims, providing social, emotional and financial support to its members, and within the family context, marriage acquires a particularly salient and specific role. As detailed earlier, current 'global ideologies of love' support the role of emotions and individual choices as the foundation of marriage (Twamley 2013, 2014). However, in this research, marriage was an area where individuality became quite marginal, and culture and Islam rather dominated the scene.

4 Love Relationships and Marriage: The Role of Agency, Islam...

The Qur'an emphasises the importance of oneness, as embodied by one of the Five Pillars stating that 'God is One'. This idea of unity is also transposed in the context of family and the Qur'an describes the reciprocal and complementary function of marriage as the bond, which unifies husband and wife:

'He it is who created you from one soul, and from it made a spouse with whom he might find solace.' (7:189)

'Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them.' (2:187)

Most parents were referencing these verses and placed a strong emphasis on marriage as a future aspiration that they had for their children. In more formal terms, marriage in Islam—Nikkha—is a contract that joins together two families, determining their honour and reputation. In this context, the involvement of parents in the selection of their children's life partner is considered a duty from both a religious and a social point of view (Gilliat-Ray 2010). This involvement can only work if precise criteria for selecting a suitable partner are clearly set out.

4.3.1 'As Long as He/She Is Muslim'

Most of the mothers and fathers had strong preferences for their children to get married to Muslims inside their own community and, more specifically, within the same ethnic group, and possibly even the same Muslim school of thought (such as Sunni or Shia). Class and status were also very important, particularly for families from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. There were very many criteria to meet when thinking about future spouses, and therefore things could not easily be left to fate. Arranged marriages were a common practice in the families, and most parents (not all) said they met someone who was introduced to them by their own parents or close relations. Even young people appeared somehow prepared for the idea of having an arranged marriage, feeling confident that they would not be forced. In order to find a suitable match, criteria were numerous and quite strict. Amongst them, Islam was always prioritised:

I have no problem. It doesn't matter which background they are from, European, Italian, French, whatever, as long as they accept Islam then I have no problem. (Osman, Hamid's father)

Parents expressed some levels of flexibility about the precise background of the children's future spouses: for instance, none of the parents spoke about dishonouring their children if they married someone from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, even though there were strong expectations that non-Muslim spouses converted to Islam.

The Qur'an lays out strict rules about interfaith marriage and sets out that Muslims should only marry other Muslims:

And do not marry the polytheistic ['Mushrik'] women unless they come to believe. A female slave, who is a believer, is better than a polytheistic ['Mushrik'] woman, even if winning your admiration. Do not give [your women] in marriage to polytheistic ['Mushrik'] [men] unless they believe; and a male slave who is a believer is better than a polytheistic ['Mushrik'] man even if winning your admiration. These people will, lead you to the Fire, but God leads to the Garden and forgiveness, by His leave. (2: 221)

Flexibility is mostly granted to Muslim men who are allowed to marry Jewish and Christian women, referred as the 'People of the Book'. For men, their spouse's conversion to Islam is often expected even though it is not compulsory:

Licit to you are chaste women from amongst the believers and chaste women from amongst the People given the Book before you. (5:5)

Much stronger restrictions tend to be placed on women, who are forbidden to marry non-Muslim men unless they convert to Islam:

Nor marry your girls to unbelievers until they believe. A man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever... (2:221)

In line with the Qur'an, respondents spoke about the different rules for men or women who wanted to marry a non-Muslim:

It doesn't have to be from my community, but he has to be a Muslim, because in that religion a man can marry a woman, but a woman can't marry a non-Muslim. (Ifrah, Zahra's Mother)

These stronger restrictions on women come from the belief that the intergenerational transmission of Islam happens via the father. Hence, for the girls, the conversion of their future spouse was the essential condition to pass on Islam to their children. Findings from the interviews comply with the norms of the Qur'an and most of the young people and parents considered the conversion to Islam to be the condition for marrying non-Muslims, as Shahid, the father of Haroon and Tania, suggests:

Yes and generally if you marry outside then the next stage if you like of that is that the person should convert to Islam and then the children will be brought up in an Islamic tradition and so on.

Quranic norms and parental wishes produced, especially amongst the girls, a general sense that choices about marriage were restricted. However, amongst all different criteria for the selection of a partner, Islam was the least challenged. Sarah accepted that she could only marry a Muslim, there was a sense that there were no other options for her:

'What about you, would you marry someone who is not Muslim?

No I don't think I would. They'd probably have to be Muslim, I just wouldn't do it, I don't know, I just wouldn't dare. Because obviously then I'd start thinking of my whole family, forget Mum and Dad, like everyone else in the world, it just wouldn't be right.

What about if he converts (to Islam)?

Yeah then I would consider it, but I don't know if my mum, I don't know. Then if he's a Muslim I think my mum would think about it, it's going to be hard though.

Although it was more important for girls, boys also perceived conversion as the condition for having an inter-faith marriage. The importance of conversion was shared by most of the young people and by parents, as they all perceived that Islam was the foundation of marriage and family:

Yes. If I'm Muslim and my wife is not Muslim then we're never going to agree most of the time. It does affect what you believe in. [...] If she's White and Muslim I'll marry her. Muslim is the biggest factor. (Saleem)

Nonetheless, there were some variations in the description of potential future partners. Sarah's father, Riyaz, hoped that his daughter would marry a 'good Muslim', not just 'a Muslim':

[...] Because the impact of marriage with different cultures can become difficult, there are difficulties, but it doesn't mean it's impossible and as a Muslim I would say to them: "It's very important that you marry a good Muslim". Because a good Muslim will hold onto the values of Islam and will not ill-treat the young lady. Because that's how Islam teaches you: not to hurt. I mean for me to put my hands on my wife would be unacceptable, totally unacceptable, but a person who doesn't have those values, you know. You see so many young ladies, English women, girls married they get beaten black and blue. That's totally un-Islamic, you know, Islam teaches you to be kind to your wife.

Interestingly, here Riyaz challenges the association of Islam with women's oppression, which links with concerns emerging from other participants about defying misrepresentations of Islam. The words of Riyaz echoed other parents who, amongst other criteria, spoke about the importance of their children marrying a 'good person', 'someone caring', 'generous', 'kind', and 'understanding'. However, these virtues were never mentioned in isolation from Islam, which was assumed to incorporate them all.

4.3.2 'As Long as He/She Is Muslim?': Ethnicity, Culture and Other Criteria

Marriage was also the specific context in which ethnic differences were perceived to be particularly important by parents from both low or higher socio-economic backgrounds, and where the differences amongst the three South Asian groups became more prominent. Discussions about the three South Asian cultures involved the search for differences and commonalities. The general feeling was that Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians share very similar values, lifestyles, practices, (including cuisine, which was mentioned many times) and, most importantly, they are all tied together by Islam:

Pakistan and Indian people are the same, they eat and sleep the same way. The tradition and culture is the same. It's only that they're two different countries. In India there are a lot of Muslims. India's top doctors and actors are Muslims. (Saleem)

Here, Saleem, who was British Pakistani, brought together the two countries-India and Pakistan-but also assumed some distinctions by religion, with his claim that Muslims were the most successful group in India. References to the history of the countries were both unifying and separating. In many instances, conversations about culture became discussions about rivalry amongst the three South Asian countries, involving history, the economy, politics and cricket. Sakina's father, from a Bangladeshi ethnic background, pointed out that, 'Pakistanis were really horrible to Bangladeshis' after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and therefore, 'Bangladeshis before used to hate Pakistanis'. Pakistanis were associated with being more traditional than Bangladeshis and Indians, which I understood, for some respondents, meant 'more religious'. Therefore, Pakistanis were described as 'more covered', as they did not wear saris but mostly the salwar kameez. Pakistani culture was depicted (by non-Pakistanis) as 'harder', as less flexible, compared with Bangladeshi culture, which Sakina's father defined as 'soft' and made of 'kind people that can live society easily'. However, references to these distinctions were balanced with an emphasis on commonalities; for example, Hania's father, Kabir, focused on the shared historical roots of the three countries:

Asian and Indian, Pakistani and Bengali, we all look the same and our background if we go back to history we used to be one nation. Probably we are three separate nations now but if go to like Ghandi's days, if we go past those days we used to be one. So we separated from one country to three countries, so sometimes when English people say "you are a Paki" or "you are a Pakistani" you have got to accept that because we are from. I mean I was born Pakistani, I was born when my country was Pakistan and now my country is independent and it is called Bangladesh, so I could say to myself "I am a Pakistani because I was born in 1962 and we got independent in 1970". So like eight/nine years old when I was Pakistani.

The multiple distinctions about nationality, culture, history and ethnicity were all relevant in the context of marriage, often making the practice of arranged marriages a requirement. Statistical evidence suggests that South Asian Muslims have preferences for intra-ethnic marriages and so the majority of them marry within their own ethnic-religious communities (Gilliat-Ray 2010). Davar's father, Raj, from quite a low socioeconomic background, warned about the negative consequences, such as communication difficulties and cultural distance, attached to marrying outside the Bengali community:

Yeah so many things like one of my cousin's daughter got married to a Muslim but he's from the Syria somewhere. You know I don't know see I mean nobody goes in their flat in the house anymore. Because of that you know, your daughters gone and married to a different culture because they don't know our culture, we don't know their culture you know [...] it's difficult.

Similarly, Omar's father, Hassan, of Pakistani origin, reiterated the risks attached to marriage outside of the ethnic and religious community, particularly the difficulties in the social sphere:

No, even if it is outside the religion the acceptance is there but obviously there are other social aspects to it. You know the first thing that comes to mind is language, sitting together we start rattling in our own language and there is somebody like yourself sitting in the middle and she can't understand a word and so that becomes a problem.

Amongst the set of 'criteria' that were important to parents in thinking about their children's future spouse, the distinction between different Muslim schools of thought, such as Sunni or Shia, was generally less relevant but still valued particularly by some of the parents. Hassan, from the Sunni group, spoke about the downside of marriage within different Muslim groups leading to young people having 'mixed views':

It's because of the children, whether the children be Sunni or Shia and that is where the problem happens because generally if the mother is Shia she will influence the children, if the father is Shia yes he can influence, but he will try to influence it because of the family. At the end of the day, I think it is to avoid that particular thing of the children having a mixed view about thing. That is why it is avoided not because it is something wrong.

The belonging of the future partner to the same Muslim school of thought (such as Sunni or Shia) was possibly more important to parents from minority Muslim groups, such as the families of Yasmeen and Tania.

Interestingly, all parents, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, valued multiple criteria (religion, ethnicity, etc.) for the selection of their child's future spouse. Professionals were as concerned with finding a suitable partner for their children as other parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In fact, sometimes parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds expressed even stronger preferences for their children to marry Muslims from the same community and from the same (or higher) social class. A divergent voice came from Yasmeen's mother, Lubaba, who was a professional working as an IT manager, and the main earner in the household. In contrast to her husband, Lubaba was quite open about the possible future spouse for her daughter:

As long as he's Muslim. It doesn't even matter if he's not. I'd love her to marry one of our culture, one of our, one from our Mosque, but if it happens to be a different Muslim, or he happens to be something else, then so be it.

In line with Lubaba, there were other parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds who appeared less worried about their children marrying outside the community, 'as long as they are Muslims'. For instance, the families of Noreen and Asif, from working-class backgrounds,² were

² Noreen's father had a low-skilled job as a labourer and Asif's father worked in a restaurant and had a second job as a taxi driver.

relatively open about their children's future marriages. Noreen's father and Asif's mother both stated that they would support their children in marrying whomever they preferred—again, 'as long as they are Muslims'. Amina was from a family where both of her parents were unemployed and not fluent in English. Yet her mother posed no conditions on who the daughters should marry, giving priority just to her children's happiness. Not all families from lower socio-economic backgrounds shared these ideas, but it was interesting to see that being from a lower social class was not as significant in defining more or less traditional attitudes to marriage as I had initially expected.

When I asked young people about whether they valued these multiple distinctions made by ethnicity or culture, I felt that overall they were a lot less interested and much more critical compared to their parents. Ethnicity and culture were at times causes of frustration for them. However, even young people saw Islam as an indispensable condition for identifying the right and suitable spouse in the future. These findings point to a more marginal role of 'love'—as it is understood today in the Western world—for marriage.

4.3.3 Hania: 'Just Because You Love Him?' Love and the selection of a suitable partner

Hania was 18 years old and from a working-class family. Her dad, Kabir, was self-employed and, as previously stated, her mum, Rehana, had never worked and could not speak English very well. On more than one occasion during the interview, Hania praised both her parents for being open-minded and more flexible than the 'average' South Asian parent. For instance, they were both highly supportive of her going to university and having a career. Nonetheless, this openness did not seem to apply to the issue of marriage:

No even my mum and dad they are different and when those other people, my family, have got married they have supported them and so then I flag up the question "If I was to marry someone outside of our culture?" and they were like "No I don't think so!!!"

These concerns led her to finish a relationship and she was still struggling to come to terms with the breaking up:

My previous partner, he wasn't Bengali and [even if] we got on so well I knew this wasn't going to go anywhere simply because he is not Bengali and it is awful that, it really is. I have got family in my family who have married Chinese and Jamaican or Pakistani and the things that they had to go through to be able to let that happen you just think it's not worth the risk.

Hania was worried about the future, as she was aware that when the time will come, she was expected to marry a 'Bengali'. Her view was that Bangladeshis are 'brought up too typical minded', and from other South Asians who she perceived as more cultured:

It is quite upsetting because it's not like I don't get on with Bengali, it's just that I am quite different from the typical Bengali family. I think it is going to be quite difficult to find someone on the same level as me and that being the reason why I would rather marry someone who is Pakistani or Indian, rather than them be Bengali because they are brought up too typical minded.

For her, Islam was the only thing that mattered in regard to marriage, but she knew that her parents did not feel the same and expected her to marry not just a Muslim but a 'Bengali Muslim':

[...] If he is Muslim, he has got good values and attitudes, he has got the same attitudes and values as me and my family. Forget what the colour of his skin is, or what country he is born in or what country his parents were born in, you know that doesn't matter anymore. Slowly people are warming to that idea, but I just think my parents would never warm to that. No I don't think ever and I just think that because they feel so strongly about it there is no point in even challenging it because it will just cause more hurt and upset.

If freedom and choice emerged strongly in the women's accounts about the hijab, in the matter of marriage the sense of agency got lost. It appeared that Hania was resigned to the idea of marrying a Bengali and was giving up the hope that her parents would accept someone different. Her father, Kabir, fully confirmed Hania's concerns:

[...] Now secondly [after religion] it's the culture, there might be a lot of issues in culture that you might accept something and you might not accept something. I might accept something and I might not accept something. So it's the differences there, and we as parents, we think, let me choose your life partner and the way we look at that is more or less everything the same, background, same beliefs.

Kabir expressed a sense of entitlement to choose his daughter's partner in line with religious and cultural norms. Still, he contemplated her possible rejection and accounted for Hania to be free to say yes or no, as arranged marriages—as many pointed out in the interviews—are intrinsically different from forced marriages. Kabir clearly thought that amongst the criteria for the selection of a suitable partner, love in the terms described earlier in the chapter—did not have much of a place:

Yeah, well you still have a choice to say no or say yes to it. But like I say if my son or my daughter picked somebody outside who is not my religion I am not going to accept that and she or he wants to go ahead with it my point is "Why just because you like her or because you love him? Okay how much do you love each other?"

Through the issue of marriage, Hania and her father, Kabir, reflected on wider intergenerational differences about the importance of ethnic and South Asian cultural identities.

4.4 Love and Arranged Marriages

Kabir's being against his daughter marrying someone 'just because of love' challenges current understanding of love (as choice and individuality) and it also involves a different view of marriage. Several respondents spelt out the distinction between arranged and forced marriage. If sympathy

for forced marriages was non-existent, most parents were supportive of arranged marriages:

You can just advise them, at the end of the day they have to do it. Arranged marriages and forced marriages are two different things. I think arranged marriages are good. The definition of arranged marriage is a mediator knows both parties and he mediates and says these are the qualities of your daughter, these are the qualities of the son and they both will match each other. Arranged marriage is not, right you have to come and marry this guy, that's forced marriage, that is wrong, but arranged marriages are good. (Qabil, Yasmeen's Father)

Parents felt not only entitled because of their life experience and knowledge, but also capable of making a better choice in selecting their children's partners. In doing so, they could rely on their 'rationality', but, most importantly, they felt able to 'act for the children's own good'. So, knowing their children and wanting the best for them were among the rationales given for arranging marriages. Moreover, the parents' involvement in the selection of partners was seen as a guarantee of longer-term and more stable relationships. By contrast, love marriages were considered to be unsteady and short-lasting, the result of temporary infatuations that disappear quickly, as Umara, Zahida's mother, sums up:

It's young people falling in love and getting married. Then you realise that's not it. Life is not that easy. You fall in and out of love and then you have a broken marriage. I don't think everyone should have an arranged marriage, but it should be in moderation. When parents look for a boy or girl each parent knows their children. If a girl or boy is attracted you can't see anything else. You're not logical but parents will always see what's good.

While also contesting current 'ideologies of love' (Twanley, 2013), these words really incorporate the parents' shared sense of what marriage meant. Young people were perceived as being unable to discern the challenges and compromises that a long-lasting marriage involves, and thus parental intervention and 'guidance' were justified. Young people's agency in these matters appeared to be highly reduced.

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The requirement for parents' approval and their role in the selection of the partner was something many young people wanted to tell me about. Nilufer, but also boys like Wajid and Omar, found it difficult to adapt to possible parental 'suggestions', sometimes still perceived as a form of imposition:

I would want to basically be my decision. I mean fair enough parents are a big part of marriage, but they shouldn't be able to decide for you because you're the one who is spending the life with that person not them. So the only way you will know if you can live with that person is if you get to know them, go out with them or do whatever. (Wajid)

Here Wajid negotiated the acknowledgment that parents are 'a big part of marriage' with his individual agency. Saleem instead drew on Islam as the basis to enforce his agency against the possible claims of parents:

I will have influence from my parents, but I will still have my choice. I will always say this is not Islamic. I will always have Islam on my side. (Saleem)

Maria, who had a Muslim Arab boyfriend, expressed resignation and was willing to conform:

So what do you have to do to be able to stay with your non-Pakistani Muslim boyfriend?

I guess I will fight for it but at the end of the day if my family says "no you can't marry him" then that would be the final decision, yeah.

Arranged marriages marked the family's involvement in the private, intimate and emotional lives of young people. Sometimes, this involvement was for young people a form of interference, which they struggled to reconcile with the belief in their agency and attempts to control their lives. Wajid, Saleem and Maria suggested that agency had become the driving narrative within the context of arranged marriages: how did young people justify compliance with their family, while attempting to hold onto their agency? Lastly, they were left with the difficult task of having to negotiate what their parents wanted with their own wishes, which meant ideally finding someone 'they loved' but who met the family's expectations and multiple requirements, as Omar suggests:

I think for me the most important thing is someone who I really enjoy myself with or who I really really love so it would be more to do with that, but in the same way it has to be someone who my family accepts as well so for me it's not just one or the other. I have to find that sort of equilibrium or balance between it.

Although intergenerational differences were evident on the issue of arranged marriages, they were not as strong as in other research. Twanley (2014) suggested that second generation British Gujarati Indians were rejecting this practice quite strongly, whilst this study shows a more nuanced picture where criticism and compliance co-existed.

If young people finally resigned themselves to the idea of having an arranged marriage, forced marriages were, for all participants, out of the question. Mariam spoke about her own experience of going to Bangladesh and seeing young girls of her age getting married under family pressures without their consent:

I feel so sorry for them [girls in Bangladesh] I just think that when they hit 16 or 14 they are just getting married off and they treat you like crap. I think it is proper sexist, a proper male-dominated country. It's really cliché or whatever because the woman is a prime minister, but their women get treated like they are crap. [...] If you go past Sylhet like my mum's half-brother's daughter, who has just turned 18, they are looking for a groom for her. I don't agree in arranged marriages no more because I just think it is pathetic [...]. I just saw her and she is my age and if my parents ever thought of getting me married at this age: "No way on God's earth!!" [...] Obviously in Britain a lot of Asian girls are restricted still, but if you look we should be happy that we were born here, that's what I think.

Mariam's point was shared by other girls who used the issue of forced marriages in South Asian countries to speak about their freedom and opportunities in the UK.

4.4.1 The Bengali Boys: Gender, Relationships and Marriage

Issues about gender were also intertwined with discourses about love relationships and marriage. It was interesting to see how the Bengali boys, with lifestyles that challenged an Islamic way of life, had quite strong conservative and gendered views about marriage and also relationships. We saw that Davar, one of the Bengali boys from Inner London, lived a very 'un-Islamic' social life, which involved clubbing, drinking, and at times taking drugs and dating girls. He explained that he mostly went out with non-Muslim girls and that he preferred them to Muslim girls at this particular stage of his life: he saw non-Muslim girls as good for casual relationships, while he saw Muslim girls as better for a future serious long-term commitment. When thinking about marriage, Davar told me he would rather go for a Muslim girl. If not, he would require her to convert:

I've been out with girls that aren't Muslim, but obviously if it came to marriage I'd have to go for Muslim girls. If not, I have to get her converted and again in Islam [...] In Islam it's not allowed.

Muslim girls were seen as having higher moral standards, symbolised by the hijab and the 'modest outlook'. No matter what he was doing in his social life—the partying, the dating, the drinking, the drugs or his trendy clothing—the standards he used to judge the moral conduct of girls were a lot stricter. Davar explained that the woman he will one day marry would have to wear the hijab:

To be a proper, fully practising Muslim you have to wear that [hijab]. But in this culture and area most girls don't bother with it. If I have to marry a girl like that [who dos not wear the hijab], and if I was my parents, I would ask her to wear a headscarf, [..]. In my culture people see me and they'd say: "Look who he got married to, look at the kind of girl he got married to".

Although, he was willing to ignore his father's concerns about the community's reaction to his Mohican haircut, Davar was very much preoccupied with the judgments made about his potential future spouse if she did not wear the hijab.

Davar was not alone in applying double standards to the moral lives of boys and girls. Interestingly, some of his friends, who otherwise tended to diverge from certain religious and cultural practices, used the issue of the hijab to reinforce their masculine identities. Pervez also made claims about the girls' requirement to cover their head and be modest as a required form of respect:

What about girls wearing the hijab, what do you think?

I totally agree with my religion. They have to wear a scarf. [...] They should. At the young age they should wear a scarf. (Pervez)

I was initially surprised that the influence of cultural patriarchal norms was so evident amongst this specific group of boys who were more rebellious, unconventional, agitated and troubled by religious norms. Possibly because of the complex negotiations between religion, family values, peer pressure, the community and the wider non-Muslim British society, they were unable to value something that is so important in Islam: balance and moderation.

4.5 Marriage as Continuing to Belong

The idea that marriage is a way to preserve religion and culture within the family and the next generation provides more context to the strong support for interfaith and inter-ethnic marriages:

That's the way we look at it because our children, because our children we brought them up in Islamic ways and our cultures, we taught them our culture. So we believe if they get married to somebody that is similar or same you know same lifestyle or beliefs it will be easier for both of them. Whereas if my daughter is Muslim and she is getting married with a Christian, then the argument starts there because she is going to say "Do you want to change to Muslim?" or he is going to say "Do you want to change to Christian?" so the dispute is from the day one isn't it? (Kabir, Hania's father) As we just saw, the sense of sharing that is derived from marrying a Muslim, and the fear that religious differences might undermine the relationship, were important reasons behind the emphasis on intra-faith marriages:

[...] The same religion, because then the values have already been taught, you know, the values of having a certain way of life and that's the way of life it should be, not more, not less, there's only just the one path and you do that together. (Riyaz, Sarah's and Farooq's father)

4.5.1 Tania and Haroon's Parents: Marriage and the Continuity of Religion and Culture

Haroon and Tania's family, one of the wealthiest in the study, summed up a number of points, which were relevant in the context of marriage as an important aspiration that parents held for their children. The continuity of tradition and the different perception between mothers and fathers about the requirements of possible spouses were negotiated within the family context (Franceschelli 2013).

Haroon and Tania were 15 and 18 years old, respectively. Their family lived in a predominately White and quite affluent area in the South Coast of England. Their mother, Nazima, was a self-employed legal adviser and the main earner in the family, while her husband, Shahid, had a job as an administrator. They both belong to the same minority Muslim group and both of them were first generation migrants: Shahid was born in India but grew up in Uganda, whilst Nazima was born and brought up in India. Shahid moved to the UK in the early 1970s because of the events that affected Uganda at the time after the dictator, Idi Amin, took power, while Nazima arrived in the UK to complete her postgraduate studies after graduating from a private university in India. Their migration and pre-migration histories were relevant to the narrative about Nazima and Shahid regarding their own marriage. Interestingly, Nazima explained that they had had a 'love marriage', but they were initially introduced through their transnational extended network of kin:

Anyway, the first six months [in the UK] were depressing and no family, but I was making gradual friends and other people and after that I felt fine. I met then [Shahid] [...] when you're going to a place, everyone around your extended family is well wishing you and saying "aah by the way I know of a family in London, here's the number". But you never use that do you? It's just in the drawer or somewhere and you think I'm not ringing someone [...]. Anyway, so [...] his [Shahid's] mum said that he should go and call on me and just look on and invite me for the weekend so we get to know each other. So he made contact initially and then invited me to his family and then started inviting me to any of the social dos for the community. So I get to meet people and so on and I think what happened was gradually our friendship grew [...] and I grew close to Shahid and I started then liking him.

She received the approval and support of her family very easily as all the main criteria were met: Nazima and Shahid were both Muslims, both Indians and from the same extended family network and Muslim minority group. In this case, the best possible worlds came together in terms of the arranged and love marriage overlapping. There were still some discordant elements, such as slightly different social classes, but Nazima emphasised how her family, and particularly her father, always proved to be particularly open-minded and unconventional. One example of this was her father's support of her leaving home to study in Bombay and then moving to London:

[...] Before coming to England my mother was obviously wanting me to find a match and get married, so she was trying to get me to see some boys [...] "I'm not interested!" I wasn't interested in getting married. [...] Because I didn't want to get married then, but here when he proposed and I wanted to, I picked up the phone and I said look I've met someone and he's proposed to me and I told my father a bit about his details and I said ask me anything you want. But he said "No, if you've made the decision I'm happy with your decision, you're the one who's going to live with it and whoever it is it's fine by me". I couldn't believe he was saying this. [...] Then I spoke to my mum, my mum had 120 questions! Like what's he doing, what's he earning, where is he living, what's his mother, what's his father, which sect is he, you know. Her personal experience also shaped her view of her children's future and Nazima acknowledged that she would not have problems with their children getting married outside their Muslim group. Ideally, she would have preferred Tania and Haroon to marry a Muslim, but her priority was that they would marry 'a good human being' with the recognition that, even within their group, there was corruption and misbehaviour:

Does your Muslim minority group matter in the context of your children's marriage?

I personally don't think so. I think I would like my children to marry Muslim preferably and I would like them to marry good human beings first [...] Because you've seen lots of people saying you want a [someone from their minority Muslim sect], and when they get married things don't work out and they are not the right people and I know [people from their Muslim sect] who drink and who smoke and who gamble. So to me the first thing is they've got to have a right good human being who's got good values right. And then, of course, I'd like them to be Muslim because then their children can be Muslims and they can practise Islam. The advantage if they are from a [minority Muslim sect], there's an advantage [...] then all the cultural nuances and traditions and so on will mean something to them [...], otherwise it won't mean anything. Now this is my perspective which is completely different from my husband, who will want them to marry a [minority Muslim group] and he says to me you shouldn't say this to children, because you're sowing seeds to them which he wouldn't want.

Nazima anticipated that her husband would have different views. In fact, Shahid was a lot stricter about the criteria for suitable partners for Tania and Haroon:

Well why wouldn't you want them to get married to someone else? [...] Getting married to someone from another religion, well why would you want them to get married to someone from another religion? Why would I not want my children to marry another Muslim? Exactly what's wrong with that? There's no prejudice, that's what I was looking for, there's no prejudice about it. Certainly I don't think that's even a question of prejudice [...]. I want my children to be happy and *I want them to carry on with their traditions, both in terms of the values and traditions that we were*

brought up with, that we have brought them up with, we want them to carry on with that. Why would we want them to do anything different, anything new?

It's not 'prejudice' that drives Shahid, but rather his attempt to support the 'continuity of traditions' via inter-faith and inter-ethnic marriages. Moving to the UK and bringing up his children in such a different environment from where he grew up involved the risk that they would lose their 'roots'. Shahid's concerns were even wider than this. He spoke about how migration and current social changes, such as the Internet and technology, had already enlarged the intergenerational gap between himself and his children. The need for keeping traditions alive was compelling:

[...] World and life and things do move, things change, but sometimes because you've moved away with a certain picture of something [...] you want that picture forever to be, you don't see change, your change is far more gradual. So they use the term to describe that, you are more Indian than the Indians.

It seemed that the parents had passed on to their kids an interest in their culture and Tania and Haroon both loved India. They enjoyed spending time there and had a good relationship with the extended family that they visited frequently. Tania was about to take a gap year after her A Levels and to do some volunteering in Bombay. Both Tania and Haroon did not seem worried about marriage at this point in life, but rather they were confident there would not be any imposition on them:

I'm not forced into an arranged marriage, my parents have told me they'll be happy with whoever I marry and hopefully that will still be the same when it actually comes down to it but I think generally it will. Some of the people in our community and in our family have married White and non-Muslims and it's been fine for them, like I understand it's difficult because it's hard to bring them into the community. (Tania)

There were important elements emerging from this family, which show how the constant negotiation of change and tradition tied parents and children together: Nazima was challenging traditional family roles by being the main earner of the household; Shahid, by contrast, placed a very strong emphasis on continuity with Indian cultural practices, while Tania and Haroon had no concerns, yet, about the implications of their parents' views on their lives and future.

4.6 Conclusion

Marriage and love relationships highlight the importance of negotiating individual agency and the compliance with religious and cultural norms. These negotiations provide new contexts to explore how agency, freedom and choice act as ideals to aim at, rather than as tangible realities. In the context of marriage, agency appears once more as bounded, manifesting its 'interfusion with structural influences' (Evans 2002: 261).

'Love' acquired specific meanings, which suggest evident intergenerational differences: for parents love was less of an emotional and individual matter, but rather it meant long-term mutual support and stable commitment that can only be achieved through the guidance of family in the selection of a suitable partner. Young people were instead shifting between support for their parents' views and ideas of love as involving individuality, emotion and 'natural attraction' (Twamley 2013).

Although the stories of young people were stories of teenagers growing up in Britain and not all of them were specific to their ethnic and religious groups, there was a sense that religious and cultural norms posed some extra challenges. As a consequence, being in love also meant 'haram' (forbidden), and it was about diverging away from 'the right path' of Islam. Ultimately, there was awareness that a suitable partner could not just be someone they loved, but he/she had to meet a number of 'criteria', among which Islam was central. Ideas of love informed ideas of marriage as a family matter with specific functions including the intergenerational continuity of religion and culture, and the maintenance (or advancement) of class and socio-economic status.

Finally, the difficulties of reconciling widely diffused ideas of love relationships with South Asian cultural norms and Islam were another side of the wider combining, diverging and converging described in Chapter 3.

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5

Islamic Capital: Islam, Social Class and Upbringing

5.1 Introduction

My mother and father have tried their best to bring us up in an *Islamic upbringing* and it has only ever benefited us. (Maria, 17-year-old, British Pakistani girl)

More Muslim parents are concerned about *bringing up Islamic children* in this country. [UK] It is a bit difficult but there is more Muslim people here than in the old days and more mosques around here than used to be. (Kabir, Hania's father, British Bangladeshi)

The influence of class on upbringing has been explored in depth by Lareau (2002, 2011) who identified middle-class and working-class types of parenting. Her ethnographic work conducted with families in Philadelphia during the 1990s concluded that middle-class parenting (concerted cultivation) and working-class parenting (natural growth) not only reflected, but also reproduced class differences between families. Here, I will examine what other factors are at play in shaping practices of upbringing and how they intersect with each other in these specific families.

I initially wondered what Maria meant by 'Islamic upbringing' and what Hania's father, Kabir, was referring to with 'bringing up Islamic

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children'. After a number of interviews, I realised that Maria and Kabir's words identified the importance of Islam for upbringing, which was a widely shared view by many research participants. As detailed in Chapter 1, upbringing is the process that seeks to support the social, emotional and identity development of a child through practices aimed at passing on values and beliefs. These practices mostly take place in the social context of the family and involve exchanges of different types of resources (economic but also cultural) as well as power relationships amongst family members (Bourdieu 1990). Cultural capital, which shapes values, beliefs, aspirations and investments in education (Geert 2001) is central in the context of passing on these resources, while the family functions as the social-institutional setting (social field) where the exchanges can take place. For Bourdieu, cultural capital exists in three forms:

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

Importantly, the transmission of embodied, objectified and institutionalised forms of cultural capital inside the family is, for Bourdieu, a major determinant of the intergenerational reproduction of class and status. Bourdieu dedicated two articles, 'On the Family as a Realized Category' (1996) and 'The Family Spirit' (1998), to the discussion of how the notion of family fits with the rest of his theory about habitus, social fields and cultural capital. He defines family as 'a principle of construction' that is both inside or immanent in individuals (as subjective mental category) as well as external and transcendent as a 'subjective social category' (Bourdieu 1996: 21).

Together with the inner-family resources such as cultural capital, there are also other mechanisms that shape intergenerational transmission from outside the family. Modood's (2004) concept of 'ethnic capital' focuses on the role of the community in its interplay with the

family leading to a combination of 'familial and ethnic norms'. The idea of ethnic capital was initially developed to explain the increasing participation in higher education of South Asian groups, as the result of strengthening ethnic ties and common values in relation to education (Shah et al. 2010). In this sense, ethnic capital has the power to compensate for the lack of economic capital and the weakness of cultural capital, which characterise disadvantaged families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, ethnic capital which originates between family and the wider ethnic community involves negotiating both cultural and social capital.

This chapter draws on the ideas of cultural and ethnic capital as part of what parents pass on to their children, and explores whether and how other types of 'capital' and resources are employed during the process of upbringing. It will focus on the use of a specific resource—Islam—which functions both as part of the process and part of the content of intergenerational transmission. This is to say that parents were not only referring to Islam as part of what they were passing on to their children (content), but they also employ religion to pass on (process) values, beliefs and moral standards. The chapter begins with defining the concept of *Islamic capital*' and exploring its multiple uses (Franceschelli 2013; Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014). It will then focus on upbringing in middle-class and working-class families while considering the influence of gender and it will conclude with an analysis of more general practices for bringing up children.

5.2 The Concept and Use of Islamic Capital

Because Islam plays a vital role in discipline and upbringing your child and one's behaviour and making one's character. This is very vital and if I don't know in Islam how one should be as a person to one's self, to one's family, to society, if you don't know how to do it then how are you going to be a good person?

Here, Sakina's mother, Fatiha, highlights different ways in which Islam may be employed for upbringing, such as disciplining the children, but also creating a sense of identity. Through their interaction in the family field, young people apprehend and internalise the family habitus. The habitus brings together the way of life, the beliefs and values of the family, and it establishes priorities and the identity of each family group. *Islamic capital* was an important resource within this process—either conscious or unconscious—of passing on the family habitus. In this specific context, *Islamic capital* is defined as 'a body of convertible resources originating from Islam and used by parents as support for their children's upbringing' (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014: 1194). Hence, in what ways and contexts did parents employ Islamic capital for bringing up their children?

Firstly, as Fatiha points out above, Islamic capital had a major role in the moral sphere, as Islam provided the way to the right path, as the frequent references to 'The Surah Al Fatihah', the opening verses of the Qur'an, suggest. Maria also made a connection between 'Islamic upbringing' and the ability to discern what is right and what is wrong according to Islam:

My mother and father have tried their best to bring us up in an *Islamic upbringing* and it has only ever benefited us.

What does 'Islamic upbringing' mean?

Like just teaching us and showing us what Islam is, what's right and wrong, just the general rules and then just probably going into the background of religion and God and just spreading the message to us to say that "look kids this is the right way". They have never forced us but we have all voluntarily chosen that path because we have seen the rightness in it.

The idea that, through Islam, parents were showing the way without enforcing religious messages is rather a reflection on agency. In Maria's words, following the right path was a matter of choice rather than enforcement. Similarly, Sarah's mother Baseema, from a middle-class background, reflected on the possibility of free will by assuming that religion only provided directions and indicated the way:

Islam is a guideline not to go over the steps, but in life, say, something happened at work it wouldn't be because something Islamic is in it, do you understand? It's something that you've done, what you have done in your life to make that happen, make that situation. Islam is in our way of life, but it's the human, it's you at the end of the day. (Baseema, Sarah and Farooq's mother, British Indian)

Baseema challenged religious determinism by reclaiming individual responsibility. According to this perspective, Islam by itself explains neither individual failures nor successes. However, this was only one aspect of the relationship between Islam and agency, which often involved more deterministic views of life with Islam playing a major role.

Secondly, the role of Islamic capital in the transmission of moral standards, with implications for behaviour and agency, also unveils its potential to strengthen parental control. Control was at times exercised by placing God as the invisible guardian checking on young people's behaviour, as Sakina's father exemplifies:

[...] So that's another thing we tell our children whatever you do it's going to reflect on this life and the next life, but also being aware that even when we're not around you, someone else, God can see you so instilling that in children, we try to do that.

Riyaz, Sarah's father, used Islam to support not only the transmission, but also the children's compliance with stricter norms of behaviour, particularly when compared with British moral standards that were considered to be too loose:

The guidelines are Islamic guidelines that we have. I don't expect them to behave as you'd see the classic English teenage girls do.

Still, Riyaz recognised that employing Islamic capital to control behaviour was not always an easy task. He was aware that his children, who were born and grew up in Britain, had different degrees of attachment to and different levels of understanding of the moral norms he valued as a father:

As a parent I think for us at times it's difficult and at times, you know, the way we explain to them is how we have lived our lives but, of course, my lifestyle 20 years and 30 years ago was completely different to the lifestyle that the kids are living here now. The conditions are different, the environment is different, so the influence of the environment and the

influence of their friends, their peers has an impact as well, but at the end of the day we have tried to show them and instil in them good moral backgrounds. Moral in the sense that we ensure that their behaviour has an impact not for today, but 10 years later.

The words of Riyaz mirror general parental concerns about intergenerational differences. However, they also identify a more specific level of complexity resulting from his children growing up in a very different cultural milieu compared to where his own upbringing took place.

Thirdly, as we will see in the next chapter, several respondents drew a connection between Islam and educational success. Sarah's father explains how, by 'keeping you on the right path', Islam allows young people to focus on their studies and to avoid distractions that could undermine their educational attainment:

[Islam] is a way of life, it's a complete way of life. Islam teaches you to be patient, to be kind to your neighbours, Islam teaches you to be generous, to help the poor, you know, it teaches you about what your all responsibilities are. So, yes it is also connected with education, because of you are Muslim and stay in the right path. It helps you to focus on what you do, like your education or your work. Islam doesn't allow you to go off the rails, "Do you know what I mean?" So you have the chance to focus on what it's more important, like doing well in life with education.

Finally, Islamic capital was also employed to support in-family solidarity by providing a common platform of values and a unifying bond:

It [Islam]'s a way of guidance for me and all my family. We all go together with it, follow it as one. (Hamid, 14-year-old boy, British Indian, London)

Yeah definitely because we all believe in Islam all our family, we quite firmly believe in Islam and we all participate in Ramadan together and everything. It's like religion brings us all together into one. (Maria, 17-yearold girl, British Pakistani)

As it operates in the specific context of intergenerational transmission, Islamic capital differs from cultural, ethnic and also religious capital (Baker and Miles-Watson 2010), even if it relates to all of them.
Bourdieu (1991) has theorised about 'religious capital' as an autonomous social field, which involves the production, reproduction and diffusion of religious goods. However, while Bourdieu used 'religious capital' to explain the formation and maintenance of structural and institutional relations of domination, here the focus is on religion in the context of micro family dynamics (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014).

5.3 Middle-Class Families, Islamic Capital and the Division of Family Roles

In the families of Omar, Tania (and Haroon), Sarah, Yasmeen, Zahida and Hamid, both parents were working full time in professional jobs, including as a consultant, business manager, teacher, researcher, accountant and IT manager.¹ All parents had qualifications, sometimes from South Asian countries, but most often from the UK or both. Most of them had a degree, and a few others had postgraduate qualifications including two with PhDs. Some of the middle-class mothers like Nazima and Lubaba had even better professional roles than their husbands and were the main earners. In the middle-class families, upbringing acquired specific characteristics, drawing on the messages of Islam, but also considering other sources of transmission.

The use of Islamic capital in the middle-class families is a good reflection of the unconscious nature of certain family practices (Becher 2008). In other words, the use of Islamic capital was not always explicit, but rather it took the form of latent guidelines. That points out the unconscious nature of these processes:

[Islam] it does help [to bring up children], because it gives you a guideline of how to go through that situation, how far you can go and how far you shouldn't go. So maybe it is Islam, it's just that we don't realise it, that we're in it, that we don't see it.

All parents acknowledged the importance of Islam in bringing up their children, but the way they employed Islamic capital related to their wider

¹As detailed in Appendix 1.

understanding of the role of religion in life. For middle-class parents, Islamic capital had to be balanced with their emphasis on *'being liberal*':

I think we are quite a *liberal family* the way we have been brought up. My parents never insisted on anything we do, even wear the scarf, I was never told that I must wear it, so we were brought up very liberally even though we read the Qur'an, we read our prayers, we fasted, we did everything. But like I said, it didn't hinder you from doing anything. (Thara)

Moreover, middle-class families had a more individualised approach to religion. This is to say, they had a stronger focus on belief as dimension of religiosity and saw religious practice as something adaptable to their needs and circumstances, as Yasmeen's mother Lubaba suggests:

But not a practising Muslim. I do my own version of Islam for my own peace of mind. My husband doesn't fast. We don't go to mosque all the time. We go whenever work permits or if we can be bothered. But other than that, no.

According to Lubaba, practising religion was her own personal matter, for 'her own peace of mind':

I do pray once in the day and I read a bit of Qur'an in the morning and that's all. [...] But because I don't do it for religion. I do it for peace of mind. I don't do it in the name of Islam, I do it for my own peace of mind. My husband Quabil's ground rules [also to pray] once a day when he goes to work, but we don't do it to say I'm a religious person or I hope you're watching and seeing what I'm doing. Both of us just do it for peace of mind.

This personalised approach also fulfilled a specific purpose, which was to establish the identity of the family as modern and liberal:

It's [my family] more modern than [others], I say modern in a very general sense, but it's a lot more open than the average Muslim household. (Lubaba)

Therefore, Islamic capital and any emphasis on Islam had to come together with other sources of legitimisation for practices of upbringing.

Yasmeen's mother, Lubaba, described her need to integrate religious explanations with other sources of evidence:

I think I'd rather she didn't think it was good [...]. I've never said to her, you can't drink just because you're a Muslim. [...]. But I would say to her you can't drink, because it's not good for you and because it plays, it messes with your mind.

Similarly, her husband Qabil explained how they used their own lives as examples to provide grounds for their moral teachings:

We referred to our acts, as you do she will do it. When we wanted her to go to sleep at 8 o'clock we went to sleep at 8 o'clock to say this is bed time [...] Right everybody is going upstairs, so it's your act that teaches, you don't have to say that this is right and this is wrong you just do it without saying it and she will know it.

In summary, upbringing in families from middle-class backgrounds drew on Islam, but often it did so indirectly, by, for instance, using ideas such as 'the right path' or 'moderation'.

5.3.1 Omar: Islamic Capital and Moderation: 'Never Have Too Much of Anything'

I met Omar one Saturday afternoon at his house, a semi-detached maisonette with a very well-looked-after front garden, where he lived with his parents. We went out for a walk, as he said he needed a break from the preparation for his A Levels. My feeling was that he really needed a break from his father, Hassan, who was sitting in the living room keeping an eye on the revision. While showing me around the neighbourhood, we passed by a pretty Italian delicatessen, a bakery—or 'patisserie', as Omar pointed out—two pretty cafés and one organic shop, which to me appeared to be markers of the affluence of the area. Omar started the interview with telling me about himself and what sort of person he is. Within his self-description he spoke about identity and described himself as a British Pakistani and added 'Muslim'. From there, the conversation moved in multiple directions: school, exams, university, friends, social life, family, values, belonging and more. While speaking about his social life and going out, he introduced me to the importance of 'moderation':

[...] As much as it might be good or fun to do all of those things [such as drinking] *it's only to moderation that you can enjoy them at best.* That's another thing my mum taught me *"always moderation"*. [...] *Moderation, never have too much of anything.* So you always have things, enjoy what you have but don't expect too much of it. If you're enjoying yourself enjoy yourself but [...] you can't always enjoy yourself enjoy the moment. So it's sort of like that sort of have everything in moderation so not too much of anything and not too little of everything.

Global events, from 9/11 to the most recent Charlie Hebdo and November 2015 attacks in Paris, have negatively affected the perception of Islam often associated with violent extremism (Morey and Yaqin (2011); Morgan and Poynting 2012). Nowadays, moderation is unlikely to be the first word Western media—or the general public—will use to describe Islam. Nonetheless, I learnt that moderation is a very important concept in Islam and a recurrent theme in the Qur'an, which emphasises the importance of being moderate and it connects it with following the 'right path':

'O People of the Book, do not be fanatical in your religion except in truth. Do not follow the whims of people who strayed before, and made many stray, and stray once again from the right path'. (5:76)

The idea of moderation was elaborated through the relationship between Omar and his mother, Noor, and it illustrated how religious teachings were internalised and then reproduced by individuals with influences on their values and everyday lives. Noor re-interpreted and explained the importance of moderation as *'the way to Islam'*, which promoted a life that avoids extremes and enhances balance:

Islam is such an easy religion. It is such an easy religion. That's what people make it to be, fanatic. We do not believe in that. Islam in fact says fanaticism is not allowed. You are not to be obsessed with anything. Even love too

much is bad for you. Too much food is bad for you, too much sleep [is bad] everything moderate. And I try to teach my son the same and I try to practise the same, *be moderate*. Not too much either, *not too much of anything*.

For Noor, Islamic capital took the form of moderation, which was employed to attempt to control her son's behaviour. The context where moderation was particularly relevant for both Omar and his mother was the issue of drinking alcohol. Omar showed me photographs of being out with his friends drinking, and while talking about the images, he explored the reasons and rationale behind the religious prohibition of drinking alcohol. He concluded that these limitations are there to set boundaries for self-control.

The Qur'an mainly addresses the issue of alcohol in three separate verses and links it with Satan, sin and the need to avoid intoxication when praying:

Believers, wine and gambling idols and divining arrows are an abhorrence, the work of Satan [...] (5:90)

They ask you about wine and gambling. Say: 'In them both lies grave sin, though some benefit, to mankind. But their sin is more grave than their benefit. (2:219)

Believers, do not come near to prayer when you are drunk until you know what you are saying [...] (4:43)

When applying moderation to the context of alcohol, Omar explained that being moderate signified 'to be able to drink but never get drunk'. By drinking moderately, Omar managed to feel at ease amongst his friends and avoid the feeling of being a 'social outcast' attached to being teetotal. While doing so, he also conformed with his parents who both admitted drinking occasionally but 'only moderately'. Omar's idea of moderation particularly reflected the pattern of transmission emerging from his mother who despised heavy drinking and drunkenness:

So he said I know my limits. I can't stand people who are drunk. I despise people who drink a lot. I'm telling you that is something you will never see in my life and I hold you to it. I said, well, I'm going to hold you to it. Because if I ever see you drunk Omar you will lose all respect for me. [...] when I say my prayers I pray to God that you are allergic to alcohol. He said "That's nasty". For your own good son. [...] I said Omar if you become drunk like all these children who drink and get drunk and throw up and he said "Mum, I detest it too" [...].

Here, Noor seeks to pass on to Omar her repulsion of drunkenness by using different discourses: positioning herself as a role model meant her son would never see her drunk; she wanted the son to fear the threat of disappointing his parents and losing their respect; she even hoped that Omar was allergic to alcohol. However, through allowing for moderation, Noor also sought to emphasise their liberal and open-minded approach to parenthood that she associated with being middle-class:

Because we are educated and open-minded and liberal, we won't just forbid things. We give him a sense of things.

Here, moderation is the means by which Islamic capital is operationalised in the family field to address specific parenting needs, such as passing on the message of drinking alcohol only moderately. Mother and son made different use of the Islamic notion of moderation: Noor used it as a means to instil moral boundaries, whilst Omar employed it to reconcile Islam with the non-Muslim practices of British society and so to justify his drinking.

5.3.2 Family Roles in Middle-Class Families

Middle-class families described the roles of mother and father as 'equally distributed'. In Tania's family, one of the wealthiest in the study, her mother, Nazima, had the highest qualifications and was the main earner. Both parents perceived gender roles as fundamentally equal, as Shahid suggests:

We may be very much an exception or a minority but we pretty much have brought the children up together we're completely equal partnership in everything that we've done. Other than when they were being breastfed, when they were bottled we both did it, when the nappies needed changing we both did it. When they needed to go to nursery, we both did it, we divided if one parent was taking them... [...] We are a partnership because although they speak to her she'll discuss it with me, we will talk about it and so they will still get the same feedback, same guidance, there are very few occasions when we will disagree [...].

Nazima also confirmed this sense of *partnership*, which involved parents being open to the views of the other:

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

Although some of the other middle-class parents aligned with Nazima's ideas of equal roles, this was not always the case. In Yasmeen's family there were some contradictions between the views of husband and wife. The husband, Qabil, spoke about sharing responsibilities equally with his wife:

No we do common things, we don't have like this is your role and this is my role—everything is everybody's. We don't have anything in the house which belongs to me or which belongs to my daughter. [...] That comes in the role as well. If something is wrong we both will say wrong, if something is right we both will say right. Equal role. [His wife] is here, I'm here 100 % role is in my hand, I won't say this role belongs to your mum so wait till your mum comes.

By contrast, the wife Lubaba had different views about their division of parenting roles, and she explained that Qabil had taken a 'back seat' regarding the daughter's upbringing, because of his cultural background and being brought up 'old school'.

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

different society. If you're born here then both parents take an active role. But in his, what he's seen is that mums take the active role. *So he has stepped back*. But he does everything for her. He'll jump through hoops for her. But it's the mum who's the active one.

If partnership was the main discourse used to describe the division of family roles, it was not the only aspect and these middle-class families were also attempting the negotiation of continuity and change from South Asian cultural norms. On one hand, in their attempt to be more 'liberal', these families align with global trends of increasingly equal parenting roles, with growing involvement of fathers in their children's upbringing (O'Brien 2004, 2011; O'Brien et al. 2015; Haour-Knipe 2011). Yet, as we just saw, some of them kept acting 'old school', showing that higherclass positions did not always prevent the compliance of families with more traditional cultural norms about gendered roles.

5.3.3 Zahida's Family: Family Roles, Family Habitus and Upbringing in a Middle-Class Family

Zahida's family, originally from Pakistan, was from a middle-class background and lived in a residential area of London. Zahida was 17 years old at the time of the interview and she had a younger sister of about 13 years old. Their father, Sameer, who had postgraduate qualifications, was often abroad because of his work and their mother, Umara, was also working full-time and complained about the many commitments related to the job. I spoke to Umara for quite a long time before I managed to talk to her husband who was busy travelling at that time. If Umara and Sameer described parenting as 'working together', they set out distinct roles for themselves. Both of them explained that there were differences between their parenting roles. Umara felt she was the one in charge of the emotional wellbeing of her daughters. She was the 'listener' between the two, the one consoling them if they had a problem. She told me her priorities as mother were mainly around the moral sphere:

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

Sameer was mostly concerned with managing the family's finances, in particular he spoke extensively about university tuition fees and the affordability of higher education. He suggested that his role was different from that of his wife and he was purposely withdrawing himself from some aspects of his children's upbringing:

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

His withdrawing was exercised in two different ways. On one hand, Sameer devolved certain aspects of parenting to his wife, as he sums up: 'Well I say to them mamma's in charge'. On the other hand, he also believed that boundaries of behaviour were implied and did not need to be always explicitly discussed, reflecting the unconscious dimension of the family habitus of which Islam was a part. The assumption that his daughters were very much aware of what they could and could not do was the main reason for his 'withdrawing':

They know what pressures I go through. They know everything. 50% of us grew up in the same thing. You know if you wear a mini skirt nobody's going to like it.

As this last passage suggests, for Sameer, intergenerational transmission was perceived not so much as the result of the conscious act of parenting, but rather a spontaneous process of apprehending the family habitus while growing up into that family field. Hence, Zahida and her sister learnt about what was appropriate to wear or what was not, without being explicitly told. I tried to understand from Sameer if Islam had a role in bringing up his daughters:

Yes probably but only if we've done it we've done it subconsciously [...] As a father I have to keep them and have the teachings available to them if they want to read or study them. I have never told them: "Get up, go and pray!" Never once. I have never say do this because it's Islam. But I may have implied you know. It's sort of there.

Sameer also made another interesting point about a key priority for the daughters' upbringing. As a father he wanted to ensure that the daughters were able to understand the boundaries between different cultures:

One would want them to be mentally and culturally balanced. Some people go after a certain thing headlong. They don't think about anything else. Culturally balanced means they keep some of the old culture, they adapt to the new culture. The old culture is something else.

Can you tell me about the old culture?

How you dress, how you handle yourself, how you talk to strangers, how you stay away from certain strangers. You should be special. When you talk to someone you shouldn't be blunt and abrupt. You should be nicer with depth and wisdom.

This need for negotiating South Asian and British cultural norms was a common preoccupation amongst first generation migrant parents with a diasporic sense of belonging.

5.3.4 Hamid's Mother, Thaka: Career and Parenting

Thaka, Hamid's mother, was in her mid-40s. Her parents, originally from India, moved to Kenya and then to the UK when she was still a child. She grew up in London where she studied, to postgraduate level. Thaka was the mother in the study with the highest level of qualifications, with a science-related PhD from one of the Russell Group British Universities. Although she really enjoyed her academic career as researcher, she told me she had to give it up when Hamid was born. She was concerned about job insecurity attached to short-term contracts and the long hours in the lab made difficult for her to spend time with the son. That was not an easy choice though. Thaka explained that she loved that job, she still missed it, and she did not feel the same interest for the current position she held as a part-time secondary school teacher:

I miss the carefree life of research, the going in, doing what you want, you are your boss, going out shopping whenever I wanted to. The challenges,

discovering something new. And the way you constantly pushed to learn and use your brain [...] [In secondary school teaching] You won't believe it, everything is dictated by the bell and our lessons are one hour long so you finish one lesson, next lesson straight away there is no break, it's go, go. Whereas when you are in research it's your own time, I miss that terribly. 12 years later, I still miss it.

When Hamid was born she did not quit her research job immediately but used different types of childcare: mostly informal support from family and eventually also a child-minder. However, these arrangements did not last long: Hamid got ill with an infection and she decided to leave the job to focus on him. I asked her if she had regrets:

No. This is what I had to do. This is what any mother would do. You sacrifice for your children. Work comes after.

After one year out of work she opted for a career change and moved into part-time secondary school teaching, because the timetable was easier to manage with her family responsibilities. After Hamid, she also had another boy, who was ten years old at the time of the interview:

He [the little one] still needs. He needs me full time and I'm here.

The husband, Osman, was a qualified (not fully) accountant working in the public sector. He was not so much into his career—he told me it was a job he needed to provide for the family. He did not hate it, he did not love it, so 'he just did it'. I asked Thaka if at the time when she quit her postdoc, they had considered Osman moving to part-time work to allow her to stay in research:

No that was not an option. We are very modern parents but I could not live with myself if I wasn't there for my child. One of us had to work full time, and it was him. It was something we simply knew and accepted. I had no doubt, no problem. Both Thaka and Osman spoke about partnership and sharing parenting responsibilities:

In our own house it is not very different—we both share the responsibility of the children. We both, maybe I discipline them a bit more sometimes than he does, but the role is, but there is no such thing as only mummy will do something and only daddy will do other things, we both do things. (Osman)

It was interesting to see how Thaka had internalised very specific roles for herself in the family. Nonetheless, her choices are very similar to those of many women becoming mothers and so they cannot be simply attributed to South Asian cultural norms, which prioritise the role of mothers for women. Even some feminist scholars have criticised models of mothers as independent career women who are highly skilled in juggling family and busy working lives as being prescriptive and intrinsically neoliberal (McRobbie 2007). Thaka was very well read, she was from a Sunni background, she knew about the doctrine of Islam and spoke extensively about her choices not just in terms of career, but also about her religiosity, as reflected by her recent decision to wear the hijab. Still, we saw in the previous chapters how the emphasis on choice often relates to an agency that, rather than being a full expression of the individual self, is 'bounded' to multiple external circumstances (Evans 2002).

I tried to get a sense of what Thaka and Osman felt the role of Islam was for upbringing. Osman directly acknowledged the importance of religion for intergenerational transmission:

I think that religion does play a major part in it anyway. You have to let them know many things that you can't and you can do. Religion is a big part of it.

For Thaka, Islam filtered through their behaviours, beliefs and values as parents. Hence, intergenerational transmission was not so much about what is said, but what is done.

The perception of Muslim families most widely diffused is that of gendered segregated roles and women mostly restricted in the home. However, these middle-class parents have showed a changing picture, where parenting roles were increasingly shaped by the family circumstances and employment commitments (Yafai 2010), and less by South Asian cultural norms and gendered parental responsibilities. Still, continuity with South Asian cultural norms kept on informing aspects of upbringing and family members' interactions. Finally, motherhood and fatherhood were mostly perceived as equal, complementary but also different in their nature, with specific roles to play in the children's upbringing and family life.

5.4 Working-Class Families, Islamic Capital and the Division of Family Roles

In the working-class families of Hania, Sakina, Zahra, Asif, Nasreen, Ali, Amina, Davar and Tahir, most parents had no qualifications; fathers were working in semi-skilled or unskilled jobs in restaurants, as taxi drivers or as labourers.² Some of the fathers were unemployed, and all the mothers—apart from Fatiha—did not work. In these families, practices of upbringing were shaped by a stronger attachment to South Asian cultural norms, which particularly informed the perceptions of women's roles in the domestic sphere.

Although the importance of Islam for intergenerational transmission was common across all the families, there were differences in the ways and the extent to which parents adopted Islamic capital. These less educated parents from a lower socio-economic background tended to refer more explicitly to Islam when passing on their values and beliefs to the children as compared to middle-class parents. I asked Asif's mother, Latifa, who was unemployed (while the husband was juggling two jobs to keep the finances going), what her priorities were for her children and how she was planning to pass them on:

Islam tells you [that] you have to care about your children, looking after [them] well, give them good advice, how they have to do their school and religion. The Muslim thing you have to teach them.

²As detailed in Appendix 1.

Latifa was not fluent in English, but she managed to explain how she used Islamic capital to set out her priorities as a mother and to transmit them to the children. So, in her case, as for other working-class mothers and fathers, Islam was a more direct tool used for intergenerational transmission. Raj, Davar's father, also suggested how Islamic capital was employed explicitly under the assumption that the passing on of Islam will allow other moral values and behaviours to trickle down:

The most important thing to bringing up them, the most important thing is actually if you go through Islam and make them understand the Islam properly. If you know Islam if you make them understand properly about Islam then I think they will be more decent kids than anybody else anything else. 'Cos Islam gives you priority, plus it holds you as well from the bad things doing it 'cos if you don't understand Islam properly [you can do bad things].

The idea that Islam could provide the foundation for the moral aspects of upbringing was shared amongst the families from lower socio-economic backgrounds as Jabar, Amina's father sums up:

When you're a Muslim your religion doesn't say do this thing [like smoking or drinking] and do this thing, [those who are doing this] they're not a Muslim.

The process of intergenerational transmission also implies the question of 'who transmits what?' In the working-class families, more than in the middle-class families, Islamic capital contributed to the justification of the division of family roles. Mothers were acclaimed as having a special and specific value, with Islam being the source of legitimisation for these claims as Hania suggests:

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

Wajid also points out, in his critical terms, that Islam could in some instances be mobilised to justify gendered divisions and women's subordination:

So is this idea about the different roles of men and women, is it related to Islam?

Personally I think it is. Because you know if it wasn't for religion they [parents] wouldn't have that thing which you said that women and men having different rules because there would be no rules to follow because of religion.

Is this because of religion then?

It's more different for people who are more religious because people who are more religious they believe that it's more stricter on women than it is. But if you are not as religious you do still care but you don't put emphasis on religion do you? (Wajid, 18-year-old British Pakistani)

However, the use of Islamic capital in working-class families was not a solitary practice but intersected with many other factors.

5.4.1 Sakina's Family: Islamic Capital, South Asian Culture and the Complexity of Gendered Parenting Roles

Sakina's family was from a lower socio-economic background and lived in a predominately Bangladeshi area of Inner London, as described in Chapter 1. Her father, Sakib, moved to the UK as a young man, a lot later than his wife, Fatiha, and he was not fluent in English. Therefore, Fatiha, who grew up in London and had a good level of English, offered to help with the husband's interview and initially acted as an interpreter. I soon realised that this plan was not going to work, as the situation involved power dynamics between the two: Sakib did not appear happy about having the wife speaking 'on his behalf', he kept on correcting and interrupting her until he asked her to leave.

Sakib explained that mothers and fathers have different roles. Children tend to listen more to their mother because they spend more time with her while growing up, whilst the father's role is mostly concerned with providing for the family financially. When I asked Sakina to tell me about her parents, she mirrored her father's ideas and explained how she perceived the father as the main 'breadwinner' who was also in charge of transmitting a strong working ethic to his children:

So then my dad is playing the whole *breadwinner* role, bringing the what do you call it, getting the income and making sure everything's is there for us [...]. What he said was never ever, you know, rest on your laurels, don't ever be lazy, be determined and that's instilled in me the work hard ethic.

Together with the recognition of the father as 'breadwinner', in Sakina's family there was an evident sense of attachment to cultural norms that prioritise motherhood as women's main identity and social role, as Fatiha points out:

Women who have a role to play in society because you are going to be a mother and if you are not a good mother obviously you are going to fail society. If your children are not good, what society you create, we believe that mothers are the foundation of children's education, upbringing, everything and there is a saying "If you teach a woman then you teach the whole nation". Because like I say, the mother is the first teacher for the child and you know like in some communities they understand the value of having a mother who is educated and understands everything.

Still, there was another side to Fatiha. Because she moved to the UK as a child, rather than as a grown woman like many of the other mothers in the study, Fatiha emphasised her British identity and her difference from the 'average Bangladeshi mother'. With this, she meant that she was more empathetic, complicit, understanding and willing to listen to her children and generally 'more modern and open minded', as she phrased it. Sakina complemented what Fatiha said and perceived her mother as a 'best friend'; she spoke about her close relationship with her and reiterated the centrality of mothers according to Islam:

Yeah because my mum obviously she had to grow up really quickly at such a young age obviously when she married my dad and she had my sister straight away as well and the things she has been through in life. [...] The stories she has told me about how hard it was growing up and the things that have happened to her. We are more than best friends than mother, daughter and sisters and it's like we will do everything together at the same time and I just think "wow!"

This type of mother–daughter relationship can be unusual in the context of the Bangladeshi community, where the roles of family members tend to be more hierarchically structured (Becher 2008). Like her mother, Sakina reflects complex negotiations between maintaining cultural continuity and moving away from certain Bangladeshi cultural norms. Hence, she spoke extensively about her academic success and her sense of achievement being shaped by a future career as a doctor, while she also expressed gendered views about women's roles and the primacy of motherhood for a woman's identity.

5.4.2 Different Proxies of Social Class and Effects on Parenting Roles

Sakina's family highlights the importance of the interplay between Islamic capital and gender for the construction of parenting roles. However, the distinction between the perceived duties of mothers and fathers was also influenced by other factors such as the parents' employment circumstances, their knowledge of the English language and their migration histories. Behind all these three factors, there was the influence of the families' socio-economic backgrounds.

As for middle-class families, a common emerging explanation suggests that family roles were the result of employment pathways and the time that parents spent at home. However, unlike the middle-class parents, this explanation involved parenting responsibilities shifting naturally toward the mothers who were unlikely to work. Women's unemployment was a substantial characteristic of the working-class families. Ali's mother, as well as the mother of Asif and Zahra, expressed the desire to work but also showed awareness of barriers, as they were not sure how to look for a job; they felt insecure because of their lack of experience and skills. Asif's mother had started a course in childcare and amongst all of them appeared the most determined. However, as Mariam suggests not all South Asian first generation mothers would share these aspirations:

I am always telling her to get a job and she goes "No way" and I go "The government is going to change the law, forcing you to get a job" and she goes "I won't do it."

The discussion about work between Mariam and her mother reflected differences in intergenerational priorities and opportunities, but also identity:

I think to some extent it [being British] is where you are born [...] but then my mum has been living here for twenty years, but then I wouldn't think she was British, she might have a passport, but I wouldn't say she is British because she hasn't adapted to the values and I have. I mean I am not saying British as in going and drinking and clubbing [...]. I mean there is some people like my mum she has been living here for God knows how long yeah and she won't speak English [...] I think that is really annoying. I mean you have been living here for thirty years, [...] I think she came here when she was eighteen and she is past forty now, she is forty two.

Why do you think she did not learn?

I think it is culture, I think that she classes herself as Bangladeshi you know. While I will be sitting down watching Gordon Brown she will want to watch her Bangladeshi TV [...]. I don't blame her obviously she was born there. Her family is still over there.

Unfortunately, I never had the chance to hear directly from Mariam's mother about her views on work and learning English; I only had access to Mariam depicting her mother as 'Asian cultured' and attached to traditional roles in the domestic field with no real desire for change.³

The difficulties with the English language experienced by Mariam's mother were shared by other working-class mothers and posed challenges to their ability to deal with aspects of her upbringing such as their

³Mariam's parents refused to be interviewed. Mariam explained her father was unwell and her mother was not confident enough.

interactions with schools. Different levels of English language skills also involved problems with internal communication in the family, as Hania's father, Kabir, acknowledged:

In our Asian [families] because our father and mother sometimes there is a big gap understanding each other to start with. In English the wife and husband understand each other, they can communicate alright. But our Asian people I have seen, I wouldn't say everyone, but majority I would say that they have been brought up here, they have got married over there and then brought the wife here and she doesn't know nothing about this country.

Another way of looking at this, is to think about language skills as reshuffling parenting roles toward the parent who spoke the better English and therefore often toward the father, as Kabir pointed out:

So the whole responsibility bringing up the child it goes to father. If a mother grew up here and then she has been taken over there and got married there then the father comes here, the father doesn't know nothing, so mother has got more responsibility.

Finally, parents with poor English language skills also involved the possible reversal of their roles with those of their children, who took adult responsibilities translating or acting on behalf of their parents in different socio-institutional settings (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Ambrosini and Molina 2004). Both Tahir and Davar helped their mothers with the initial part of the interview. In the case of Tahir, I was able to proceed on my own as soon as the mother felt more comfortable; with Davar's mum, I got further help from a neighbour and the son left after the initial part of the interview.

In summary, class emerged as a main determinant of family roles, affecting women's ability to find work, their level of skills and their selfconfidence and so confining them toward more domestic roles. Statistics suggest that things are changing for their daughters, but first generation South Asian mothers are still under the threat of persistent disadvantage and social isolation.

5.4.3 'Strict Upbringing' and Islamic Capital in Working-Class Families

In some of the working-class families, Islamic capital was also employed as a justification behind the practice of 'being strict' and it informed the language of strict upbringing, particularly through the emphasis on 'the right path', setting boundaries of behaviour. Hania's father, Kabir, highlighted how strict guidance was particularly required during young people's transitions to adulthood to ensure that they will stay on the 'right path':

I mean they [children] need the guidance instead of just spend the time with them, just spending time as well as guide them as well. Like you say the teenagers are very difficult and so I thought this is a time where you need to put them in the right way and if they are in the right track then life starts from there. I mean after you are 12 or 11 years old after high school days, you are playing around and messing about but when you were in high school that is when the serious things start. You can go the right way or the bad way and that is where I thought to myself more responsibilities and be with them more than I used to.

Islam informed elements of strict upbringing, but it was not the only factor of influence. Some parents explained that 'being strict' was the response to threats that they perceived were affecting their local areas. Kabir and Ifrah in the North West shared concerns about the increasing numbers of Asian youths being involved in criminal activities:

I am now [concerned] you don't see anymore English kids, you don't see any local kids, White people, but what you see is our own children. (Kabir)

Amina mother's, Selma, was a stay-at-home mum living in a highly deprived area of London. She was not fluent in English and her life revolved around her children, her disabled husband and looking after the home. Selma explained she was aware of crime in her neighbourhood, but she was also unsure about what exactly was happening and how she could protect her family from it. In the interview, Selma came across as particularly vulnerable: 'I'm scared but don't know what to do' she repeated. She worried about her children being out on their own and she was constantly checking on them: she rang them on their mobile after school, she would wait by the doorstep while they were on their way home or she would look through the window until she could see them arriving. Even if these practices appeared to be controlling, I understood that they were more about being preoccupied than being strict. Selma did not like her daughter to stay out late (she meant after 6.00 p.m.), especially if dark; she always wanted to know where the children were:

Yeah I'm scared of, when my children are going on their own that time I'm scared and I don't know what to do.

Similarly, Ali's mother (lone parent family) told me that she felt unsafe outside her own house:

Small boys—14, 10, 12—taking and smoking drugs, not taking the drug but drug dealing. I am so scared.

These references to fear of crime and concerns about safety came from parents who lived in deprived neighbourhoods and suggest that parenting is also a response to the influences coming from the social world, like the local areas. These various concerns are supported by national statistics (ONS 2011a, b; Garner and Bhattacharyya 2011;Trade Union Congress 2006) showing that South Asians still live in the most deprived areas of the country, with higher rates of crime and implications for young people's upbringing (Lewis 2007; Alexander 2000).Young people had mixed views about the constant checking and the control from their parents. Davar explained that he understood his parents' concerns, but he kept on arguing for more freedom:

What sort of people are your parents?

My dad is a very strict person. He does say stuff I don't like him saying to me. Then I think about it, he's doing it for my own good. Stuff like that. *In which way would you say he is strict?*

He does want me to go out but he doesn't want me to stay out too late, get involved with the wrong people.

Do you think this is all right?

I think it's right what he's doing but at this age you want to get out, have your fun because in the near future you won't be able to do that.

Finally, strict upbringing fulfilled two main purposes: it was employed to protect children, by trying to control their behaviours, but it was also a way to keep them safe from threatening local areas.

5.5 Indulgent Upbringing and the Extended Family

Together with class differences in the practice of upbringing, there were also commonalities amongst the families and, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, it was common for parents to combine strict upbringing with more indulgent approaches to parenting. Indulgent upbringing relied strongly on parents' and children's reciprocal understanding, empathy, mutual support and communication. This type of upbringing involves 'responsivity' (Zhou et al. 2002) to the need of the child and also—Hamid suggests—tolerance:

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

The language of love and emotions characterised this type of upbringing. When Islamic capital was employed for indulgent upbringing, it drew on aspects of Islam concerned with the spiritual side of the religious creed and focused on caring for others, doing good and being good to people. Young people made references to this side of Islam and its importance for upbringing as Pervez suggests when speaking about 'love' and what he learnt from his parents:

Everything comes within love. When you've got love in the family that's when everything revolves around you with your brothers, sisters, uncle, aunties. Love. (Pervez)

Indulgent upbringing also involved parental warmth, as the tendency of parents 'to be supportive, affectionate, and sensitive to the child's need, as well as to express approval and direct positive emotions and behaviours toward the child' (Zhou et al. 2002: 895). References to parental warmth were particularly evident in the accounts of some of the mothers. Noor, for instance, described her journey into motherhood to explain her close relationship with her, son Omar. Omar was born quite late in her life, after many years and many failed attempts to conceive. When quite unexpectedly she finally got pregnant, her life and that of her husband took a new turn; their focus and priorities shifted toward their child:

[...] So he has been a part of, literally I could say Omar is my right side. He is connected to me. It's really odd that I tell him sometimes I can feel you. I adore him, it's like when I want to kiss him, I smell you, I can smell you, and I can actually smell his cheeks at this age also. I say "Give me a kiss otherwise I'm going to die! Give me a kiss". It's a great connection with him and I just hope he doesn't forget us when he becomes older. [...].

The strength and depth of the mother-and-son relationship was also mirrored by Omar's words:

Yeah like mum I can tell her absolutely everything so it's it is different like I don't think I can have that same relationship as with anybody else really it's just something sort of I guess a bit special.

However, parental warmth was not an exclusive feature of mothers, as Hania's father, Kabir, suggests when describing his unconditional love for his children:

Me as your parent regardless of what you do to me you are my child and I am always there for you. [...] And these two people in your life [parents] you will need they will never misguide you and they don't want anything in return. All [we] want it is you take all the benefits. So that is the message I tried to get through to my children and every child that I come across and friends and whatever.

Parents who were permissive and indulgent, were also eager to support their children by listening and advising them, as echoed by the interviews with some of the young people:

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

These inclinations to listening and advising were important elements of another aspect of indulgent upbringing: communication. Communication involved parents spending time explaining to their children why boundaries were set, what sort of behaviours they should avoid, and what the consequences of certain choices were:

How do you pass on these messages to your daughter?

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

Are you not concerned if you are too strict they might try and rebel against?

Everything in moderation. You have to be strict but you can't lock them up. They have to understand where to draw a line. You can do everything but you have to know where to stop. You have to teach your children. You have to keep your eyes open. (Umara, Zahida's mother)

Indulgent upbringing also involved a certain amount of guidance. However, in this case, parents were more concerned with instilling the right criteria so that young people could eventually decide for themselves, rather than being pressured into certain decisions. To do so, parents made references to their own biographies and life experiences. Here Yasmeen's mother, Lubaba. explained how, as parents, they always tried to give their daughter evidence and facts to support their teachings, while leaving her free to do and experience things: It's to do with the way we brought her up. [...] We've never said to her, "No you can't do this or you can't go there". I've always allowed her to do what she wanted to do, within reason. She's never asked for anything which has pushed a boundary. She never ever. I've never had to say to her no you can't. We're comfortable with who we are. We're happy in our lives so I think that rubs off on them to a certain extent.

Learning about boundaries of behaviour without being directly told about them is a reference to the unconscious nature of the family habitus as means for upbringing.

Finally, strict and indulgent practices of upbringing were not necessarily exclusive, but parents were at times employing them interchangeably according to circumstances. This is the case of Hania's father Kabir who was shifting between the two:

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

Hania expressed full appreciation for her father's approach to upbringing that she perceived overall as 'democratic' rather than 'authoritative' (Baumarind 1966):

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

For some of the parents, the outcome of being indulgent was the transmission of a sense of morality exemplified by the capacity to discern right and wrong in line with their ways of thinking. Young people seemed to respond positively to indulgent parenting practices, which appeared to increase the attachment to their parents, as Sarah suggests:

Yeah I like to be like mum and dad. I know at the end of the day everything they're doing is right, even when they shout and everything they say I know it's always right. They always have a point to it as well. It's not wrong; they never do something that's wrong, they do everything because they love us [...].

5.5.1 The Extended Family Habitus

As Saleem told me, 'the family is the biggest influence on what you become and do.' This emphasis on family was shared by many respondents, both parents and young people. Amongst the multiple ways in which family was important to them, there was the idea of relying on the extended family for the intergenerational transmission of values and beliefs. In this context, the idea of extended family habitus reflects dispositions that originate from the relationships beyond the direct nuclear sphere of parents and siblings, to incorporate grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and so on.

Some of the parents spoke about family more in terms of a value than an entity, and referred to it as representative of their own background and origins and was therefore relevant for identity (and habitus):

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

Relying on the extended family was a way to provide a protective network for children, an environment for their socialisation, and receive support with decision-making and sources of role models:

Hopefully they won't be exposed to things like that [drinking, smoking, drugs, etc.] because when we do go out and do things as a family, although

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

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

When I say extended families, it's important that my children know that they belong. OK, that they have uncles and aunts, they have cousins that they can relate to, they can go and ask questions to, if they have a problem they can interact with them. [...] It also means that they have somebody else to talk to. [...] If something has happened, go and talk to them, you know, because that's part of being a family and having the unity of a family, so it's very important yeah.

While being strict and permissive are strategies of upbringing that can easily apply to parenting in different ethnic and religious groups, the emphasis on the extended family was a characteristic more specific of the South Asian cultural milieu.

5.6 Islamic Capital as the Content of Intergenerational Transmission: Passing on Islam

There were different ways in which Islamic capital was important, not just as part of the process, but also as the content of intergenerational transmission and therefore as an object of religious socialisation. The survey conducted in schools with young people provides context about the link between religion and intergenerational transmission. Young people were asked whether they thought their parents were religious and about the religious affiliation of their parents. The results show that patterns of religiosity of young people and their parents tended to converge and therefore young people adopted their parents' religion: for instance, 99 % of Muslim young people said their father was from Muslim religious background; 98 % of Hindu young people said their father was also Hindu. (Similarly, the mothers' religion very much mirrors these effects). Most of the young people who described themselves as non-religious had non-religious parents (77 % of them said their father was not religious) and a minority of them (15 %) had parents from Christian religious backgrounds.⁴ Moreover, the religious affiliation of parents also impacted on the strengths of their children's religiosity and young people (Clark et al. 1988): those who described their family as religious also considered religion to be very important in their own lives.⁵

If the survey uncovers the link between the parents' and children's religious affiliation, the interviews provide a deeper insight into Islam as the content of intergenerational transmission as well as the mechanism that parents employed to pass on religion to their children. The study of Muslims in Cardiff by Scourfield et al. (2013) that focused on religious nurture also suggested that parents tend to be less concerned with the theological aspects of the transmission and more focused on the implications of religion for the moral sphere and behaviour. Similarly, I found that the practices set out by The Five Pillars were central to religious socialisation and their transmission to children, which involved a combination of parents 'explaining and doing'. Sakina remembers how she used to pray with her mother, who told her about the value and reasons for covering up:

So like when I was younger the first experience of Islam was just praying with her [her mother], just wearing the scarf and sitting down and

⁴The survey shows that 99 % of Muslim young people said their mother was from a Muslim religious background; 95 % of Christian respondents described their mother as Christian; 96 % of Hindu young people said their mother was Hindu. Also, in the case of the mother's religion, young people who described themselves as non-religious followed a slightly different pattern: 77 % of them said their mother was not religious while 18 % reported their mother as being from a Christian religious background.

⁵The survey shows that 92 % of the young people who described their family as religious also reported that religion was important in their lives. This convergence was not as strong for respondents who described their parents as not religious and more than a third of them (34 %) still felt that religion was somehow important in their lives (while 42 % reported that religion was not important and 24 % said that religion was neither important nor unimportant).

praying with her and how she used to tell me about Islam and beliefs and heaven and hell and things like that. And so you know when you're younger you accept it more, because whatever your parents say to you, you believe it.

In this passage, Sakina also draws attention to the importance of encouraging children to practice Islam from a young age. By enhancing its acquisition during childhood, parents wanted their children to internalise certain practices and beliefs in the hope that they would then continue to comply with them in the long term as adults.

Scourfield et al. (2013), with a sample of working-class families, highlighted how mothers tended to be the one most heavily involved in the teaching of Islam. This research provides a more nuanced picture with parents dealing with religious socialisation interchangeably, depending on the availability of time and knowledge of Islam. In Sakina's family, the mother, Fatiha, was the one primarily in charge of religious teaching. In the passage below she describes how she passed on to the daughter the idea of modesty and the importance of the hijab:

[In Islam] women are supposed to cover themselves after they have gone through puberty so when a girl has seen her period, so they have developed. So I said to my daughter "You know that you have to wear a hijab" and I showed her evidence in the Qur'an and the Prophet's narration where he says what the wisdom is behind covering yourself and she said "Okay mum" and she understood it. [And I explained] she knew why and it was just to protect herself so that no men can gaze at her and to cover her modesty because she knows it is for her husband. She can uncover herself in front of her brother, uncles, grandparents, dad but when we go outside or someone comes to us or strangers to us then she covers up.

Because passing on Islam entailed interpretations and explanations, parents were not immune from the influences of South Asian cultures, their own upbringing and their life experiences. Some young people were well aware of these intersections and were concerned about possible confusion and deriving misunderstandings, as Chapter 2 suggests.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter answers one of the key questions of the research: how do parents pass on values and beliefs to their children? In doing so, it provides important insights into upbringing in South Asian Muslim families in Britain.

Upbringing unfolds from the family habitus, which draws on Islamic capital as a key resource for transmission. Islamic capital was used to transmit moral values and it acted as the underlying rationale of parental control. By informing the language of 'the right path' and 'moderation', Islamic capital was employed to prevent children from getting involved with un-Islamic practices. Moreover, Islamic capital became embedded in more general strategies of upbringing, supporting patterns of parental warmth, while it also served as an active resource in the context of the extended family, providing social networks and alternative spaces for young people's socialisation. Ultimately, these different functions all tend to converge; like cultural and ethnic capital, Islamic capital was mobilised to improve the future life chances of young people. However, the focus of this research on the teenage years does not allow explorations of later-in-life experiences where the outcomes of upbringing are more likely to manifest.

Parents acknowledged the significance of Islam in bringing up children, but the way Islamic capital was employed varied by class, shifting between the working-class' more explicit use and the middle-class' more unconscious practices. These differences suggest that, on the one hand, Islamic capital mediated the effects of class differences on upbringing by providing a common platform and a shared resource for parenting across all the families. On the other hand, its use still indicated classbased distinctive features: similar to Lareau (2002, 2011), the interviews with Muslim parents and young people suggest that class played a determinant role by shaping differences in the resources available to parents, but also in their discourses and approaches to upbringing.

Together with the processes of transmission, this chapter has also explored parenting roles in the families. It shows that the intersection of gender and class-shaped family roles but through different mediating factors such as employment and English language skills. While some of the mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to be confined in domestic roles and more involved with the children upbringing than their husbands, the women in middle-class families described upbringing in terms of partnership. Still, even in this small sample there were outliers, providing insights about different trends and patterns of change, such as the case of Fatiha, from a working-class background, who was working full time and who could speak better English than her husband who needed her as interpreter and mediator.

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6

'Because Education Is Everything': Capacity to Aspire and Inequality

6.1 Introduction

Education is very important. My father always told us, [...]. An earthquake can come. You can lose your house and jewellery. People can steal anything but one thing no one can take away from you is your education. That is one thing I've told my daughters and I would like them to be well educated. (Umara, Pakistani mother)

Most people migrate not because of themselves, but for the future of their children. (Sameer, Pakistani father)

Zahida's parents, Umara and Sameer, reflect widely shared views and feelings amongst the families. During the interview, I asked parents what was most important to them in bringing up their children and I asked young people to reflect on what they thought the parents' priorities were in bringing up children. Education came first for all of the respondents: some spoke about education together with other priorities, but overall all parents and young people made references to the importance of education spontaneously without need for probing or prompting. Is this a surprise? Rather than just a focus on education, the novelty stayed in the

© The Author(s) 2016 M. Franceschelli, *Identity and Upbringing in South Asian Muslim Families*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-53170-4_6 203

intersection of factors underlying the families' educational aspirations, including the migration history of parents, the influences of Islam, South Asian cultures and social class.

The importance of high educational aspirations that were highlighted in the research also relates to a wider debate in Britain¹:

'It's frustrating to hear that some of those low aspirations and tolerance of failure are still around in 2013 and 2014 when they should have been extinguished many years ago.' (David Laws, School Minister)²

In the last decades, different British Governments from Labour (1997–2010) to the Coalition (2010–2015)³ and the most recent Conservative Government (2015) have been increasingly promoting the idea that having high aspirations is a route out of poverty and to social mobility. These ideas come under the assumption that aspirations naturally lead to better educational and employment outcomes. This belief in the power of aspirations is reflected on the use of the catchphrase 'Aspiration Nation', which was employed as the slogan for a strategy to improve outcomes amongst disadvantaged children (Cabinet Office 2011). The narrative about aspirations is also grounded in research findings showing later-in-life benefits for those who are more aspirational at a young age (Rothon et al. 2011).

However, there is a relatively strong counter argument seeking to problematise the aspiration discourse, which is accused of shifting attention away from other ways to tackle inequality (Reay 2013). Those like Reay (2013), who have criticised the renewed emphasis on aspirations, argue that this emphasis is ingrained in the wider neoliberal ideology, which promotes individual responsibilities for both personal successes and failures, thereby downplaying the role of the structure of opportunities and social inequalities.

The definition and interpretation of aspiration are also contested: while some hold the view that aspirations are a state of mind that

¹Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-19890459

²Retrieved from http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/feb/26/schools-minister-pushyparents-uk-low-aspirations

³The British Coalition Government was elected in 2010 and stayed in power until 2015 when the research was conducted led by the Conservative Prime Minster David Cameron. It included two parties: the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats led by Nick Clegg. The Conservatives won the election again in 2015.

motivates and improves life chances, others see aspirations in more economic terms, as evaluations of individual circumstances. In defining aspirations, I was particularly influenced by the work of the Indian anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (2004) who writes about the 'capacity to aspire'. Thinking of aspirations as 'capacity' involves considering them in terms of the potential that they unfold and the possibilities for orienting agency that they provide (Appadurai 2004). Appadurai argues that the capacity to aspire suggests alternative and improved lives in the future and, in so doing, it enhances the possibility to orient agency toward aspired goals. Yet, there is a gap between its potential for orientation and the actual achievements of these imaged and aspired goals. In other words, no tangible outcomes are naturally attached to the capacity to aspire, which is rather situational and, as Appadurai detailed, 'cultural, unevenly distributed and navigational' (Appadurai 2004: 68-71). It is cultural because the aspirations of a 'a good life' may vary across different socio-cultural contexts; it is unevenly distributed because rich and powerful people tend to have the knowledge, cultural and social capital to better navigate the system and achieve aspirations, and in this sense it is also 'navigational' (Appadurai 2004). Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) enlightening work on agency adds a temporal dimension to the boundaries of the capacity to aspire: the past family background and the specific contingencies of the present shape the chances of turning imagined goals and aspirations into achieved outcomes. In summary, imagining the possibilities of a different future does not make things happen, and hard work or individual self-endurance alone are not enough to turn aspirations into tangible achievements. Rather, the achievement of aspired goals is bounded to the structure of opportunities and specific social and historical contexts (Evans 2002).

This chapter explores the mechanisms behind the intergenerational transmission of aspirations in the families and particularly the place that education has in the wider context of upbringing. It presents specific cases illustrating their belief in the importance of education as the means to achieve imagined aspirations. The subsequent sections look at different factors behind the capacity to aspire, and highlight some of the challenges underlying the successful achievement of aspirations.
6.2 Aspirations and Predictors of Success in Life

Aspirations are important elements of upbringing, because of their ability to orient the future agency of young people and to shape the goals toward which parents can focus their parenting efforts. In the survey, young people answered a question about whether they agree or disagree with a number of statements taken from the YPSAS (Park et al. 2003) about their aspirations and ideas of success in life.⁴ They were asked to rate the three most important aspirations for their future and more than half of them (57 %), considered 'being happy' the first most important ambition in life. This was consistent with national representative findings from the YPSAS 2003 (Park et al. 2003: 83-84), which indicated that half of the respondents considered happiness their main ambition. Other important aspirations identified by respondents were having good health (16 %), having a good job (11 %) and being successful at work (7 %). Differences by religious group, ethnicity and gender were not statistically significant for this particular question; this is to say that all young people in the survey shared similar life priorities regardless of their gender, ethnic background and religious affiliation.

Young people were also asked to rate how important a number of factors were in predicting success in adult life. Similar to the YPSAS (Park et al. 2003), almost all the participants recognised that having an education (97 %) and working hard (96 %) were the two essential determinants of success. Also, in this case, there were no significant differences by gender, religion and ethnicity, suggesting that young people's attitudes towards success encompassed religious and cultural differences. This lack of significant differences and the similarity of these findings with national representative trends, point to the importance of age in shaping these attitudes: some argue that optimism is one possible feature of the teenage years and youth more generally (Arnett 2000). However, the focus on the individual being responsible for their success—by education and hard work—also reflects much wider societal discourses shaped by neoliberal

⁴The questions about the predictors of success in life and aspirations were drawn from Q242 and Q247 of the YPSA survey (2003).

ideas about individual self-endurance (Jeffrey and McDowell 2004). I wondered what happiness and success meant to young people and to parents. The interviews provided insights into the intergenerational dynamics behind the construction of aspirations, and therefore also the ideas of success and happiness.

6.3 'Because Education Is Everything': The Moral and Material Benefits of Education and the Related Family Pressures

The capacity to aspire, particularly in the area of education, is an important component of the contemporary ethics of parenting, although parental investment and orientation toward education vary according to social and structural conditions, such as the class context of the family. In total, 9 of the 15 families in the study were from lower socio-economic backgrounds, including two lone-parent families where the father was absent.⁵ Still, the importance of education was widely shared regardless of the family's social class, with emphasis on its multiple benefits in the moral and the material sphere.

6.3.1 Hania: The Wider Benefits of Education

Hania's father, Kabir, had no formal qualifications but his English was very good; he spoke confidently, and his vocabulary was rich. Kabir explained that learning English had been one of his priorities when he first arrived from Bangladesh so he enrolled in college to take language classes. However, his main motivation for studying English had more to do with his role as provider than with his personal development or career:

[...] I wanted to improve my English because I know I need that, you know you need that everyday in this country plus I knew my children

⁵See Appendix 1 Tables A.1 and A.2 for further details on family backgrounds and circumstances.

would be learning English and get to react to that with them especially. So I learned that, I took English classes in the evening in college.

Kabir's experience of education was common to most of the fathers from working-class families. He explained that since taking some English classes at college, he did not have time for more formal learning. He got married when he was quite young and had to take up family responsibilities, which took priority over his education. In order to support his family, Kabir had a number of jobs: he started as a factory worker, then worked in restaurants and, as we saw earlier, he had recently started his own business. While reflecting on his experience as a young man, he explained how education went for him:

Yeah I did try [to enrol on some courses] but it didn't go along with my job. I did try to do a couple of things you know get [...] a qualification. I never wanted a degree, but some kind of a qualification would have been alright, but I didn't manage to get that because I was too busy working. Because I was married at a very young age and I had the family responsibilities and needed to work, needed to bring the money home as well and then you can't be in full time education as well as working, so that was a bit hard for me to get any sort of degree [or qualifications].

Hania complemented her father's words, and she drew upon the life history of Kabir to express her sense of gratitude:

Because as long as you have got the dedication you can do anything and my dad told me that and because he couldn't really go to university and get a degree or anything, because he had my mum and my sister and from such a young age, and because he was living on his own over here, he did struggle a lot and he made a lot of sacrifices. I feel like it is my duty to make sure that he feels like they were all worth it because of me obviously getting my degree and that.

Kabir's experience of education reflects clear intergenerational differences common to most parents, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, who valued education for their children a lot more than they valued it for themselves. Hence, Kabir's own experience of growing up and becoming an adult was contrasted with the expectations he had for his children, and while, during his own upbringing, education had been relatively marginal, his parenting had a strong focus on education. Kabir's wife, Rehana, highlights these intergenerational differences even further. Rehana could not speak English well. I remember meeting her briefly; she made me a cup of tea and offered me some food, but our level of communication was very basic. She understood my questions but could not express herself in English and so we did not go through the full interview. The main point she made in our short conversation was her priority for Hania to continue education and do well in life. By contrast, education did not have much of a place in Rehana's past and present life; she had no qualifications, and when I asked if she wanted to improve her English she appeared uncertain. On one hand, she would have liked to learn, but on the other, she acknowledged that she could get by without it. 'Getting by' was the phrase that Kabir used to translate what Rehana told me in Bengali. To me these words incorporated well how some of the parents seemed to view their own future: the only hope they had for themselves was 'to get by' and the focus instead was all on the children. So although Rehana was relatively content with her life at home, she wanted Hania to go to university and have a career.

Hania, Kabir and Rehana demonstrated the multiple ways in which education was important in both moral and material terms. Kabir initially highlighted the importance of education for the moral sphere by associating being educated with being respectful, having good manners and 'being a better person':

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

Still, the benefits of education did not end with the moral sphere, and Kabir also spoke about the material contributions marked by economic advancement, symbolised by 'a good car' or 'a nice house':

Hania she wants to become a midwife and she knows what she needs to do, just carry on studying what she is doing and then she will achieve that. And when she achieves that eventually she knows she is going to have a better

life and she will have a good family, she will drive a good car, she will have a nice house and even she can support me if she wants to but if she doesn't achieve anything like that then she doesn't know herself what she is going to do. So education is vital and important for anybody, for any religion.

This emphasis on the moral and material gains of education reoccurred in many interviews and pointed toward the belief in education as the main route to social mobility. Although this belief was solid amongst all the families, the reality of Britain and other countries in the West is rather disappointing, as evidence suggests the potential of education for social mobility is decreasing sharply, with prospects of 'education with no jobs' on the rise (Allen and Ainley 2010; Putnam 2015).

However, family support for education could not be taken for granted. Hania explains that her story was not yet the norm, and in her community some of the girls were still struggling to get an education. Her anger was directed toward those who believe in limiting the girls' opportunities simply because 'they are girls':

My dad supported me a lot. Oh definitely you wouldn't get the normal dads especially being Bengali as well. A lot of people have criticised him for being supportive and say "How come you let your daughter go to college?" and my dad is like "Why not?" and they will be like "You know Asian girls don't go to college" and my dad is like "Since when? She has an equal opportunity like her brothers to go out there and be something that she wants to be". [...]

How do you feel when people say that Asian girls shouldn't go to College? I tell you what it makes my blood boil.

Although in Hania's words, Kabir supported gender equality in education, and so girls and boys having equal chances to study, he was not fully free from concerns that can be considered to be gender-related. Kabir in fact sent both Hania and her younger brother to Islamic secondary schools against their will. According to him, Islamic schools provide better learning environments where distractions are limited by avoiding gender mixing, and by relying on Islamic capital to strengthen the levels of discipline:

Why? Because my first daughter (Hania's older sister) was in high school and I put her up there and she was mixed up with different people like

girls, boys in one class, and especially you are a teenager, and you probably know what I mean you know when you are a teenager and you see something you enjoy it and, you seem to ignore education. I am not saying everybody is doing that, but there is more chance of doing that.

Ultimately, the fear of gender mixing appeared to be the central concern of Kabir:

I am not particularly bothered about religion I mean that is one of and as well as you are learning two things in one school, but whereas in state school in this country [...] boys and girls are mixed up together. [...] Whereas in Muslim Girls School it is more strict and it's only focused on education.

Neither Hania nor her younger brother (as she claimed on his behalf) wanted to go to Muslim schools, but they just 'got on with it'. The narrative about Hania's education suggests particular views of gender where aspirations were supported for both boys and girls, but also specific gender identities and mixing in school were contested because they were perceived as threatening. For Kabir, support for education came together with a direct involvement in the educational lives of his children. This was not a unique case, and even if all parents were supportive of their children's education, some wanted to have more of a say on their educational choices, as the cases below suggest.

6.3.2 Tania: Educational Prospects Between Choices and 'Enforced' Guidance

The belief that 'education is everything', providing secure material and moral benefits, was also a source of pressure that parents put on their children. Tania, who was from an upper-middle-class family, initially said that she wanted to study biomedical sciences, but eventually applied for physiotherapy. I asked why she changed her mind:

I wanted to do some healthcare, that field/area. And my parents want me to do a professional degree so not something like biomedical sciences, which was also an option I quite wanted to do that. But because of the whole job situation, they were just a bit worried about me getting a job afterwards. And so I settled on physiotherapy, which I like an interesting degree and it's about helping people and it's got biology aspects in it. So it incorporates what I enjoy and stuff and they want me to do a professional one so it helps with that.

Here Tania makes sense of how she finally compromised between her personal interest and the suggestions of her parents. The rationale to justify her choice was simple and drew on assessing advantages and disadvantages to then make conclusions accordingly. There was no sense that she was giving up her dream, but rather she sounded content with accommodating her parents' preferences.

Shahid, Tania's father, explained that as parents they had a duty to offer guidance. Interestingly, his definition of guidance was 'providing options'. However, in practice his guidance involved leading on his daughter's educational choices. Although he was reluctant to fully acknowledge this, he admitted 'maybe we made them a little bit dependent':

Well you can do this, so we discussed the options, that's our *guidance role*, to give them the path [...]. So it isn't that children aren't capable of, but we feel it's our duty to do the very best and the very best that we can do is give *guidance* by giving options that if you do this like these are the options, "What do you think?" So we're laying out things for her and I'm sure she's perfectly capable of doing that if we weren't there. [...] Maybe, maybe we've made them a little bit dependent, because we haven't given them the independence that they would otherwise have [...].

Shahid explains that guidelines were not imposed or enforced, but rather it was left to Tania to decide and assess the implications:

So we start to show her the implications [of doing more academic less vocational course such as biomedical science] [...]. Well things don't just happen, you know, you have to make them happen. So we made her thought about the process that occurs [...] it took a long time for her to come round to the fact that, in fact, "yeah OK maybe vocational is what I want to do. Because I want to be able to start work and then I don't want to be dependent on working for someone else, I want to have the opportunity of working myself in the profession that I'm in".

From outlining options, Shahid moved to 'showing the implications' of choosing a certain degree for Tania's future career. He argued that his preferences for more vocational degrees were actually the best for their daughter, as they could open the option of self-employment. Although the feeling was that Shahid had more than a say on the issue of the degree, Tania made sense of her decision as the best possible option, bringing together her own aspirations for something 'healthcare related' with the father's preference for something vocational. She was in fact rejecting the idea of being pushed or pressured and she sounded confident that her parents would have ultimately supported her toward whatever choice she made or career she followed:

What about if you wanted to go for a drama school or something like that? I don't but I think they would be fine with that, if there was something that I really wanted to do, they might be a bit worried because they're worried about jobs. [...] but if I really wanted to do, something like that and they said no I would do it anyway.

'I would do it anyway' is how Tania maintained her sense of agency while negotiating the influences coming from her parents. Below, Mariam, from a lower-class background, was more explicitly subjected to restricted choices about her educational future.

6.3.3 Mariam: 'Keeping Close to Home'

If most parents strongly supported their children in education, some of them were doing so while imposing conditions and expecting their children to comply. Mariam was a very interesting young girl from the North West who was studying sociology at college. At the time of the interview, she had already applied to a number of universities and received offers from two of them. One was a prestigious Russell Group University, far away from where she lived, the other was local but a former polytechnic, which did not seem to have the same appeal to her.

Mariam sounded at times upset and I was not sure, when she stopped several times during the interview, if she was going to cry or shout. She did neither of those, but just stayed silent for a moment and then started again from where she left off. She said she was struggling to gain more independence and she dreamt of travelling around Europe and moving away from home. In contrast to these dreams of independence, the reality was that she was not even free to choose 'the best university'. Although her family valued the material benefits of education, she was under pressure from her mother to remain close to home:

My mum wants me to be closer to home, I don't know I don't think they even thought we [her and her twin sister] were going to university. I don't think they thought we would make it to sixth form. I think but here we are, but I am not sure I really want to go away to London or Birmingham. [...] Yesterday I went to Manchester [close to where she lives] for something and my mum was worried sick just for going. And so I have applied for [local university] as well just in case and she is worried about me going to somewhere else.

Marian's family field provides the context to understanding better her concerns about future and university and also her identity. Mariam described her mother as 'traditional' and as never having fully settled in the UK; as we saw in Chapter 3, she could not speak any English, and had never worked or had even wanted to work. Growing up for Mariam involved negotiating her own aspirations with the patterns of dependency imposed on her at home. However, she was not willing to just let it go and, to some extent, she kept on challenging aspects of her upbringing:

How do I feel about future? Well there isn't always a happy end right? Hm not sure...

Below, the case of Omar illustrates how his family managed educational aspirations and further reflects on the emotional impact of parental pressures.

6.3.4 Omar: 'Not Getting into Cambridge'

We saw before that Omar's family was from a middle-class background, they lived in a quite affluent area of London and his parents were highly educated, working in professional jobs. Both his mother and father were originally from Pakistan whilst Omar was second generation, born in the UK. Omar's father, Hassan, moved to the UK in the early 1970s to study and once he had completed his degree he worked in banking until quite recently when he became a self-employed consultant. Omar's mother, Noor, also worked full-time running a small business.

Omar was an 18-year-old only child about to finish his A Levels at the time of the interview, and he exemplified well the hopes, expectations and uncertainty of this specific transitional time. Indeed, he spoke extensively about the end of secondary education, going to university and his own hopes and worries about future. Central to the conversation with Omar was his story about his refusal from the University of Cambridge. He started by telling me how he had applied to several prestigious (all Russell Group) universities and that he had received offers from all of them except the best one: the University of Cambridge. Omar was overall very optimistic and was trying to maintain a positive outlook, even in the face of perceived failure:

So when I got the answer and they [Cambridge] said no I felt something like a weight on my heart. I didn't say till the [official] letter. But then I told myself to get on, be strong. Whatever you know? It wasn't meant to be. I felt like in a bad movie with a bad end, just bad man! I wished it was a bad dream and I would wake up and say: "It's ok"!

The refusal from Cambridge became the central issue in the interviews with Omar's family members, as Noor, his mother, summarises:

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

Omar's parents invested a lot of income in a prestigious private school, which involved having to make 'sacrifices', as Noor highlights:

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

The idea of the 'sacrifices' to support Omar's private education was recurrent in Noor's interview and was used to explain what was behind their high expectations. However, Omar was aware that being privately educated meant he was expected to exceed:

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

As a consequence of these high expectations, Omar described a sense of pressure that he felt coming from his father in particular:

Yeah I think my dad's [...] wants me to be perfect, which is quite difficult to live up to and I think maybe that's why my dad's a little bit more impatient. So in that way I've always found it maybe a little bit harder to deal with him, my mum's always been very level headed so. Noor, who was aware that Hassan had not yet fully accepted the rejection from Cambridge, described similar concerns to Omar. However, Omar's reaction was reassuring and he was determined not to let the pressure overtake him, but rather, he attempted to maintain his high self-confidence:

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

As detailed later in this chapter, migration enhances parental focus on education, which becomes one of the main priorities of parents for the children. This was also the case for Omar's family:

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

However in Omar's family, parental expectations were not just the consequence of the family's migration history, but also—as Hassan explained—of the parents' social class, both in Pakistan and in the UK. Back in Pakistan, Omar's parents were from an educated high-middle-class background, and so their emphasis on education was part of passing on values that they learnt within their own family's field.

In searching for a solution for Omar's educational future, his parents were divided between two different options: taking a year off and trying for Cambridge again the next year, or accepting one of the offers from the other universities. The best options for Omar became the object of discussion in his extended family where the pros and cons were carefully assessed:

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

Omar had a quite large extended family network in the UK with whom he had regular contact and which provided different levels of support. Grandparents, cousins, uncles and aunts gathered together and came to the decision that Omar should accept one of the offers he had received. An older cousin who was a successful lawyer, was a determinant of this final decision. As Omar explained:

He's [the cousin] very level headed and he's always been a very modest individual so he's definitely a role model I'd like to be when I was younger I wanted to be a lawyer. He is a lawyer and he's a fantastic lawyer. He was one of the youngest lawyer ever so I mean academically he is brilliant and he's used that and now he's doing really well in his profession as well.

Hassan sums up the importance of the extended family as a key source of parenting support. The extended family provided a space where to debate and make important decisions all together and it also helped with the transmission of aspirations.

With that, we as a family also value family life so basically you know my mother in law lives here very close to us and my sister in law lives with her family five minutes away and we live here and I have a brother in law who has recently got married but he also was living very close. Now there is about 10 or 12 of us literally three to four times a week we will meet [...] at dinner time at my mother in law's house, and collectively we take food from our house [...]. We sit at the table together, and we talk and with the children around and it gives us that thing, rather than us telling children

what to do, it is also coming from their grandmother or their aunt. And usually I felt the same when I was a child that the parents it's like they want to do it specifically against you but it isn't like that [...].

Omar shows two sides to the story about high aspirations and the strong emphasis on education: on the one hand, the expectations of overly ambitious parents can set the children up for failure with related psychoemotional effects, while on the other hand, they push their children to work hard and do their best.

6.4 'Do What We Couldn't Do': The Role of the 'Migration Effect' for Upbringing

Another interesting aspect of the debate about aspirations is the case of migrants, which is particularly relevant for this study. Families from lower socio-economic backgrounds have fewer resources available (lower cultural capital, economic capital and social capital) and they are less likely to be involved with the children's education (Evans 2006; Lareau 2002). Migrants represent a countertendency: even when from a low socio-economic background, they value education as the main route for social mobility, invest in their children's education and pass high aspirations on to them. This is because migrant parents, who strive to overcome the initial disadvantage associated with settling in a new country (Sayad 1999/2004), devote themselves to supporting their children into a full use of the new opportunities (Dale et al. 2002).

Heidi Safia Mirza (2009:13) has defined the 'migrant effect' as 'the degree to which migrants themselves pursue the goal of upward social mobility, particularly for the next generation, by striving for educational achievement'. Others refer to migrants' high aspirations as a '*migrant paradigm*' (Strand 2008: 47). Shifting the focus from the migrant to the process of migration, I will refer to the discourses that connect the difficulties of migration with an emphasis on aspirations, education and social mobility, as the '*migration effect*', which in this study is part of the processes of intergenerational transmission. Wajid's words, 'do what we couldn't do', sum up what the migration effect entails for parenting:

I don't think they [his parents] are as happy as I think they are but my parents have always had that thing of "We have come from Pakistan and you were born here and so you can go to school, college and university and do all them things". Basically "*do what we couldn't do*". I know that's the right thing to do. That is what you would want for your own kid to make sure they have got a future.

Behind the migration effect there is a strong belief in meritocracy. This is the belief in a social system where individuals 'get ahead and earn rewards in proportion to their hard work, effort and abilities' (MacNamee and Miller 2009: 2).

In conducting the interviews, I was very interested in finding out more about what underpins the development of parental aspirations and young people's capacity to aspire. It emerged that the 'migration effect' was a very strong factor: parents projected onto their children the opportunities they themselves had missed out on in life because of the difficulties endured during migration, as well as their hopes for the future that were behind their migration journeys.

Asif's mother, Latifa, from Bangladesh, was looking after the house and the two children and she had never had a job. While speaking about her hopes for the children, she made references to precise professional careers such as medicine or teaching. As suggested later in this chapter, certain aspirations and ideas of success were informed by South Asian cultures:

About your children, what things are important to you in bringing them up?

Study, career. They do something better because we didn't have the opportunity.

What would you like your children to do?

My son wanted to become a doctor. My daughter said she will be a teacher. As long as they do something good.

What do you mean by 'good'?

Good career. Be a doctor, engineer, teacher. I don't want them to be like me, housewife or working in a restaurant.

Latifa's lack of opportunities is where the migration effect comes to play a role in the construction of the capacity to aspire, and in the process of upbringing more generally. The awareness of the parents' missed opportunities because of migration led young people to feel an increasing sense of responsibility to meet parental expectations, as Asif suggests:

So is it going to be difficult for you to decide what to do after school?

I know what I want to do. I want to be a doctor, so those people that can't afford medicine around the world so I can give them that medicine for free

How did think about becoming a doctor? It was my parents' dreams, so I'm just following my parents' dreams. I see. But do you like it? I like it as well. So in the future are you going to university? Yeah! For sure.

Other young people, like Saleem, explained how migration reduced the opportunities of their parents by forcing them into unskilled jobs because of barriers such as poor English skills or lack of qualifications:

When the Muslims from Bangladesh and Pakistan come here, they all started off in factories. My dad studied in Sheffield, but after that he never went to college, he regrets it. He says "Why don't you try and have an easier job than me? Sometimes you don't have money and you think how you're going to feed your kids, why don't you try and get a better job so you don't have to think about the money?" They talk about their experiences and they know all the troubles they went through they don't want their kids to go through. (Saleem)

Hence, the migration effect unfolded the links between young people's high capacity to aspire and their parents' missed opportunities. Amongst the reasons why migration led to these missed opportunities, there is also racism, which marked the experiences of settlement in Britain of many parents: Davar's father, Raj, who moved to the UK as a child during the late 1970s, described living in East London as 'really tough':

Now it's [East London] not racist it's maybe a grudge or whatever, but before [it] was racist. Wherever you go if you found White kids outside and I'm a kid as well at that time they might attack me you know they might say—oh mind my language—"There's a Paki going, let's get him!" You know that's what they say. [...] Well so many times at that time, that's a long time ago [...]

I asked Raj how he reacted when that was happening and he laughed, saying he did not react. Sometimes he replied: 'I am Bengali not Paki, I'm not Pakistani'. Most of the time he 'did not bothered' because he felt that behind these racist statements there was just fear and ignorance that was not worth discussing. When I asked the son, Davar, about racism in his local area, he laughed saying: 'You can maybe [experience racism] if you are not Bengali, we are the majority here'. Davar felt that the close-knit ethnic community where he lived acted as a protective environment and so racism was no longer an issue. These intergenerational differences in the experiences of racism were the results of different historical times and changes in the local community where father and son grew up.

Still, the migration effect was not the only factor behind the capacity to aspire, and therefore the construction of aspirations. Research on the educational and career aspirations of young Muslims points to the negotiation of other factors such as gender, religion and class (Archer 2002). A study about Pakistani boys in Slough and Bradford (Dwyer et al. 2008) illustrates the different ways in which young men mobilised Islam: for those from working-class backgrounds, Islam was a base to support and strengthen aspirations, while for middle-class boys, Islam operated more in the background as a philosophy of life and a cultural identity. Archer (2002) found that careers and educational choices were shaped by a gendered construction of identity: while girls emphasised agency and personal choice, boys perceived girls' choices as parental matters. An exploration of the aspirations of Muslim girls (Basit 1997a, b, 2009) suggests the importance of Islam for granting specific roles: the husbands' duty to provide for the wife, but also the women's entitlement to access education and careers. The case of Zahra below depicts the complexity of how the intersection of religion, cultures, gender, class and migration affect life prospects and aspirations.

6.4.1 Zahra: Migration Effect, Gender and Capacity to Aspire

Zahra's family was from a working-class background and lived in a suburban area of the North West. Neither parent had any qualifications and both were out of work at the time of the interview: the mother, Ifrah, had never worked, while the father, Amir, was taking time off because of an injury sustained at the building site where he used to be employed. Amir was concerned about not being able to work in that sector any longer and was thinking about what else he could do to support his family. Both parents were originally Pakistani, but the father moved to the UK as a child while the mother arrived in England as a young adult when she got married in the late 1980s. They had four children, two boys and two girls, of whom-as they said-they were very proud because of their admirable educational achievements. The oldest daughter was in her third year of studying medicine, one of the sons was a first year dentistry student and the youngest boy had just started at comprehensive school. Zahra was the third child, she was 16 years old and she was studying psychology, biology, sociology, chemistry and maths, and she planned to go into dentistry.

Although both parents had regrets about leaving education early in life with no qualifications, their journeys and experiences of education differed. The father, Amir, spoke about failing at school:

I did study when I left school, but I only went to college for a year. So I've not really, I didn't pursue further education [...] I just fell behind really, you know, not that I got in trouble or anything, just I wasn't really at the level you see, so I stopped and then started working.

The intergenerational aspect is important in his account. Like other fathers from low socio-economic backgrounds, he contrasted his upbringing and experience of growing up with his current parenting as a father:

Of course I would [have liked to study] yeah, I regret, you have your regrets, you know, but like I said, I wouldn't put the blame on my parents

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but I wasn't really guided sort of. But whereas my children they've been guided from early days and I think guidance is the main part you play in life with your children, and obviously you're guided, you're not misguided.

Similar to Amir, his wife, Ifrah, also suggested that her focus on the children's education originated from her own upbringing and, in particular, from the experience of growing up as a girl in rural Pakistan in the 1970s and the 1980s, where the education of girls was not valued:

Like I said, back in that time they used to think girls are not going to do any job or anything. So it's alright they should learn housework and stuff like that, and so that is what I actually did, learn how to cook and stuff like that. Then I decided if I get married and I have children, daughters, I am going to make sure they get a good education.

The specific circumstances of where she grew up meant that there was no space to make any plan about career or education. Like other parents, Ifrah's considered her own personal aspirations to be irrelevant, and she was only preoccupied with the future of her children. In fact, she sounded very surprised when I asked her about herself, what she wanted in her life and if she had ever thought about studying:

Would you have liked to go to university? Get an education

Me? Do you mean me going to university? Oh well, I would do yeah, I would have yeah. Of course but...

What would you have studied if you had the chance?

No never actually thought of it because I knew I was not going to be able to do it where I grew up.

Ifrah was a self-reliant, proactive woman; when she moved to the UK to get married to Asif she learnt to speak English by watching TV with little help from her husband. She wanted to ensure that language barriers were not limiting her interactions with the children, and so any learning was aimed at providing better parenting. Both Amir and Ifrah saw education for their children as the route toward a better life out of the difficulties they had had to experience while growing up. However, there were substantial differences in how they explained why education was so important to them. Amir's emphasis was very much on the 'prosperity' and therefore on the material benefits that come from education:

The message I would put forward to my children is obviously do good in life, don't get yourself involved with bad people and I think education plays another part you see. You know, if you're educated, you graduate, you're going to have a good job at the end of the day. It's for your benefit, you have to decide, so for a better future I think education is a long-term sort of thing, and obviously they will progress in life and they will see *prosperity*.

In order to guide his children toward this life of prosperity, Amir employed Islamic capital. He argued that Islam has a role in guiding his children by setting rigid moral standards and a sense of duty. In so doing, he drew a connection between Islamic capital and educational success:

There is a connection you see, I think there is a connection between Islam and education. Because Islam forbids you from doing a lot of things which are bad, and obviously if Islam is forbidding you from doing bad things, you stay on the *right path* so you can focus on your studying and what it is important. You see and I think staying on the right path you learn differences between good and bad and I think Islam is a guidance for a better life. Yeah, so there is a connection with education there definitely I think there is. [...] To do well in life yeah and stay out of trouble.

If for Amir education was a route to future prosperity, Ifrah saw the benefit of education differently, as a guarantee of her daughters' independent lives as women:

Because education is everything. It is very important. Like I said, I missed out on it and whatever I missed out myself I want my children to have

that and I said to a friend of mine, I don't know about you but for my children, especially my daughters I want them to be driver and I want them to get a good education so they can get a good job. For example, if they get married, God forbid if it doesn't work out, they won't be stuck. They can live their life as normal people, because I've seen it happening in our community. Poor girls they get stuck with children, husband just goes off and if you're not driver and you don't have a job "What can you do?" So I don't want that to happen to my daughters. I mean whatever happens, I believe whatever's been written is going to happen, so you can't change that, but what you can change is get them educated and if they are drivers they can do their own stuff. I think it's very important.

Here, the migration effect, symbolised by her words 'I missed out on it and whatever I missed out myself I want my children to have', intersects with issues regarding gender, shaping Ifrah's hopes that her daughters will become self-reliant and able to support themselves, independently of future husbands.

Zahra was a bright student who highly valued education. Because she always had an interest in science, she initially considered going into medicine like her sister, but finally decided on dentistry as she felt it was 'a more practical approach'. She had already had talks about opening a studio with her brother (also studying dentistry). Zahra's words suggested that she had internalised the migration effect and acknowledged that her mother's missed opportunities in education had motivated her to do well and work hard:

My mum is a big inspiration for me to be honest she has always encouraged us from a young age to work hard for what we want. Because she is unemployed herself because she came here at the age of 19 when she got married to my father, but she was never really given that opportunity to gain an education. It's what she has always wanted and so she has encouraged us from a young age that if we want something then we are going to have to work for it and she's really understanding.

Underlying the hopes of this family, there was a strong belief in meritocracy, highlighted in Zahra's comment: '*If we want something then we are* going to have to work hard'. Without the belief in meritocracy, the migration effect would make no sense.

6.4.2 The Capacity to Aspire Is Cultural: The Role of Ethnic Capital and South Asian Cultures on Aspirations and Ideas of Success

Research exploring the determinants of the migration effect and migrants' high aspirations suggests the importance of aspirations and the 'values inculcated by families and reinforced by communities' (Wilson et al. 2006: 55). Modood's (2004) concept of 'ethnic capital' adds further depth to this idea of a migration effect.

What sort of imagined futures characterised these families? Or, in other words, what was their idea of success in practical terms? The focus of parents and young people was on very specific professional careers and, similarly to Basit (1997a, b), I found evidence that the appreciation for these types of careers was socially structured in the ethnic communities. Law, medicine and pharmacy were regarded as the most 'respectable' occupations, as Hania suggests:

It seems South Asian parents have some preferences (about their children career choices)

Definitely pharmacy, medicine and probably law. [...] When we were very younger like five or six years old he [the father] used to go "medicine, pharmacy, medicine" and I don't really understand why. I think because doctors and pharmacists they are more Asian orientated, and I think that's probably because that is seen as being successful. And you know being a midwife isn't seen as being successful compared to someone qualifying as a doctor or pharmacist. Probably that actually because a lot of my friends in college, especially my tutor group, there is like four Asian lads and they are getting into medicine or pharmacy if not both.

The emphasis on these high-level professional jobs also reflects the importance of the material sphere on the families' capacity to aspire. We saw before that education was perceived as the main route to social mobility, which took the form of an imagined future of increased wealth and respectability, also marked by material objects such as cars and houses. Hania catches the nature of these preferences about careers and describes it as intrinsically 'cultural':

Definitely I think [reputation] that plays a really big part. I mean there is White boys in my class who are doing their typical drama or performing arts. It doesn't have to be boys it can be girls as well and I have never met a White boy who is doing medicine at all. I have seen some doing music or travel and tourism but mainly medicine is done by Asians.

Her emphasis on the influence of South Asian cultural norms on aspirations provides further evidence to Appadurai's (2004) claim that the capacity to aspire is cultural.

Success was also marked by ideas of self-reliance and independence embodied by preferences for self-employment, as Tania's father explained:

She wanted to do some bio-mechanical science, we tried to say well alright this is where our guidance role comes in: "You really want to think about a profession that is vocational, something that will allow you to stand on your own two feet". So if you go and do bio-mechanical science then what's going to happen at the end of it, what are the opportunities?

'Being your own boss' was perceived as more prestigious and respectable because of the independent decision-making that it involved. Quite a few parents were supportive of self-employment: Sakib, who had finally become self-employed, spoke about it in celebrative terms and Shahid encouraged Tania into physiotherapy because of the prospects for 'being her own boss'. Zahida's father, Sameer, seemed unconvinced about his daughter's interest in international relations and wanted her to study law, because of the possibilities for self-employment:

No I don't like it [international relations]. Although I'm sure international relations will have a future, a very good future, you need to be employed. You can't be doing it on your own. Then we went to University of York and she's been on the Internet to the various universities and it seems she has

come around to do her grades better and try for law. She's going to retake some of the exams and is working very hard.

These preferences for self-employment reflect more general trends discussed in Chapter 1, with self-employment being the main factor behind the increasing employment rates of South Asian groups, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

Finally, if specific professional careers were markers of success, examples of routes to success came from role models within the family or extended family. This was the case for Omar, who looked up to his cousin working as a lawyer; or Zahra, who clearly was influenced by the educational choices of her older siblings. Nasreen, whose parents were not educated, was very determined to go into medicine and become a GP; she spoke about her sister, a law graduate, as a major role model:

Yeah and she's [sister] very supportive as well like [...] for my GCSEs she supports me all the way and she goes: "You have to do better than me like!". Even though she's a lawyer, but she wants to push me ahead of her, that's why she's really important.

Nasreen's parents lacked the cultural capital necessary to navigate the complex British educational system, so Nasreen's highly educated older sister had taken over the role.

6.5 Capacity to Aspire and Life Chances: 'It's Not Always a Happy End'

Having high aspirations is only a small part of the 'story of success' and the high aspirations of migrant and ethnic minority parents and children are often difficult to translate into tangible outcomes (Clair et al. 2013). All sorts of obstacles and barriers may get in the way: low economic resources; the precarious employment situations of parents, marked by the degree to which their skills meet the needs of the local economy; and the poor educational provisions that characterise most disadvantaged areas of the

country. In addition, migrant families may have lower levels of cultural and social capital, which means that parents are lacking the knowledge, experience and the networks that help to navigate a complex education system. Moreover, poor English language skills may make communication with schools difficult, making parents unable to support the children with their homework. Racism and Islamophobia also have their own implications when we think about the educational attainment and the future career of young people from ethnic minority and religious minority backgrounds (Halliday 1999). Zine's (2001) study of Muslim girls in a Canadian school is just an example of the educational experiences of young girls exposed to gender stereotyping and Islamophobia. Although most young people showed an underlying sense of optimism about the future, there were some other narratives reflecting concerns and preoccupations.

6.5.1 Zahida's Father, Sameer: The Cost of Education

Together with directions and guidance, which became at times restrictive and pressurising, parents also supported their children's education by providing for them financially. The number of South Asian young people continuing into higher education is increasing, but unlike other groups, most of them tend to study locally and live at home for a combination of cultural and financial reasons.

Zahida was a chatty and witty 17-year-old girl from a middle-class family. She was one of the few (only two) young people in this research who were born in Pakistan and she moved to the UK when she was about 13 years old. We met in a coffee shop so that, as she told me, she would feel 'free to talk'. I soon found out she was very well read and interested in contemporary art. She also knew a lot about music, even British bands from the 1970s and 1980s, which was quite surprising for someone of such a young age who was not even born in the UK. She was doing 'ok' at school, but she said she found it hard and did not excel. Like many people of the same age, Zahida also appeared confused and undecided about her future: she wanted to study 'something creative' and she was also interested in politics and international relations, but she was almost sure she was going to try law. After speaking to Sameer, her aspirations became a lot clearer to me as he provided context and background about in-family discourses on Zahida's future:

No. We had a period of indecision with them. The older one [Zahida] was distracted and thought she might want to make a career in rock music. Eventually I said to her do something you can practice at any age, anywhere. We came to an agreement that law should be something she can do.

Sameer was not eager about international relations, and, as discussed earlier, he had preferences for qualifications, which lead to self-employment. Together with the prospects about his daughter's future, he spoke extensively about finances and the cost of higher education. Sameer was highly qualified and had a professional job, but he and his family had only moved to the UK relatively recently. That meant his daughters had to pay higher fees, as overseas students:

They [the daughters] will still pay the fees for foreign students, between $\pounds 10-14,000$ or now even more. This is per year for just the tuition.

The topic of Zahida's housing during university was also an issue. He was hoping she would stay in London, which he saw as being beneficial financially and also in more practical terms:

I have suggested it [studying in London], to try for somewhere in London because you save so much money on the accommodation and transport. [...] She's going to try. If she goes to say, York, her tuition fee will be about £11,000 then you add on all the other stuff. You're looking at more than £20,000 and if she goes to the City University that's less than £10,000. If she manages to get into Kings College or LSE, okay £14,000 but again not £20,000 of being outside London. I think she's going in the right direction. The thing is, for an all body of reasons you know cultural. I'm not keen with having debts. I will have to but I'm not keen. It keeps me awake in the night.

Sameer was not the only one worried about providing financially for his children's education. In the gendered division of family roles, it appears that paying for education was a main preoccupation of fathers. In the families from working-class backgrounds, this was always the case also because mothers were most often out of work. Asif's father, from a lower socio-economic background, took on two jobs in order to be able to save and then afford to send his son to a good university one day.

Importantly, most interviews were conducted in a very specific socio-economic and political context; it was the time soon after the Coalition Government took power, but before the reforms that increased the University tuition fees and scrapped the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA⁶) (BIS 2011; Dearden et al. 2009) were approved. Explorative research provides evidence that Pakistani and Bangladeshi households are generally less likely to access loans and so more likely to experience financial exclusion, with implications for access to education (JRF 2007; Khalid 2008; Vasagar 2012; Khan 2008).

6.5.2 Tahir: Inequality, Rap and Educational Failure

Not all of the young people in the study had succeeded at school or had families who were able to guide them toward stable and successful educational journeys. The group of young Bengali boys who we saw in Chapter 3 distanced themselves from the career and educational aspirations of their other peers. The Bengali boys showed the strong influence of consumer popular culture (Clay 2003), which shaped their dispositions, including their physical appearance defined by specific clothing and hairstyles as detailed in Chapter 3.

These boys perceived education as the 'old fashioned' route to success, and preferred other shortcuts. Amongst them, 16-year-old Tahir described in particular how he fell out of 'the system' or the mainstream route, and got interested in rap music. He was particularly influenced by his favourite rapper Lil Wayne:

I got into music because in year nine I started a bad path. I started to blaze a lot, do weed, I used to bunk a lot. That's why my education wasn't that

⁶The financial support scheme for students aged 16–19 years from low income households (YPLA 2011).

good. In year ten I was started to bunk a lot, my attendance and grades went down. I was in higher in every subject, English, maths, science. I was in higher. I was doing quite well but because of my attendance I went down to foundation. Somehow in English I stayed in high for that. In year 11 I started to realise, but that was too late. Year 11 is half a year then it's finished so I tried my best. If I could, I would go back and I wouldn't mind being a lawyer. You need very good degrees, grades which I'm not sure I'm going to ever get that.

'I wouldn't mind being a lawyer' reflects Tahir's awareness of his missed opportunities. Hence, to compensate for educational failure, he got involved with rap music:

That's when I started listening to music. I found it easier. Some things I really like and I won't get bored of it. Then I just made my own tracks. That's how it is. I just made music my career. I want to become a rapper [...]. My heart's more into music. I don't see nothing else for me in the future other than music and become a rap artist. I'm really determined. My whole heart's in music. That's it.

For Tahir, dropping out of school did not mean losing the capacity to aspire, but rather he developed specific compensatory mechanisms. He explained that rap music was initially a means to express himself:

My music I can't express myself by talking to people, I express my feelings with music. If I'm in love I'll make a song about love. If I'm sad I'll say everything is bad about my life. I use that music.

From a means of expression, rap had become, for Tahir, the career to which he aspired: as Lil Wayne made it, he would one day made it too. However, Chapter 3 suggests that Lil Wayne is not the role model that parents want their children to follow and admire. He is well known for rapping about drugs and sex and he has been in and out of jail because of drug-related crime. President Barack Obama even mentioned him as an example of lack of ambition: 'Our kids can't all aspire to [...] Lil Wayne. I want them aspiring to be scientists and engineers, doctors and teachers, not just ballers and rappers. I want them aspiring to be a Supreme Court Justice. I want them aspiring to be President of the United States of America'.⁷

Yet, for Tahir the controversial rapper had a very specific appeal. He and his Bengali friends looked up to Lil Wayne as the parable of success that they wished for themselves: someone from a minority, poor and marginalised background who had found a way to break through the glass ceiling and become famous worldwide.

Tahir's family circumstances provide background to his narrative about success. Like Ali, Tahir also lived only with his mum in a council flat. The flat was small, smaller than others I had seen in the area, with suitcases and boxes all piled up on one side of the living room. The wall had some brown marks, as though from a leak, and there were some greenish patches of mold around the windows. The carpet was old and stained and the wallpaper was yellowish and worn out. In contrast to the dull atmosphere of the room, Tahir's mother, Disha, was wearing a colorful salwar kameez, she had lipstick on and looked ready to go out somewhere. She told me quite early in the interview that there was no money to renovate the place, and pointed to the marks on the wall herself while speaking about the numerous repairs that the flat needed. Disha came to the UK from Bangladesh when she was 13 years old, she had no qualifications and had never had a job, but her English was good enough to understand and answer my questions. In the last few years, since her divorce, she had started suffering from a health condition and she was on medication. Unlike Ali's mother who lived a life in isolation. Disha had quite a few friends. She told me that she liked yoga classes and confessed she loved going out to restaurants and trying different foods: she liked Italian food, but she had to add chili sauce to the pizza. She also loved shopping, but none of these interests or activities were something she could afford and remained only aspirational. Disha openly spoke about

⁷Retrieved from the following website

http://www.lilwaynehq.com/2009/07/barack-obama-our-kids-cant-all-aspire-to-be-lil-wayne/

how they were struggling financially as all their family income was based on benefits and what Tahir was earning from part-time work, which was just enough to cover bills and food. They had very little left after paying the monthly expenses, sometimes nothing at all. Disha knew that Tahir had left school, but she thought he had completed the course. She also thought he was working 'a bit', but as she was aware of the situation in the local area and she had also concerns about her son being around the wrong people. I asked her what she would like Tahir to do and she said, "anything that makes him happy". "Any good job, profession also having his own business"—although I really do not think she knew anything about, or was keen on, rap music.

Tahir, like some of his Bengali friends, Davar and Mohammed, had views of success which were even more passionate than those of his other peers in education, but also possibly less realistic. Although he dreamt about unreachable wealth and fame, symbolized by Lil Wayne and rap music, in practice, his efforts toward this success seemed tentative. I asked him if he had written many songs, if he was performing much and if he thought about other jobs that were easier to get. He answered 'no' to all these questions. I was not sure, while I was listening to him, to what extent he really believed he was going to achieve the dream of being a rapper, or whether he was just trying to convince himself and come up with something to say. Surely, passion and dreams are not sufficient to turn the capacity to aspire into tangible achievements, which also highly depend on the social structure and access to opportunities. The capacity of Tahir to aspire and his dream of improbable stardom rather reflects his attempt to overcome marginalised class positions.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the mechanisms and factors that shape the capacity of South Asian Muslim parents and young people to aspire. It found that education was central in this regard. Bourdieu argues that education is a crucial component of cultural capital, which enhances advancement of social status and access to a wider range of resources

negotiated in the different social fields. Education was seen as a source of both material and moral benefits and was perceived as the main route for social mobility. In this context, the increase in tuition fees⁸ and higher student loans may have implications for the educational opportunities of young British Muslims⁹ who are less likely to access financial services for cultural reasons (Collard et al. 2001; Mitton 2008).

This chapter suggests that an emphasis on aspirations had multiple outcomes and, at times, it turned into pressure, limiting choices and even potentially setting young people up for failure. The emphasis on education and high aspirations drew on the migration effect, which acted as the key mechanism of intergenerational transmission of aspirations. With reference to their missed opportunities because of difficulties with settlement, parents sought to inspire their children to do better than they had done.

However, migration did not by itself explain young people's ideas of success and their capacity to aspire, which were highly structured under the influences of culture, class and gender (Guttman and Akerma 2008). The capacity to aspire and ideas of success were informed by culture, which sets out specific career preferences such as for instance for medicine, pharmacy or law. Even when South Asian cultures and the migration effect were pushing for high aspirations placing emphasis on education, they were not enough to mitigate the effects of class inequalities. Tahir and Omar tell two very different stories of coming of age and reflect two different 'capacities' to aspire that remained shaped by social class. Social class explained some very crucial differences in the experiences of growing up for these young people; if the strength and extent of aspirations tended to converge amongst families, their actual resources, determining the possibilities of achieving these imagined goals, differed. Finally, gender also informed the capacity to aspire. Although parents' attention to education was not gendered, and both boys and girls were expected to get high qualifications and move into 'respectable' careers, gender equality

⁸In 2010, the Coalition Government increased the university tuition fees in England and Wales from £3,000 to £9,000.

⁹ In theory, Muslims are not allowed to use financial products that are interest-bearing or interestearning called '*riba*' (Farooq 2009) as it is forbidden by the Hadiths and the Qur'an (Farooq 2009). Therefore, Muslim families may be even more reluctant than others to borrow money because of their cultural and religious heritage.

could not be taken for granted. As Hania highlighted, ideas such as 'Asian girls don't go to college' were still common in her community

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7

Conclusion: Continuity, Change and Intergenerational Difference

7.1 Introduction

The book has presented findings from interviews with South Asian Muslim parents and their teenage children, together with results from a questionnaire conducted in three secondary schools in London and one college in North West England. The aim was to shed light on two related questions: how is it to grow up as a South Asian British Muslim today and what are the experiences of South Asian Muslim parents bringing up their children in Britain? These questions do not exist in a void, but rather they are set in the wider social context that, particularly since 9/11 (and other attacks including the London bombings, Madrid, and the Charlie Hebdo and November 2015 Paris attacks) and the advent of ISIS (Islamic State), has affected the perceptions and identity of Muslims around the world.

What we have seen in this book is that identity and upbringing in South Asian Muslim families are nuanced and ambivalent and both present different challenges and opportunities to parents and young people. Young people's identity is shaped by *combining* closeness and difference—continuity and change—between Islam, South Asian cultures and

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non-Muslim British lifestyles, often by converging or diverging from their parents' ways of thinking and value systems. Upbringing also involved reconciling change and continuity between South Asian cultures, and Islam and British values, as suggested by the parents' attempts to employ 'Islamic capital' to promote the children's educational success and social mobility within British society. The American sociologist Charles Wright Mills (1959) notoriously wrote that the life of an individual and the history of a society cannot be understood separately. Ultimately, both identity and upbringing result from negotiating individual and family dispositions with wider social influences where class, cultures, religion or gender all play a role. In doing so, identity and upbringing provide new ways to link family and individual experiences to history and society.

7.2 Continuity, Change and the Big Questions of Our Time

The stories of parents and young people presented in the book invite us to reflect upon wider societal issues. Globalisation and large-scale international migration are transforming the ethnic composition of Western societies, leading to deep cultural transformations occurring at great speed (Castles 2010). New generations know nothing different, but the others are caught between a sense of nostalgia, the fear of the unknown, feelings of inadequacy, apprehension of increasing competition, but also an interest in the new opportunities and in the benefits of inter-cultural exchanges. In this scenario, the questions addressed by this book about Muslim parents and young people reflect deeper considerations about living together in increasingly diverse societies (Latour 2007). Ultimately, the families show that change from and continuity with South Asian cultural norms have co-existed, as cultures are not monolithic, but rather manifold and supple. We saw how parents changed and adapted to their new lives in England. However, these adaptations were not perceived necessarily in terms of passive assimilation, as loss or abandonment of their ways of life, but rather as negotiations between the past (South Asia) and present (Britain) experiences.
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How did the families negotiate continuity and change from South Asian cultural norms? Gender roles and expectations on women were key markers of whether the families were staying closer to or rather taking distance from their culture of origin. In relation to questions of gender and family roles, we saw that class was a main factor influencing-for instance-the position of women in the family and in the public sphere. Sadia and Disha (the mothers in the lone parent families) inhabited completely different worlds compared to Nazima, Noor or Lubaba in the highermiddle-class families, no matter their shared faith in Islam, religious beliefs or similar cultural norms. So, on one hand, some of the middleclass women gained autonomy and professional recognition (such as Nazima, Lubaba or Noor); on the other hand, some of the women from working-class families remained attached to traditional roles confined to the domestic sphere. Rehana (Hania's mother), Selma (Amina's mother), Yamina (Nasreen's mother) and Ali and Tahir's mothers all seemed to share a similar fate: a life at home with no qualifications, no jobs and poor English language skills. If some of the mothers from working class families, like Selma and Yamina, appeared fulfilled by focusing on their children, others, like Latifa or Ifrah, wished they could do more for themselves and they expressed interest in studying and working, but were unsure about where to start. These findings reflect wider trends suggesting that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women have the highest unemployment rates compared to women from other ethnic groups (CODE 2013a, b, c, d) and are subjected to both structural and individual barriers: low levels of qualifications, low confidence, limited or no work experience, limited networks of contacts, lack of English language skills and issues around affordability of childcare (Tackey et al. 2006), but also-importantly-racialised labour markets. Things have started to be different for the daughters and new generations: we saw that most girls had the support of their families; they had plans to go to university and aspired to professional careers. Yet Hania reminded us that the idea that 'Asian girls don't go to college' was still ingrained in the way of thinking of her community.

The mechanisms of class also worked behind other circumstances, which were important determinants of the families' positioning between change and continuity, such as the English language skills of the parents and their migration histories. Hence, class involved different status and social positioning back in the South Asian countries, but also different levels of qualifications and motivations to leave. We saw that most parents were first generation migrants, and only two of them were born in the UK (although one of those move back to Bangladesh as a child and came back to the UK to get married). Most often, fathers and mothers had different migration histories. The mothers from lower socio-economic backgrounds came to the UK as dependent, leaving rural areas, mostly of Mirpur and Sylhet, with few or no economic and educational resources (Brah 1996; Marsh 2008). As Kabir pointed out in Chapter 5, migration histories and language skills led to internal problems of communication within the families, but also reshuffled parenting roles toward the parent who spoke the better English.

Generally, migration has been associated with changes and transformations that may question traditional gendered division of labour as evident in other contexts. A study of Moroccan families in the Netherlands (Pels 2000) found that migration led to shifting responsibilities from fathers to mothers, even though female power remained not publically recognised. In this sense, Pels (2000) suggests that migration can potentially favour the status of mothers by redistributing family roles and then eventually increasing women's autonomy through employment and education. Indeed, the working-class families in this research were also not monolithic or immune to change. Change just happened at a different pace according to the families' circumstances. Fatiha and Latifa, both mothers from working-class families, spoke much better English than their husbands who needed them as interpreters. Fatiha also had a full time job, while Latifa was confidently dealing with the 'external world' from visits to the bank, making payments, and interacting with schools and GPs because her husband was too busy juggling multiple work commitments. Importantly, we saw the effort that all the women-both mothers and daughters-in this research placed on challenging stereotypical ideas of their perceived subordination, as reflected by the narratives about the hijab and women's asserted emphasis on their choice and freedom. Although the research suggests that individual agency is rather 'bounded' to the social structures where it operates, the emphasis of women on their independent choices is a clear marker of their willingness and commitment to acquire new positions in the family and society.

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However, gender roles was not the only area in which to explore the effects of class, which also impacted on young people's aspirations and actual opportunities. Tahir's dream of becoming a famous rapper and Omar's preoccupations about Cambridge University also reflect their class difference. Although, they were both dealing with a sense of failure, they could rely on very different resources: Omar had other opportunities laid out for him and he had the support of all of his extended family; Tahir, instead, was struggling to get by and to show his mother he could look after himself. The two also exemplify different patterns of change and continuity from the parents' cultural norms: Omar's change was about the potential for socio-economic advancement, while Tahir's change was symbolised by leaving the 'right path' and accommodating different 'un-Islamic' lifestyles with a Muslim identity. In summary, social class determined the availability of resources, access to opportunities and life chances, and defined the capacity of upbringing for accomplishing young people's aspirations. Moreover, class remained a main source of difference amongst the families, and shaped how Islam and South Asian cultures were employed and how ethnic identities and gender relationships were performed in each family group.

Chapters 2 and 3 suggest that the perception of South Asian cultures and ethnic identity varied by both class and gender: young people from middle-class backgrounds were more positively attached to the parents' culture, which gave them a sense of their origins. These young people had better experiences of their time in South Asian countriesthey recounted their holidays back in India, Bangladesh or Pakistan with a mixture of affection and nostalgia. As such, they felt closer to South Asian cultures and their ethnic identities. By contrast, some of the young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, particularly the girls, were less keen on their ethnic identities and more critical of South Asian cultural norms, which they tended to associate with traditional views of gendered roles in the family, women's subordination, or cultural practices such as forced marriages but also intra-ethnic, intra-religious marriages and arranged marriages. More generally, young people felt that South Asian culture and ethnic identities could put pressure upon them by restricting their social lives and love relationships, and, at times, limiting their career options and educational journeys.

Therefore, attached to these cultural practices, there were some emotional implications for young people.

Still, this is not to say all changes were progressive and all continuities were challenging or regressive. Parents suggested that distance from South Asian culture might involve young people losing their bearings. For many, South Asian culture was able to counterbalance the fear of isolation associated with the British way of life by providing a sense of interconnectedness and bonding. Most importantly, the continuity with Islam was strongly reiterated by all. Parents and young people explained that Islam made their lives more meaningful and it provided purpose in the longer term to contrast against unscrupulous hedonism and shortlived satisfaction.

Finally, the experiences of the families in the book show that if different cultures co-exist, the co-existence involves changes at both ends and therefore for both the newcomers and the native majority of the host society. These changes do not necessarily mean loss or passive assimilation and they are not even the ultimate threat to national identity. Rather, these parents and young people were torn between continuity and change in an endless effort to re-invent identity without abandoning roots and tradition.

7.3 Intergenerational Differences

Change and continuity with South Asian cultural norms also influenced intergenerational relationships. Differences in values and beliefs and some levels of 'conflict' (Lim et al. 2008) between parents and their teenage children are relatively common characteristics of intergenerational relationships. These differences and conflicts do not relate specifically to the ethnic or religious backgrounds of the family and are rather age-related, or temporal as a reflection of generations born in different historical times. However, for the families in the research, parental migration and histories of settlement added a further level of complexity to the temporal dimension in the form of a new spatial and 'cultural distance' between parents and young people (Choi et al. 2008). This second level of complexity is the result of parents and children being born and growing up in

different geographical and cultural spaces and it is something specific to migrant communities. Nilufer's words summarise findings about intergenerational differences in the context of aspirations:

I would do things differently, because nowaday's generation has changed from generation back in the days. My family is very traditional you know. *Tell me about what will you do differently*

What can I say? No, she [her mum] was always like even before she was married like back home people can't educate and my mum's from a poor background and yeah she used to do like house jobs and like things round a house, washing, cooking. She's done that all her life I think. And with me I want to educate, get into a good job and carry on working. And I'd allow that for my children too, I wouldn't want them to like stop educating.

Sarah, echoed Nilufer's view and summarises the complexity of intergenerational and relationships when parents and children grow up in different countries:

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

The combination of intergenerational (temporal) and inter-cultural (spatial) differences was one of the characterising elements of South Asian Muslim upbringing.

We saw that there were intergenerational differences in the perception of religion and religious commitment. The research suggests that some (not all) young people had become more knowledgeable about Islam than their parents. While reading the Qur'an in Arabic, they went on to check the English translation and to research the meanings of Quranic verses on line. In this sense, the Internet provides both challenges and opportunities: it is an easily available resource for exploring religious scripts, accessing forums and joining debates, but it also has risks attached because of the lack of guidance, leaving space for further misinterpretations but also potential for grooming and radicalisation. Saleem questioned the older generations' knowledge of Islam and criticised his parents for their constant confusion between South Asian cultures and religion. As we saw in Chapter 2, this was a recurring feeling amongst several young people, who were committed to defending Islam against bad stereotypes rooted, according to them, in misleading cultural norms. Therefore, practices such as women's segregation in the domestic sphere or forced marriages are often mistakenly associated with Islam, whilst young people explained they belong to the realm of South Asian cultures.

The commitment of new generations to purifying Islam from the inherited ethno-cultural elements of first generation migrant parents appeared to be related to the shifting boundaries between ethnic and religious identities, with religion becoming more prominent. This tendency is a well-established pattern in different migrant communities: migration is seen as intensifying the religious commitment of migrants because of the change from being part of a religious majority, to having a religious minority status (Duderija 2007; Rumbaut 2008). Nonetheless, this book provides more nuanced evidence showing how the dynamics between religion and ethnicity also affect young people's sense of a national identity, while pointing at intergenerational differences in meanings and perceptions of identity. For the parents, ethnic identity bridged their current lives with their past, embodying upbringing and memories of growing up. Therefore, parents defined themselves as Pakistani or 'Pakistani British' (or Bangladeshi or Indian) first. As Noor (Omar's mother) summarised, the country of birth is central to explaining intergenerational differences in the perception of both ethnic and national identities:

I am a Pakistani because I was born in Pakistan, so they call me Pakistani even though I have a British Passport. But my son is a complete British because he was born here and only his parents are Pakistani. "Do you understand?" But if I say I'm British, they say "But where were you born?" It always comes to where you were born. So Omar is a true British man and he was born here and he lived here. We were born in Pakistan, so if anybody says "Where do you come from?" I have to say I come from Pakistan [...]. By contrast, young people tended to identify with a British national identity as also confirmed by the results of the survey (Chapter 2). The interviews shed more light on the interplay between national and ethniccultural identifications for young people, as Sakina suggests:

I don't feel myself as completely Bangladeshi, being Bangladeshi is [...] not necessarily me because I was born and brought up here so all the experiences that I had is in a British environment [...].

The 'struggle' with the Bangladeshi (Indian or Pakistani) side of their identity was a common feature amongst some young people. For them, ethnicity had become a less powerful source of identification. As Hania stated in Chapter 2, she saw herself as 'a female Muslim girl and then a Bengali', where being Bengali was 'right at the bottom of the page'. Once again, the criticism of South Asian cultures, associated with gendered and conservative cultural practices, was central to transforming young people's sense of their ethnic identities. To fill the gap left from a declining sense of belonging to parents' culture and ethnicity, some have argued that young people tend move away from geographicalspecific to global transnational identifications, such as religion. This research suggests that young people prioritised Islam in their selfdescriptions, although this was not happening in isolation. The declining attachment to aspects of South Asian cultural and ethnic identities was compensated by young people's growing association with a British Muslim identity.

One question that is often asked is whether young people are more religious than their parents. There are worries connected to this question, particularly if we are speaking about Muslim young people, where closeness to Islam is perceived with anxiety as a marker of radicalisation. This small sample shows high internal variation in the degrees of young people's religiosity: Omar and Zahida, Sarah and Yasmeen had very similar levels of religiosity as their parents. By contrast, the 'diverging' Bengali boys were taking distance from the 'right path of Islam', struggling to reconcile religion with their lifestyle. Saleem, Zhara, Asif, Hania and Sakina were more knowledgeable about religion than their parents. It was mostly for this last group of young people that Islam filled a gap opened by a declining attachment to the culture and ethnic identities of their parents. Hence, can we speak of a 'religious revival' or a 'reactive religiosity' (Rumbaut 2008)?

The survey highlighted the primacy of Islam as source of identity, and this primacy was reiterated in the interviews as most young people-even the more rebellious-were resiliently identifying themselves as 'being Muslims'. However, Chapters 2 and 3 show how this primacy of Islam coexisted with other identifications, including a British national identity, which is considered to be a marker of progressive assimilation, as other research acknowledges (Platt 2014). Qualitative findings shed light on this coming together of assimilation and religious revival by unpacking what lies behind the revived sense of religiosity among these young Muslims. Many perceive the religious revival of Muslims as a possible symptom of voluntary exclusion from mainstream society and radicalisation. In this research we saw that young people's increasing closeness to their religion was rather a marker of a shifting identity where the primacy of Islam often came together with the idea that you can be 'Muslim but not religious'. Therefore, rather than serving as means of self-segregation from British society, closeness to Islam was the result of young people's effort to free religion from 'oldfashioned' ethnic and cultural interferences, so that they could fit in better within British society. In this sense, their religious 'revival' acted as a means for inclusion, reflecting the attempt to find space in society as British Muslims.

7.4 Bourdieu, Identity and Upbringing

Bourdieu's theory is widely used in the study of class differences, social mobility and social reproduction (Reay et al. 2009; Ingram 2011). Although Bourdieu did not specifically focus on minority groups and identity, I have shown in this book that his general theory provides an important means by which to help to make sense of the questions I wanted to address about growing up, constructing a sense of self, and upbringing in South Asian Muslim families.

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Habitus, social field, and cultural capital are the main concepts that I borrowed from Bourdieu to explore identity and upbringing in South Asian Muslim families. Lareau argues that Bourdieu is crucial for anyone who tries to understand how parents 'strive to maintain or improve their social position and that of their children' (Lareau 2011: 360). All parents in the research were trying to do so, but my focus was not only on social class as for Lareau (and Bourdieu). Bourdieu argues that by passing on their cultural capital to their children, parents produce and reproduce their class and status. Bourdieu's theory provides an understanding of the implications of 'the passing on' from parents to children, which is at the core of the process of upbringing. This idea of 'passing on resources' was also my starting point, but I took into account a wider conception of what is passed on—and thus a wider conception of cultural capital—to include the cultural norms of the parents' countries of origin, their religious beliefs as well as the British social norms and values.

Together with his contribution to understanding complex intergenerational transmissions, Bourdieu provides deep insights into the mechanisms that connect individuals to the social world and therefore into exploring identity. Drawing on anthropological work in Algeria (Bourdieu 1979) during the 1960s, he theorised about how the social world becomes embodied in individual's behaviour, through what he defined as habitus. By observing a scene of an olive gathering he detected how the reciprocal interactions of men and women, their movements and bodies, reflected and reproduced specific gendered structures (Jenkins 2002: 74–75). Women orientated their bodies downwards embodying the 'virtue of modesty', whilst masculinity and strength were externalised by men's 'asserted movements upwards, towards other men' (Bourdieu 1990: 70–71). Bourdieu described how women offered the stool to men and walked a few paces behind them, embodying social practices, which become part of individual habitus:

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

This passage reflects well the idea of a 'physicality of the habitus' and so how the habitus is embodied in the ways individuals do things and interact.

Similar to habitus, identity was also embodied through the wearing of the hijab or the outlook of the Bengali boys. In the book, I have sought to explore whether and how habitus can inform the understanding of identity. The findings highlight overlaps between the two; like habitus, identity reflects the circularity between individual actions and the social world. Rather than in mere self-definitions and labels, identity emerged by internalising and elaborating social and cultural influences-and so as the processes of bridging outer and inner worlds in the attempt to construct a sense of self, which incorporates the two. Therefore, like habitus, identity is development, movement and process rather than a static category of self-definition (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014). Within many commonalities, habitus and identity have different histories and origins. Bourdieu developed the idea of habitus as part of his analysis of social class positions and distinctions. Instead, here identity is more of a loose concept that tries to make sense of the intersections between a number of factors: social class is one central aspect that is considered but together with others. In the way it is presented in this book, identity is a bottom-up concept in the sense that it was developed in conjunction with what the participants had to say: I let young people, through 'photographing', tell me about their identity and I listened to parents explaining what identity meant to them. My only initial assumption was that the nature of identity was rather dynamic as a process of reconciling influences originating in different social institutional arrangements or social fields.

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. Lahire (2011, 2003) and Bennett (2007) argue that Bourdieu's habitus is reductive, inflexible and only able to group together those from with similar conditions. Criticism about a static and rigid habitus also applies to the context of migration, where habitus is considered incapable of explaining the complexity of the multiple identities of migrants (Noble 2013).

Similar to habitus, identity is also perceived by some scholars as an old-fashioned and inadequate concept unable to explain the complexity of the 'unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented nature of

the contemporary self' (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 8). As we saw in Chapter 1, the proposed conceptual alternatives involved in dismantling identity into multiple fragmented units, such as the ideas of identification, categorisation, self-understanding, social location, connectedness, groupness, and so on (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Nevertheless, this meticulous fragmentation of identity does not seem to reduce the complexity of explaining the contemporary self, rather it has just polarised its understanding into multiple directions. The book suggests that speaking about identity was still very relevant to parents and young people and surely it is a pressing issue for many Muslims today. Rather than focusing on the 'multiple different identities' of one individual, a useful shift within the debate about identity would be to reflect more closely on the influences of multiple social fields on one unitary identity; as Hamid summarises, 'all together they are me'. Similar to Bourdieu's habitus, it is important to consider the implications derived from the plurality of social fields where the habitus operates. 'Combining, converging and diverging' incorporate these complex negotiations and reflect the effort of making sense of different influences and dispositions, while keeping identity and habitus together.

7.5 Questions of Identity

One of the key questions that the book sought to address is how young British Muslims negotiate different influences affecting their identity particularly those emerging from their families and from the non-Muslim British society. This is an important and popular question.

An underlying theme of *The Black Album* (1995) by the writer Hanif Kureishi is the sense of exclusion and the battle to fit in that Shahid Hasan, the main character of the novel, brings with himself throughout the whole novel. Shahid, a college student of Pakistani origin, finds himself torn between an affair with his tutor, Deedee, and a charismatic Muslim student, Riaz. Deedee and Riaz embody two worlds that Shahid is struggling to inhabit at the same time. So in the novel, he ends up oscillating between the loyalty to his origins and the need to fit in contemporary Britain. Ed Husain (2007) also wrote about his struggle to reconcile his double sense of belonging to both 'East and West', which mirrored two sides of his personality: Muslim and British. These sides have sometimes 'merged neatly' whilst at other times they have 'battled with each other', as he explained (Hussain 2007: 269). Looking to reconcile these different orientations, he said, 'Then I remind myself that, before I am anything, I am a human, and in this I am at one with the world' (Hussain 2007: 269). With a specific reference to the identity of Muslims living in Western countries, the philosopher and writer Tariq Ramadan challenged the idea of a monoidentity where one dimension takes priority over the others (2010). He called for reaching a 'broader view of ourselves' where multiple identities are to be accepted, nurtured and developed: 'Our identities are multiple and constantly on the move' (Ramadan 2010: 38).

Chapter 1 outlined that the idea of 'multiple identities' is widely used in the literature about ethnic minority groups and it is the result of important theoretical shifts. Ideas about the decreasing centrality of the oldest sources of distinction and belonging-particularly class as seen in Beck and Gernsheim (2001; Beck, 1992; Beck 2007)-are becoming more popular and they are influencing the debate about identity. Away from old and externally imposed structural representations, individuals are now perceived as choosing between multiple and more individualised self-identifications. Although these claims do not come without criticism (e.g. Atkinsons 2007; Brannen and Nilsen 2005), they have become influential also informing ideas of 'new hybridities' and 'fluidity' of identity. If these ideas provide important context to the research, they also have some rather unexpected implications for understanding identity in highly diverse societies. The assumption about hybrid, fluid and multiple identities has led to the question of which identity is the most preferred. 'Multiple' can involve a hierarchy of identities, which runs the risk of increasing moral panic about the lack of loyalty to one national identity turning into the question: if Islam is more important than Britain, then where do Muslims stand? Results from the survey in Chapter 3 suggest that religion was more important to the self-definition of a high proportion of young Muslims compared with other groups: Muslim young people in the survey were much more likely than any other religious group to consider religion as important in their lives; to see religion as a source of meaning and to practice their religion. These results find support in other more robust research with national representative samples, which also points to the primacy of Islam for self-definition of Muslims in Britain (Modood et al. 1997; O'Beirne 2004). The problem here is that questions of identity/identities tend to overlap with questions about loyalty. Ramadan (2010) explained how, if this is the case, our preferred identity also defines our loyalty, creating the expectation of having to reduce 'the self to one single identity, which is supposed to tell everything' about the self (Ramadan 2010: 37). As detailed in Chapter 2, young people and parents thought carefully about identity, as they seem to be aware that their first answer and definition had a precise weight, positioning them as more or less loyal, more or less trustworthy and more or less British.

Together with loyalty, questions of identity are also interpreted as demands about belonging. The assumption is that nationality and place of birth must guarantee certain expected belongings. However, belonging is not something people naturally acquire because they are born somewhere, but it is experiential and therefore it is the result of upbringing, social relationships and life experiences. Rather than looking at identity as an entity and a category in which we are asked to fit, I have explored whether we can consider it as a process by which individuals make sense of who they are while navigating multiple social fields. As Tania highlighted in Chapter 3, she did not think of herself as 100 % Indian or British, but rather her identity oscillated between these social fields.

In this scenario, the typologies 'combining, diverging and converging' as ways of negotiating different influences on identity, can be seen to be experiences of belonging to multiple social fields. 'Combining' was the overarching strategy, which exemplified the effort to reconcile identity dispositions emerging in social fields under the influences of religion, culture, gender or class and, more generally, British society. Omar's words in Chapter 3 summarise well what 'combining influences' means by constructing his own self as one, but one that was operating in three different spheres: for him being Muslim related to the moral beliefs; being Pakistani was about his family's origin; and being British reflected the social context where he growing up and has access to opportunities. In line with Omar, I have shifted the focus away from the idea of multiple identities to rather consider how multiple social fields—home, extended family, school, peers, and so on—can contribute to the construction of a unitary sense of identity where dispositions (emerging from different social fields) can coexist. Hania's emphasis on 'being modern and modest' also incorporated the effort of 'combining', as the polarisation between modest and modern was not perceived as irreconcilable. Therefore, girls manifested through adaptations in their clothing and external appearance, their modest and modern dispositions. It is in this interplay between the 'inner and outer' that identity comes to the fore.

Within the overarching strategy of combining influences on identity, Chapter 3 identifies two underlying trends that encompassed how young people related to their parents' system of values and beliefs: 'converging' and 'diverging'. Converging toward the moral standards of parents involved an inner criticism of 'un-Islamic practices' such as going out and drinking alcohol or having pre-marital sex. In aligning to their parents, young people were not passive recipients of moral orders but rather they attempted to express a sense of agency. Hence, converging involved young people making sense of the multiple boundaries placed on their social lives. Sakina's rejection of the 'pub culture'—'I walk past pubs and they stink!'—had become part of an internalised upbringing: 'Because you've never done it, you don't really like it.' A similar discourse is evident in the words of another young woman, Tania, who also highlighted how not being exposed to certain lifestyles and activities while growing up, made her indifferent to them, unable to catch their appeal: 'Maybe it's because I've been brought up like that, but I don't feel like I'm missing out on anything' she explained in Chapter 3.

The implications for British identity were compelling. We saw in Chapter 2 that ethnic and religious minority young people described their national identity as British. Still, this is not evidence of an unproblematic assimilation, and the interviews shed light on different aspects of being British. For some, being British was associated with opportunities, education and social mobility: there was a strong appreciation and awareness that life chances would have been different in Pakistan, Bangladesh or India. There was also another side of being British, which emerged more strongly amongst the young people who were converging toward the parents: the association of being British with low moral standards, anti-social behaviour and binge drinking, symbolised by what Hania called the 'stinky pubs' of 'Bad Britain'. These aspects were defining parts of identity, but in negative rather than affirmative terms: 'this is what I am not and this is not what I belong to'. There were direct implications for belonging attached to these negative perceptions of Britain and this book suggests that some young people sought to depart from them and looked for meaningful alternatives at home and in their communities—either by volunteering, like Saleem or Tania; by re-inventing having fun, like Hania, who was partying without drinking; by relying on willpower to maintain boundaries of behaviour, like Ali; or by a constant search for moderation, like Omar. The convergence toward a British identity is often considered to be a marker of minority groups' assimilation (Platt 2014). The book suggested greater complexity: 'assimilation' was happening not as a passive adaptation or inactive convergence, but rather through compelling negotiations. Young people were shifting between criticism of British lifestyles and Britain as space of opportunities. In doing so, they were picking and choosing the best parts of 'being British' to fit with their upbringing, their beliefs and their values.

While some young people made an effort to make sense of their parents' strict directions on their moral and social lives, some others broke the rules. We saw that a group of Bengali boys from quite disadvantaged backgrounds were the most rebellious. Their sense of self was constructed while dealing with the contradictions between their social lives shaped by un-Islamic lifestyles, and their resilient attachment to their Muslim identity. Young people who were 'diverging' also developed alternative aspirations to fill the gaps opened by their missed educational opportunities and improbable chances of accessing high professional careers. Their dreams of becoming famous rappers and their ideas of success reflected the effect of class disadvantage on their current lives and also their views of the future.

Hence, the typologies of negotiation were not immune to the effects of class and gender, but rather reflect their 'intersectionality' with religion and culture (Brah and Phoenix 2013). Brah and Phoenix (2013: 76) elaborated the idea of intersectionality as the 'effects, which follow

the intersection of multiple axis of differentiation—economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential—in historically specific contexts'. This notion puts forward the idea that different aspects of the social life 'cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands' (Ibid). Looking deeply into the two typologies (converging and diverging), we can see the effects of multiple intersections. Girls, for instance, were mostly converging and managed to resolve their 'conflict' with parental culture more easily than some of the boys. Conversely, the higher propensity of the Bengali boys to adopt conflictual identities was also related to the stronger effects of peer pressure and the influences of the local area.

Ultimately, by combining, diverging and converging, young people were not multiplying their identities, but making sense of who they are while navigating intersecting social fields. These typologies reflect the efforts and tensions of an active 'assimilation' as the process of learning to be a British Muslim today, rather than giving in to an unquestioned adaptation to a British national identity.

7.6 Questions of Upbringing

Negotiating continuity and change from South Asian cultures was one of the main challenges parents had to face and one of the main characteristics of upbringing in these families. To maintain this continuity, but also to improve their children's life chances, parents employed Islamic capital. We saw in Chapter 5 that Islam provides an invaluable resource for parenting: not only do parents pass on Islam as an integral part of their religious beliefs, but they also employ it to construct, maintain and justify their sense of morality. Therefore, ideas such as 'moderation', 'right path', and 'modesty' were part of a wider discourse centred around Islam as both the content of the transfer and the process of transmission, and therefore as a source of moral values, but also as the means to pass on these values. This duality is reflected in the concept of *Islamic capital*, as the set of resources that originate from Islam and are employed by parents in the upbringing of their children (Franceschelli and O'Brien 2014). Hence, Islam provided the bearings into the 'the right path' so that the children avoid troubles and stay focused. Unlike ethnic capital

(Modood 2004), Islamic capital is religion-specific and operates in the particular context of upbringing.

The emphasis on discourses about marriage was relevant in the context of upbringing. Marriage was a widely shared theme and most parents spoke about the importance of the ethnic and religious backgrounds of their children's future spouses. The preferences for intra-ethnic and intrafaith marriage reflected precise needs, such as maintaining the continuity of religion, roots and cultures, which was a major preoccupation of first generation parents worried that their children, most of whom were born in the UK, would lose a sense of their origin. Some of the more educated and wealthy parents were at times even more supportive of intra-ethnic and religious marriages than the others, viewing marriage also as a way to maintain or improve their status. By contrast, some of the other parents from working-class backgrounds were more flexible and, sometimes, less concerned by the social status of the spouse, raising the question: 'Did they have less to lose?'

The way young people experienced their love relationships was inevitably influenced by their overall upbringing and particularly the parents' emphasis on and expectations for marriage. We saw in Chapter 4 that young people's intimate lives were secret and fugitive. Their stories about love relationships offer insights about general experiences of the teenage years, but had some culture-specific elements. There was a sense of some extra challenges that they had to face in carrying on with their relationships but also in imagining their future with their partners. While positive and optimistic overall, as many of their age group are likely to be, some young people also appeared to be living contradictory social and love lives, dealing with a sense of guilt, and portraying anxieties reflected by their attempt to come to terms with and make sense of their un-Islamic conduct. 'Haram', which specifies a sense of the forbidden and almost illicit, was associated with the sense of breaking the rules and losing 'the right path' that being in a love relationship inevitably entailed for them.

However, together with a religious and cultural-specific upbringing, there were also more general approaches. Moving away from a sense of exceptionalism, which characterises the literature on Muslims or on minority groups more generally, Chapters 5 and 6 provided important insights into these general practices, such as the mixture between strict and indulgent upbringing, and the focus on education. Strict upbringing

was aimed at transmitting a sense of duty and respect for the rules in order to prevent young people from 'losing the right path', conduct associated with getting involved with people, lifestyles and situations which could increase the distance from South Asian cultures and Islam. Alongside the idea of being strict, parents employed the complementary strategy of indulgent upbringing, drawing on communicative and supportive practices and interactions. Indulgent upbringing reflected the parents' effort to bond with and understand their children, with an emphasis on intergenerational communication and parental warmth.

While the continuity with South Asian cultures was central to upbringing, parents also focused on change by investing in their children's education and by passing on high aspirations in order to enhance social mobility. Toward the end of each interview, I asked parents a crucial question: 'what are your main priorities for your children as a mother (or a father)?' Chapter 6 draws on this question and suggests that while Islam informed the ways priorities could be achieved, what parents ultimately wanted for their children was a 'good life', intended as good education, a career, and settling down in a stable, long-lasting, happy marriage. In line with Bourdieu's idea that education is a crucial element of cultural capital, the interviews reveal how parents mostly identified the future success of their children with good performance at school, access to prestigious universities and, eventually, professional careers. 'Education' was the most common answer to the question of priorities and aspirations; it was also the reason why parents left their home countries thinking about the future of their children. Their faith in education as the route for social mobility was vigorous and unconditional and parents were willing to sacrifice everything and work hard for it. Hence, parents employed a specific approach to intergenerational transmission: 'the migration effect'. The migration effect involved parents using their migrant past-particularly references to their missed opportunities and difficulties of settlement—to instil in their children a sense of responsibility, to push them to use the opportunities available to them and commit to education.

The emphasis on children's education was shared by families from different social class backgrounds and was not gendered, as parents expected both boys and girls to get high qualifications and to move into 'respectable' careers. While gender and class did not make such a difference to the views on education, South Asian cultures were a factor. Preferred professional trajectories such as medicine, law or pharmacy were culturally informed, reflecting South Asian perceptions of successful careers. This strong emphasis on education and certain careers had pros and cons. Parents genuinely aimed to enhance their children's life chances. Yet, in doing so, they sometimes created false expectations about the actual possibilities of achieving these goals, downplaying the role of the structure of opportunities, and setting their children up for failure. There were emotional implications for young people failing to achieve, as Omar not getting into Cambridge suggested, and as the alternative aspirations to a career in rap music of Tahir and his Bangladeshi friends illustrated.

Finally, in all these matters, from education to aspirations, from love to marriage, the specific cultural and religious differences of South Asian Muslim communities came together with experiences of upbringing and growing up that are common to many other groups and communities in Britain.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

Most people migrate not because of themselves, but for the future of their children. (Sameer, Pakistani father)

These are challenging times for many Muslim communities around the world. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks perpetrated by extreme Islamists, new fears have emerged as a consequence of the upsurge of ISIS-related violence. I am writing during the war taking place in Syria and the arrival of many Syrian refugees and other displaced people in Europe. In this scenario, multiculturalism and diversity have become even more pressing issues in both national and international policy debates while, the question about living together in highly diverse societies, has remained unanswered: how can policies promoting a more inclusive citizenship be negotiated with the respect of diversity that migration inevitably brings about? This research suggests the importance of tackling structural inequalities. Inequalities shaped the circumstances of families as well as their practices of upbringing by, for instance, determining the space of women in the family, or by creating distinctive aspirations and different life prospects for young people—as symbolised by the polarisation between the desires of going to Cambridge and becoming a rapper. Crucially, multicultural policies are likely to be less effective if interventions to address socio-economic disparities are not put into place.

Finally, with migration already back to the fore of the European political agenda, this research provides a chance to reflect on the challenges and the opportunities, the experiences and the capacity to develop aspirations, the adaptations to the new country and the continuities with the cultural milieus of origin, the intergenerational dynamics and also the class differences within these diasporic communities. The three typologies of identity negotiations and the practices of upbringing described—including the use of Islamic capital—are ways to connect the micro-level processes of identity and upbringing to the macro-level question of how equality can be endorsed alongside a respect for diversity.

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Appendix 1

Qualitative Sample

Total interviews	52
Young people interviews	25 (13 boys, 12 girls)
Parents	27 parents (13 fathers and 14 mothers)
Family groups	10 families included mum, dad & 1 young person, 2 families included mum, dad & 2 siblings (Haroon and Tania; Farooq and Sarah), 2 families were lone parent families (mother & young person were interviewed in both cases), in 1 family only daughter and father were interviewed (mother refused as she could not speak English).
	8 young people were interviewed but parents could not be reached (6 of them were recruited through schools and 2 through snowballing)
Ethnic background of the families	5 Indians
	7 Bangladeshi
	3 Pakistani

 Table A.1 Qualitative sample: summary of main characteristics

(continued)

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Table A.1 (continued)

Muslim sects	The majority of respondents were Sunni. Two families belonged to a minority Muslim group
Locations	 10 families were interviewed in Inner London; 1 family in Greater London; 3 families in the North West; 1 family in the South Coast of England (5 young people whose parents could not be reached were from the North West and 3 were from Inner London)
Generational status	23 young people were second generation UK-born; 1 boy (Yusuf) and 1 girl (Zahida) were first generation both born in Pakistan.
	Only two on the interviewed parents were second generation born in the UK.
English language skills	4 mothers (Hania, Davar, Tahir, Nasreen) and 2 fathers (Yasmeen, Asif) had poor English language skills. They could understand the questions but found difficult to answer in English without support. The interviews were conducted with the support of an interpreter who was a family member
Fathers' working status—low socio-economic background	2 unemployed, 1 labourer, 2 worked in take away, restaurants, 2 self-employed
Fathers' working status—higher socio-economic background	1 self-employed consultant in finance (with UK degree), 1 accountant (Indian + British qualifications), 1 customer service (Indian qualifications), 1 administrator (qualified as a teacher), 1 scientist (PhD), 1 self-employed consultant (qualified as a medical doctor in Pakistan)
Mothers' working status—low socio-economic background	8 unemployed looking after children and home (with no qualifications). 2 of these 8 were lone mothers. 1 working full time for the local council (UK GCSE)
Mothers' working status—higher socio-economic background	1 IT manager (with UK masters degree), 1 higher education teacher (with PhD), 1 retail manager (Pakistani qualifications), 1 support teacher (UK qualifications) 1 legal consultant (qualification both from India and UK), 1 business manager (Pakistani & British degree qualifications)

Pseudonyms	Family circumstances
Amina (Father Jabar; Mother Selma)	Girl (15); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; both parents first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: mother and father both unemployed with low qualifications. Inner London
Ali (Mother Sadia)	Boy (16); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; mother was first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: lone parent family, mother was unemployed. Inner London
Asif (Father Mourad; Mother Latifa)	Boy (14); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: the mother was unemployed, the father worked in a restaurant and as a cab driver. Inner London
Davar (Father Raj; Mother Varija)	Boy (16); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; mother was second generation born in the UK but moved back to Bangladesh as a baby where she grew up until she came back to the UK to get married in her 20s; the father was first generation born in Bangladesh but moved to the UK as a child. Working-class family: mother was unemployed and had no qualifications, while the father worked in a restaurant and had low qualifications from the UK. Inner London
Hamid (Mother: Thara; Father: Osman)	Boy (14); second generation Asian British Indian born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in India. Middle-class family: the mother was a higher education teacher (with PhD), the father was an accountant. Inner London
Hania (Father Kabir; Mother Rehana)	Girl (18); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: the father was self-employed and the mother was unemployed. Only Hania and her father were interviewed. The mother refused because she could not speak English. North West
Haroon and Tania (Father Shahid; Mother Nazima)	Girl (18), Boy (15); second generation Asian British Indian born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in India. Middle-class family: the mother was a consultant with qualifications above degree level, the father was an administrator. South Coast
Nasreen (Father Khaled; Mother Yamina)	Girl (16); second generation Asian British Indian born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in India. Working-class family: the mother was unemployed and the father was in a low-skill manual job in construction. Inner London

 Table A.2
 Pseudonyms and families' circumstances

Pseudonyms	Family circumstances
Omar (Father Hassan; Mother Noor)	Boy (18); second generation Asian British Pakistani born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in Pakistan. Middle-class family: both parents qualified at degree level; the father was a self-employed consultant; the mother was a business manager. Inner London
Yasmeen (Mother Lubaba; Father Qabil)	Girl (14); second generation Asian British Indian born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in India (but the father grew up in East Africa). Middle-class family: the father had upper secondary qualifications and the mother had a master's degree. The father worked in customer services and the mother was an IT manager. North West
Sakina (Father Sakib; Mother Fatiha)	Girl (18); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi both in the UK; both parents were first generation born in Bangladesh but the mother moved to the UK when she was a child and grew up and studied in the UK. Inner London working-class family: the mother had qualifications at lower secondary level and the father had some qualifications from Bangladesh at a similar (or lower) level than his wife. The mother worked for a local council and the father was self-employed (travel agency). Inner London
Sara and Farooq (Father Riyaz; Mother Baseema)	Girl (17), Boy (14); both second generation Asian British Indian born in the UK; both parents were first generation born in India. Middle-class family: the father was a scientist (PhD) and the mother was a support teacher with upper secondary gualifications. Inner London
Tahir (Mother: Disha)	Boy (16); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; mother was first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: lone parent family, mother was unemployed with no qualifications. Inner London
Zahida (Father Sameer; Mother Umara)	 Girl (17); first generation Asian British Pakistani. Zahida was born in Pakistan and only moved to the UK at 12 years of age; both parents were first generation born in Pakistan. Middle-class family: the father worked as a consultant; the mother had a managerial position in retail. Inner London
Zahra (Father: Amir; Mother: Ifrah)	Girl (16); second generation Asian British Pakistani born in the UK; mother was born in Pakistan but the father was born in the UK. Working-class family: mother and father were both unemployed; the father had lower secondary qualifications and the mother had no qualifications. North West

Table A.2 (continued)

(continued)

Pseudonyms	Family circumstances
Yusuf	Boy (16); first generation Asian British Pakistani born in Pakistan. Working-class family: father lived abroad and the mother was unemployed, both with no qualifications. Only Yusuf was interviewed. Inner London
Mariam	Girl (17); Asian British Bangladeshi born in the North West. The father was second generation UK born from a Bangladeshi father and White British Christian mother; Mariam's mother was first generation born in Bangladesh (she did not speak English). Only Mariam was interviewed. Working-class family: both parents with no qualifications and currently unemployed. North West
Wajid	Boy (18); Asian British Pakistani, born in the UK. Both parents born in Pakistan. Working-class family: both parents were unemployed with low qualifications from Pakistan. Only Wajid was interviewed. North West
Maria	Girl (17); second generation Asian British Pakistani born in the UK. Both parents born in Pakistan. Working-class family: both parents unemployed; only Maria was interviewed. North West
Saleem	Boy (18); second generation Asian British Pakistani born in the UK while both parents were first generation born in Pakistan. Working-class family: both parents unemployed with low qualifications from Pakistan. Only Saleem was interviewed. North West
Nilufer	Girl (17); Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK; both parents were born in Pakistan. Working-class family: both parents were unemployed with low qualifications from Pakistan. Only Nilufer was interviewed. North West
Mohammed	Boy (16); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK. Both parents were first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: the father was a bus driver, the mother was unemployed; only Mohammed was interviewed. Inner London
Pervez	Boy (16); second generation Asian British Bangladeshi born in the UK while both parents were first generation born in Bangladesh. Working-class family: both parents were unemployed. Only Pervez was interviewed. Inner London

Table A.2 (continued)

Qualitative Data Analysis

The Analysis of Qualitative Data: A Thematic Approach

The analysis of the qualitative data was carried out using NVIVO software and following a thematic approach (Aronson 1994; Stirling 2001; Boyatzis 1998)—a process for encoding qualitative data that requires *'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in the data (themes)*'—(Brown and Clarke 2006: 79). In this study, themes originated by combining an inductive (emerging from the data) and a deductive (on the basis of theory & assumptions) approach in line with the idea of a 'hybrid thematic analysis' (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). The process of coding began with a preliminary codebook, developed on the basis of the theoretical framework (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006) of the discussion about identity and upbringing presented in Chapters 1 and 2 and included the following:

- Self-description (and tastes)
- Values (and priorities)
- Practices (doing things)
- Beliefs (religious)
- Upbringing
- Parental priorities
- Migration histories

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

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

- Strategies for intergenerational transmission of values: parenting and Islam, and parenting and gender roles
- Social mobility, education and migration: parental priorities and aspirations for their children
- Strategies for negotiating identities: the three typologies of converging, diverging and combining

In order to keep the richness of the different experiences, the analysis drew on multiple perspectives. A detailed exploration of selected themes built up through several levels: the individuals (young person, mother and father separately), the family (young person, mother and father together), all young people, all fathers and all mothers. An approach of this kind enabled the examination of emerging themes from different perspectives, whilst enhancing a deeper understanding of both processes: young people's negotiation of identity and intergenerational transmission.

The Typologies of Negotiations

In the analysis of the interviews with young people, I gave primacy to the role of the photographs in shaping the key issues of the conversations. The photographs proved to be particularly useful for eliciting selfdescription, stimulating discussion about what was generally important to young people, and encouraging them to describe people and places to which they were attached. In the analysis, the photographs were used in combination with the text produced by the transcription of the interviews. The photographs were grouped into the following six categories in order to support the development of themes:

- 1. Self portraits and family members
- 2. Self portraits and friends
- 3. Islam
- 4. Places
- 5. Objects
- 6. Music

The analysis of the interviews with young people involved three key steps. Firstly, the discussion about the photographs generated different accounts that expressed how young people talked about their interests and favourite activities, such as football, cricket, meeting friends, their favourite rapper, clothing, and studying, but also praying and reading about Islam, and so on. Secondly, the analysis focused on the identification of specific themes that brought together and made sense of the previous accounts. I referred to these specific themes as 'strategies of negotiation' because they described the activities/actions used by young people to negotiate different influences. Thirdly, these strategies of negotiation/themes were incorporated into three more general thematic areas-or typologies-that detailed profiles of the 'types' of negotiations adopted by young people to deal with different influences on their identity particularly in relationship to the family context. In this sense, the typologies mapped the journey to young people's national and religious identifications.

Parents Topic Guide

TO FIND OUT: Pathways Muslim parents use to transmit religious values to children. What is relevant in bringing up their children.

- 1. General background details
 - (a) Ethnicity, gender, national identity, current employment & qualifications
 - (b) Opening questions (Tell me a bit about yourself. How is life at the moment? What are your current priorities?)

2. Employment, education and migration history

- (a) More details about their employment history (Can you talk me through the jobs you had in the past? If working: can you tell me about the job you have at the moment?)
- (b) Education
- (c) Migration history (How was life back in [country of origin]? What are your memories of it? How does it compare to your children's life in Britain? Can you tell me the story of you moving to Britain? How was settling down in this country (challenges, opportunities, etc.)? What do you miss the most about [country of origin] etc.)?
- 3. Identity
 - (a) Identity factors & components (What sort of things are important to you when thinking about your identity?)
 - (b) If religion is mentioned, probe (religious identity and meaning of being a Muslim, religion and everyday life, religious practices)
 - (c) National identity (check how they describe their national identity, the meaning of being British, the best and worst about bringing up their children in Britain)
 - (d) Identity & self-definition (To sum up, how would you describe your identity?)
- 4. Upbringing (bringing up children in Britain)
 - (a) About their son/daughter (Tell me about your son/daughter? What sort of person he/she is? What does he/she do? What is his/ her personality like?)
 - (b) Family time (What sort of things do you do at home with your children?)
 - (c) Priorities; most important message they try to get across (What is your most compelling priority for your son/daughter right now?)
 - (d) Aspirations (What are the aspirations you have for your children?)

- (e) Upbringing practices (How do you pass on these messages to your children? Examples? Does Islam play a role?)
- (f) Concerns about bringing up children both general & more specific concerns about Britain

Young People Topic Guide

TO FIND OUT: How young people negotiate multiple influences on identity.

- 1. Talking about the photographs (& identity):
 - (a) Photographs (Why did you take this photograph? What does it represent? Why is important for your identity?)
 - (b) About yourself (If not mentioned during the photographs: tell me a little bit about yourself. What sort of things interest you? What do you like doing? How do you describe yourself? Probes: music, movies; sport, reading, etc.)
- 2. Identity
 - (a) Identity components (What sort of things are most important to your when thinking about your identity? What does it mean 'to have an identity'?)
 - (b) If religion is mentioned, probe (Religion & everyday life, practising your religion, learning about your religion, etc.)
 - (c) Identity & self-definition (How would you describe your identity? What is identity to you?)
 - (d) National identity (Check if they define themselves as British. What does being British mean? What do you think are the positives and negatives of being born/growing up here?)

3. About life at school and your friends

(a) Life at school (How is life at school at the moment? How are you doing? Do you like your school? What is your favourite subject/ teacher, etc.)

- (b) Social relationships at school (or other friends) (What sort of things you do with your friends? What sort of friends do you have? Where did you meet them? Describe your best friend, etc.)
- 4. Parents
 - (a) Parents (Describe your parents. What sort of people are they? What do they do? What sort of things do you do together? What does your mum mostly do? And what about your dad? Where are they from? Etc.)
 - (b) Parenting (What is the most important things you learnt from your mum? And your dad? How do they teach you? Are they strict? If you become a parent one day, what would you do the same or differently?)
- 5. Aspirations
 - (a) Aspirations of parents (children's view) (What do you think your parents would like you to be/become in the future? What are their aspirations for you?)
 - (b) Aspirations of young person (How do you see your future? What would like to be? Etc.)

Appendix 2

The Survey Sample

A total of 560 young people aged 14–19 years old completed an inclassroom questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed in three different secondary schools in Inner London while one sixth form college in North West England completed the questionnaire online: 74% of the students in the sample attended secondary school in Inner London and 26% attended sixth form college in the North West. The following charts summarise the breakdown of the sample by gender, ethnicity and religion:



Fig. A.1 Respondents to the survey by gender (%)



Fig. A.2 Respondents to the survey by ethnic group (%)



Fig. A.3 Respondents to the survey by religion (%)

Multicultural Schools: Country of Birth and Languages Spoken at Home

The selected schools were very diverse and students were originally from a number of different countries as shown in Table A. 3 below.

In total, 22 % of students in the survey were first generation migrants not born in the UK. The majority of these students who were not born in the UK were born in Lithuania and Pakistan (2 %); Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kenya and Somalia (1 % each country).

Of the 548 born in the UK, 25 % said England was their country of origin and of the others 56 % instead said their country of origin was the United Kingdom.

There was also a variety of languages, other than English, which students spoke at home, reflecting the multicultural environment of the sampled schools. Overall, 541 students answered the question about language. Just over a half of them (53%) spoke only English at home, while 18% spoke other languages rather than English in the family context and 29% spoke English and another language. Amongst the other languages spoken at home, Bengali was the most common (22% of the students in the survey who spoke more than one language at home), followed by Urdu (19%), Tamil (9%), Gujarati (7%) and others did not specify any language (9%).
Table A.3Students in thesurveybycountryorigin

Country of origin	
England	56.1
United Kingdom	20.5
Lithuania	1.8
Pakistan	1.8
Sri Lanka	1.4
Bangladesh	1.2
Kenya	1.2
Somalia	1.2
India	1.1
France	0.9
Netherlands	0.9
Afghanistan	0.7
Ecuador	0.7
Nigeria	0.7
Germany	0.5
Philippines	0.5
Poland	0.5
Austria	0.4
Colombia	0.4
Ghana	0.4
Mauritius	0.4
Uganda	0.4
Albania	0.2
Brazil	0.2
Congo, the DRC	0.2
Czech Republic	0.2
Denmark	0.2
Estonia	0.2
Iraq	0.2
Israel	0.2
Italy	0.2
Latvia	0.2
	(continued)

(continued)

Country of origin	
Nepal	0.2
Portugal	0.2
Romania	0.2
Russian	0.2
Federation	
Saint Lucia	0.2
Saudi Arabia	0.2
Sweden	0.2
Turkey	0.2
Ukraine	0.2
United Arab	0.2
Emirates	
Vietnam	0.2
Other	0.2
Blanks	2.3
N	560

Table A.3 (continued)

The Survey Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the classroom questionnaires was analysed using SPSS. The analysis focused on identifying differences and commonalities between the targeted group—South Asian British Muslims—and the other ethnic or religious groups. The type of data, mainly categorical/discrete, determined the statistical techniques and type of analysis carried out. A Chi-Square test was used to determine whether differences in the responses amongst the main religious/ethnic groups in the sample were statistically significant (Agresti and Finlay 1997; Field 2009).

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